Gender equality, sport and the United Nation's system. A historical overview of the slow pace of progress.

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Abstract

The history, milestones and (sluggish) progress toward gender equality within the interconnected movements of sport, international development and human rights are reflective of the broader feminist struggle. In this paper, we focus on how key stakeholders, such as the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the (former) United Nations Office on Sport for Development and Peace (UNOSDP) have worked in partnership with the International Olympic Committee (IOC) and the International Working Group for Women in Sport (IWG) to promote gender equality within and beyond sport. Despite decades of synchronized effort, critics contend that progress is slow and uneven, leaving generations of girls and women marginalized. In this article, we explain the progression toward a renewed initiative to create a UNESCO Global Observatory for Women, Sport, Physical Education and Physical Activity and discuss how the observatory should serve as a nexus of these collective movements by bringing advocacy, research and action together in one platform.

Keywords: Gender, Sport, Feminism, Equality, Development, United Nations

Introduction

Early efforts to support gender equality and battle sex discrimination in sport began alongside the modern Olympic movement, with activists such as Alice Milliat leading the charge to include women athletes in the Olympic Games (Teret 2010). Later, elite athletes such as Babe Didrikson Zaharias, Fanny Blankers-Koen, Wilma Rudolph, Nawal El Moutawakel, Grete Waitz, Katherine Switzer, Hassiba Boulmerka, Billie Jean King and many others pushed the boundaries for women in sport.[1] In the US, Billie Jean King's *Battle of the Sexes* tennis match in 1973 was emblematic of the feminist movement in sport at that time. It took place just a

[1] Throughout this paper, we will rely on binary gender terms such as men/women, boys/girls, male/female. We recognize that gender is not binary, but rather a fluid spectrum of social identities. However, for the sake of clarity and in line with historic terminology, we will use these problematic words. Wherever possible, we will try to use more inclusive language such as "all genders."

year after the landmark Title IX amendment in the United States (US). Title IX prohibited discrimination by sex in all publically funded educational institutions. Because the US sport system is structured through schools, colleges and universities, these institutions were required to demonstrate gender equity in their athletic programmes. Implementation of the ruling was slow and disjointed, but over the past 47 years, participation has soared, with an 1150% increase in women competing in college athletics (Acosta and Carpenter 2014).

International institutions and policies appeared alongside American women's activism in sport. UNESCO's 1978 International Charter on Physical Education, Physical Activity and Sport declared sport as a "fundamental human right" and emphasized that the UN charter had previously called for the prohibition of discrimination by sex (amongst other characteristics, e.g. colour, religion, etc.) (UNESCO 1978). A year later, the UN General Assembly adopted the broader Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), a watershed victory for the feminist human rights movement that serves as a bill of rights for girls and women. The CEDAW has since been ratified by 189 countries, although the US and several Middle Eastern and African states have not signed (Zipp and de Soysa, 2019).

Throughout the 1980s and 1990s athletes, activists and organizations advanced the cause in fits and starts, often through lawsuits challenging compliance with new regulations that prevent sex discrimination (e.g. Title IX). Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) such as Billie Jean King's Women's Sport Foundation (WSF) led efforts to improve opportunities for girls and women as athletes, coaches and leaders in the sport industry. Amongst these efforts, the 1994 Brighton Declaration was a pivotal moment. The declaration was drafted at the first global conference on gender equality in sport in the United Kingdom (UK). It serves as a "bill of rights" on girls and women in sport. The declaration is now signed by more than 550 organizations around the world. At the Brighton conference, which brought together women and men from all over the world for the first time in a spirit of sisterhood in sport, the International Working Group on women and sport (IWG) was established. The IWG is now a UNESCO partner.

