

# **Bahamas 2017 Commonwealth Youth Games Child Welfare and Human Rights Approach: Promoting Sustainable Development Goals through Sport**

## **1. Introduction<sup>1</sup>**

The Bahamas is proud to be hosting the Commonwealth Youth Games in July 2017, the first Caribbean nation ever to host a major multi-sport youth event. These Games come less than two years after world leaders adopted the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* at the United Nations in September 2015 and with it seventeen Sustainable Development Goals.

Reflecting global trends, the Commonwealth Games Federation (CGF) - the governing body for the Commonwealth Games - adopted a new strategy in 2015. This strategy prioritizes inclusivity and bringing peace, sustainability and prosperity to wherever the CGF and its partners operate. The CGF is committed to ensuring that it promotes a positive and enduring commitment to cooperation; and individual and common fulfillment supported by human rights values in Commonwealth Games and Youth Games host communities.

Humanity, equality and destiny, including safeguarding human rights lie at the heart of the CGF's vision. The Bahamas 2017 Commonwealth Youth Games is the first Games within the Commonwealth family since this new strategy and vision came into being. We in The Bahamas therefore have the honor and challenge of delivering an excellent sports event that also leaves a positive social legacy beyond the Games, both at home and throughout the Commonwealth.

The Bahamas 2017 Commonwealth Youth Games is all about people. Our success relies on the Commonwealth's young athletes, the volunteers, the sports officials, our workforce, the local and visiting spectators, local residents, our contractors, the Games Family, and the young people we want to engage and inspire at home, within the Caribbean and throughout the wider Commonwealth. All of these people – young and old, strong and vulnerable alike never mind where in the Community of nations they call home – have inherent rights and freedoms that are enshrined in domestic or international law, and in the best circumstances are recognized in both.

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<sup>1</sup> In drafting this document we acknowledge [Transformation 2022 – The Commonwealth Games Federation Strategic Plan 2015-2022](#); [Approach to Human Rights](#) by Glasgow 2014 Commonwealth Games; and [Human Rights Policy](#) by the Gold Coast 2018

Further, the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (UNGPs) which were adopted in 2011 provide a framework for integrating human rights into the operations of commercial organisations. This UN framework outlines the Government obligation to protect human rights, as well as a corporate (private sector) obligation to respect human rights. The framework also sets out the requirement to provide access to effective remedy when human rights violations occur.

The Bahamas Organising Committee for the 2017 Commonwealth Youth Games has both a moral and legal responsibility to help establish a culture of integrity within its organisation that upholds basic responsibilities of any business to people and the planet. The CGF has also recognised that the Commonwealth Games and Commonwealth Youth Games include significant commercial activities and that therefore the UN Guiding Principles are the appropriate international reference standard for human rights for these Games.

Consistent with domestic and international laws and notably the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (2011) the Local Organizing Committee seeks to respect and support the rights of all the people under the umbrella of the Games mandate in the course of our activities. This document outlines how we will try to make that happen.

## **2. What are human rights and Commonwealth values?**

Human rights are rights inherent in each of us without difference, favour, effort or interest of any kind. Human rights belong to all peoples everywhere no matter what their background or personal circumstance. The modern concept of human rights – founded on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights which was agreed after worldwide consultation just after World War II - entails both rights and obligations on the part of both the individual and the state: the state is required to safeguard, protect and respect freedoms and to fulfil obligations relating to the individual's rights; the individual is also obliged to respect the human rights of others. Human rights are universal, inalienable, indivisible and interdependent; they apply all over the world and should be protected, promoted and respected as a whole. More recently, an expectation has emerged that companies and commercial enterprises including sports bodies should also take steps to actively respect human rights and avoid causing people harm.

Human rights are often poorly understood. They do not belong to any particular group but to everyone, and each of us has a role to play in ensuring the rights of others are respected. Human Rights include civil and political rights - such as the right to vote; the right to a fair trial; freedom from slavery; freedom from discrimination; the right to freedom of religion; the right to a family life; and the rights of children; as well as economic, social and cultural rights - such as the right to an education; the right to health; the right to decent

conditions of work; the right of access to water and sanitation; and the right to an adequate standard of living.

As a member of the Commonwealth, in 2013 The Bahamas came together with other Heads of Government to endorse the [Commonwealth Charter](#). This Charter was agreed after broad consultation among Commonwealth member governments, civil society and the public. The Charter brings together for the first time in a single document “*the values and aspirations which unite the Commonwealth - democracy, human rights and the rule of law*”. The Charter promotes tolerance, respect and human understanding, with a particular concern for the vulnerable, and reminds us that “*respect for the dignity of all human beings is critical to promoting peace and prosperity*”.

The Bahamas has also joined with a majority of countries in the world to ratify the International Bill of Rights (which comprises the *Universal Declaration on Human Rights* and two international human rights Covenants), and treaties such as the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child* (1989). The UN Child Rights Convention is a principal source of inspiration and guidance for the Youth Games and the Organizing Committee’s *Child Safeguarding Policy and Plan*. These rights together with the aspirations found in the Sustainable Development Goals make up the backdrop of values of today’s Commonwealth.

The Organizing Committee of the Bahamas 2017 Commonwealth Youth Games commits to doing its utmost to meet the human rights expectations set out in the Commonwealth Charter, domestic and international human rights norms, and in the UN Guiding Principles.

### **3. Policy Statement**

The first step for commercial operations under the UN Guiding Principles is to publish a human rights policy. This document has been developed to help us communicate our commitment to positively managing our human rights impacts in the planning and delivery of the 2017 Commonwealth Youth Games. The Bahamas Organizing Committee for these games is not politically motivated and does not expect the Games to solve the challenge of fulfilling human rights or sustainable development goals at home or abroad. However, the 2017 Commonwealth Youth Games can and should make a positive contribution to society and do no harm to those around us.

This policy supports one of the CGF’s strategic priorities of its Transformation 2022 strategy to “nurture and develop one of the best governed and well-managed sports movements in the world”. More specifically the CGF seeks to ensure that Commonwealth sport is “underpinned by a strong commitment to, and respect for human rights,

environment and sustainability, health, safety and wellbeing as well as accessibility and inclusivity”.

#### **4. Objectives**

Under this policy our human rights objectives for the planning and delivery of the 2017 Commonwealth Youth Games are:

- To apply the framework of the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights to the management of human rights.
- To comply with its legal obligations under Bahamian and International human rights law.
- To conduct due diligence to avoid complicity in human rights violations.
- To ensure that particular care is taken when dealing with minority or vulnerable groups such as children; people with disabilities; people in precarious livelihood circumstances; and to put child safeguarding systems in place.
- To provide a safe and healthy workplace that safeguards against individual and institutional discrimination whether ad hoc or systemic, and that respects employees’ rights to collective bargaining or to join organisations of their choice.
- To report publicly on our progress, and share our learnings with the CGF and future host cities of the Commonwealth Games and Commonwealth Youth Games.

#### **5. Scope**

This policy applies to the delivery of The Bahamas 2017 Commonwealth Youth Games, inclusive of its workforce, contractors and volunteers, from planning and implementation to review and post-Games activities. The Bahamas 2017 Commonwealth Youth Games Organising Committee also strongly encourages all other stakeholders associated with these Games to observe the terms of this policy. This policy is a companion document to the *Child Safeguarding Policy and Plan*.