



PRESS RELEASE

MORE THAN A GAME: A CONVERSATION BETWEEN ATHLETES AND YOUTH LEADERS ON THE POWER OF SPORT

Launch of the #MoreThanAGame Media Campaign and Roundtable Discussion

Doha, 18 November 2022 – The #MoreThanAGame media campaign was launched today with a roundtable discussion, as part of Generation Amazing Foundation’s annual Youth Festival, during which inspiring community leaders were able to share their stories of how sport positively changed their lives with more than 100 youth training to be future practitioners in the prevention of violent extremism (PVE) and promotion of peace.

Featuring **Professional footballer Dr. Nadia Nadim**, the event was organized by the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT) Global Sports Programme and co-hosted by the Generation Amazing Foundation on the margins of the Goal 2022 festival. The panel launched the programme’s #MoreThanAGame media campaign and fielded questions from 120 young people representing the 32 nations participating in the 2022 FIFA World Cup.

The #MoreThanAGame campaign is a key initiative of UNOCT’s Global Sports Programme and its co-implementing partners, the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations (UNAOC), the United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute (UNICRI), and the International Centre for Sport Security (ICSS). The campaign aims to promote the potential of sport as a force for good by highlighting the stories of professional athletes and inspiring young people from around the globe during major sporting events. It also includes “Golden Ticket” events where exemplary young people have the opportunity to join a professional athlete in a conversation to share how sports improved their lives.

This event kicked off the first edition of the campaign. It took place on the occasion of the 2022 FIFA World Cup. It was supported by Generation Amazing, the human and social legacy programme of the Supreme Committee for Delivery and Legacy that has positively impacted more than one million people globally since its launch during Qatar’s bid to host the FIFA World Cup.

In his opening remarks, **Mr. Mauro Miedico, Deputy Director, UNCCT and Chief, Special Projects and Innovation Branch** of UNOCT expressed the Office's appreciation for the State of Qatar's generous support of the Global Sports Programme, which aims to strengthen protective measures for major sporting events as well as promote sport and its values as common goods for humanity, which help foster community cohesion and resilience to violent ideologies. During his speech, Mr. Miedico highlighted how "Sport inspires people to be better, aim higher, and go further, reaching beyond borders to become a common language of peace for all".

During the panel discussion moderated by Mr. Miedico, **Dr. Nadia Nadim, professional footballer**, told personal anecdotes on how sport helped her overcome the difficulties of her childhood to become a world-renowned star on the pitch as well a medical doctor in the time she spent without her kit on. Speaking on her experience with the power of sport, Dr. Nadim emphasized "football came to me at a difficult time, and I used it as my weapon to fight out of the way I was in. The more I played, the more I realized that there is a place for me in this world as well."

Dr. Nadim was joined in a panel discussion by one young beneficiary of sport based PVE programming, **Ms. Kelsey (23, from Northern Ireland)** of the Irish Football Association Foundation as well as a young sport-based PVE programme practitioner, **Ms. Caroline (30, from Cameroon)** of Local Youth Corner Cameroon. Kelsey explained her challenging upbringing in her home community and speak about how the power of sport was able to completely turn her life around. Speaking of the sense of community sport creates, she emphasized that "on the pitch it doesn't matter about religion. You just go out there and have fun, everyone's identity's the exact [same] thing." Caroline, noted similarly that "by developing teamwork and communication skills, we are able to not only succeed on the pitch but also promote peace and positivity within our own communities."

Generation Amazing Foundation (GA), the human and social legacy initiative of the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022, launched its Goal 22 program in October this year. The year-long program is the first ever international school exchange program to take place alongside a FIFA World Cup. More than 300 students from around the world were brought to Doha, Qatar to participate in football for development theory and practical sessions, and to work with peers from across the world to design, develop, and deliver community initiatives.

Additional Quotes

Mr. Nasser Al-Khori, Executive Director, Generation Amazing Foundation (GA):

Generation Amazing Foundations' mission is to inspire and provide life-changing opportunities for underserved youth from all over the world through the power of football. Inspiring stories like that of Dr. Nadia Nadim's and of the panelists showcase the many ways football can truly impact lives and communities. We at Generation Amazing Foundation are proud to host this panel and the launch of MoreThanAGame campaign during our annual Youth Festival. The campaign personifies what GA represents as an organisation, not only to provide opportunity and empowerment through football but to amplify the stories of those impacted. Our global programmes also focus on developing safe spaces for youth and we along with UNOCT, believe that when used effectively, sport and major sporting events can foster a climate of peace, and that youth participation in the development and implementation of sport-based PVE programmes and policies is crucial in this regard.

Mr. Miguel Angel Moratinos, High Representative - United Nations Alliance of Civilizations (UNAOC):

We hope this campaign will inspire many young people around the world. We are delighted to see this happening with the support of influential athletes and within the framework of the FIFA World Cup 2022

in Qatar. Major sporting events are powerful platforms to develop and maintain conversations on inclusion and social cohesion. As advocates of meaningful youth engagement, UNAOC is also pleased to see youth playing a key role in this campaign by taking the lead in amplifying powerful messages to their peers.

Mr. Massimiliano Montanari, CEO - International Centre for Sport Security (ICSS):

Our campaign complements three years of work to inspire the advancement of global and national policies to secure sport and promote its values as a strategy to prevent violent extremism. Three years of hard work with policy and decision-makers and in support of law enforcement agencies, organizers, and civil society. The campaign and the exemplary testimony of sports champions like Nadia Nadim, form an integral part of the holistic approach we have embraced with the Global Programme. It reminds us of the unique capacity of sport to unite where there is division, and to create opportunities where there is despair.

Ms. Antonia Marie De Meo, Director United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute (UNICRI):

“The stories of the panelists and Dr. Nadim are truly moving testimonies of personal strength and the potential of sports to help overcome challenges and build resilience. Sports are a uniting force. They build trust, promote inclusivity and encourage respect for diversity. Our work shows that these values are essential to counter radicalization and violent extremism in communities at risk. UNICRI is thankful to the State of Qatar for their generous support to the Global Sports Programme, and to the panelists as well as Dr. Nadim for allowing us to share in their stories. We are very proud to be associated with building such a positive legacy for the 2022 FIFA World Cup.”

For more information:

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