The Brighton Declaration created a new momentum, alongside the broader third wave feminist movement that launched the gender and sport movement into a new era. Efforts moved beyond eliminating discrimination into more actively promoting gender equality through better opportunities, more support/funding and better coordination across sectors. At this time, the gender equality in sport movement increasingly intersected with the international development sector. In 2000, when the UN launched the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the emerging sport for development and peace (SDP) movement was already underway. The formalisation of the MDGs, which included gender equality and empowerment specifically, provided a structure for SDP actors to focus on gender and pursue relevant funding. (15 years later, the goals were revised and expanded into the Sustainable Development Goals (SGDs)). The United Nations (UN) launched the UNOSDP in 2001, further aligning the international development movement with sport for development. (The office was closed in 2017, shifting the coordination of SDP to the IOC.) The UN declared 2005 the "International Year of Sport and Physical Education (IYSPE)," generating more interest and funding in SDP. Alongside the UN initiatives, the IOC announced their Agenda 2020, which included a stronger focus on SDP, promoting sport for health and a goal to "foster gender equality," (IOC 2014, 7).

Amidst these initiatives and organizations formed in the 21st century, UNESCO, the IWG, the IOC and other key stakeholders were holding meetings, conferences and making declarations to further gender equality in sport. Yet proposals and programmes often languished in seemingly endless debate and discussion, delaying action and denying opportunities for girls and women around the world (Zipp and de Soysa 2019). Throughout a series of meetings by UNESCO ministers for sport (Ministers and Senior Officials Responsible for Physical Education and Sport (MINEPS)) leading up to and following the Athens 2004 Olympics, the idea of the global observatory was proposed, discussed and voted on. However, the concept was never pursued further until a 2017 MINEPS meeting in Kazan, Russia. There, the Kazan Action Plan (KAP) included the launch of a feasibility study for the observatory. Two years later, the Swiss government agreed to conduct the feasibility study in partnership with UNESCO.

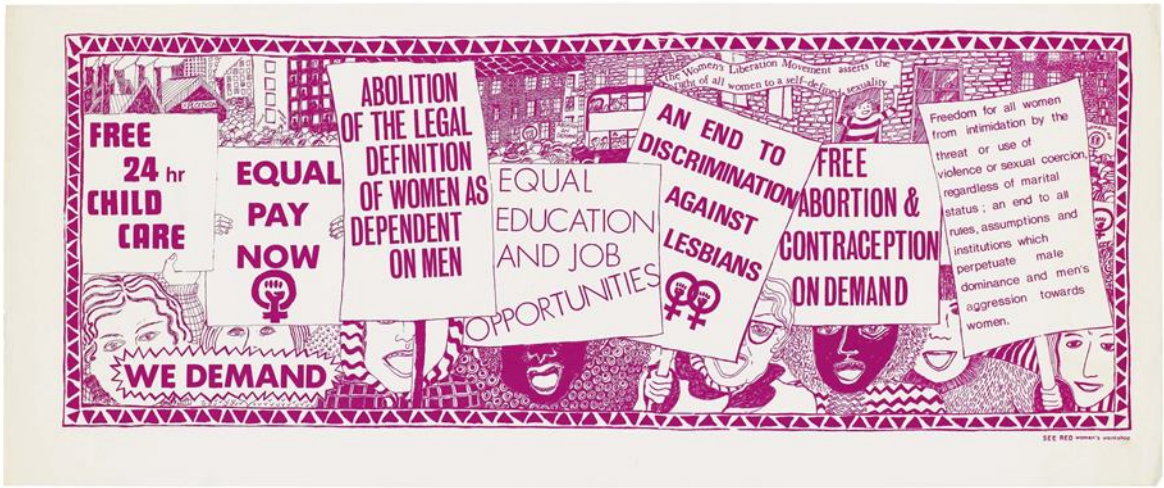
The observatory is a notable benchmark in the many years of struggle to give girls and women their rightful place in the world of sport and physical activity. This paper will explore the lead up to the observatory, through the interconnected roadmaps of organizations such as UNESCO, the IWG and the IOC. We examine how milestones such as the Brighton Declaration, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the Olympic Agenda 2020 have changed the landscape for gender equality in sport and how the Kazan Action Plan (KAP) and proposed Global observatory might further these intertwined movements.

Gender Equality

Regrettably, the evolution of the movement for gender equality is painfully slow. What indeed is gender equality? The meaning of gender and the meaning of equality are open to interpretation and may vary significantly, in both extent and form, from country to country. This paper will use the UNESCO definition of gender equality, as stated in the UNESCO Priority Gender Equality Action Plan, 2014-2021 (UNESDOCa 2019, 12). "For UNESCO, gender equality refers to the equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities of women and men and girls and boys. It implies that the interests, needs and priorities of both women and men are taken into consideration, recognizing the diversity of different groups of women and men. Gender equality is a human rights principle, a precondition for sustainable, people-centred development, and it is a goal in and of itself. UNESCO's vision of gender equality is in line with relevant international instruments such as the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. It is also informed by the reflections concerning the post-2015 development framework." This definition, which positions gender equality as a human rights principle, equates with the definition of sport as a human right which is established in the fundamental principles of Olympism in the Olympic Charter (Olympic Charter 2015, 13).: "The practice of sport is a human right. Every individual must have the possibility of practising sport, without discrimination of any kind and in the Olympic spirit, which requires mutual understanding with a spirit of friendship, solidarity and fair play. In addition, UNESCO's International Charter of Physical Education, Physical Activity and Sport recognises that "the practice of physical education, physical activity and sport is a fundamental right for all." All of the above is also covered in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of the United Nations, adopted in 1948. However, there is still a long way to go to ensure the adequate protection of "Women's Rights" in and through sport. There is also a lot more scope for research, which would study the history of the global women's rights movement and its interactions with the global women and sport movements. Just like the

terms "gender equality," the terms "human rights" are represented, misrepresented and used in myriad ways.

On 8th March 2019, International Women's Day (IWD), women took to the streets in large numbers around the world. "The Future is Female" says one placard in the streets of London (The Telegraph 2019). But how far away is this "future?" Women took to the streets for worldwide “women’s marches” in the previous two years and as far back as the 1900s when they marched for voting rights, rights to work, better pay, better work conditions, against sexual harassment, for reproductive rights, for human rights and more (Figure 1).
Figure 1. British poster for women’s day 1974 (Bengal 2017 Bengal Rebecca. 2017.



Notwithstanding that 2019 marks 100 years of American women's suffrage, the same demands are voiced over and over again but are still ignored and unmet, around the world. 8th March was first established in 1910 as a day to honour "the movement for women's rights and to build support for achieving universal suffrage for women" (UN WOMENa 2019). Ladd (2017, 1), in his article "International Women's Day 2017: How Bold is Bold?" acknowledges that:

> International Women's Day is a time to recognize the tremendous progress made in the last century on women's rights because of the efforts and sacrifices of women and women's groups. In almost all fields - politics, business, science, sport and the arts - and in many parts of the world, women are now recognized and compensated more fairly for their leadership and contribution to human progress. But.... there is a huge but. In all fields and in all parts of the world, women and girls still face daily discrimination, stereotypes, verbal abuse and often violence."

This statement is clearly backed up by the fact that, on 14th June 2019, women in one of the richest countries in the world, Switzerland, organised a nationwide strike demanding equal pay (Swissinfo 2019).

The UN addresses this question with its 2030 agenda which aims to build "a world in which every woman and girl enjoys full gender equality and all legal, social and economic barriers to their empowerment have been removed" (UN 2015, 4). SDG 5 - Gender Equality as an independent standalone goal, underlies its importance and highlights its cross sectorial significance for all the other goals. Zero poverty, health and wellbeing, environment, quality

education for all or any of the other goals will not be achieved without specific attention to gender equality. This understanding is the founding principle for all global efforts that are being made with the aim of achieving sustainable development. However, it is worrying to note what Goetz (2015) points out "the United Nations is a crucial arena in which to set universal standards on women's rights. But in recent meetings of the Commission of the Status of Women (CSW) an increasingly coordinated misogynist backlash has been building unconventional alliances that transcend familiar geopolitical divisions and draw on the resources of religious organizations". The research done by the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD) identifies three serious threats to gender equality: widespread misogyny on all levels; discordant gender definitions and continued stereotyping; and strong, increasing and unconventional backlash forces (Kaufman & Esquivel, 2015) Despite the tremendous advancements made in certain areas, it is clear that "backlash forces are strong" which makes one even wonder "whether there is a new "cold war" on women's rights" (Kaufman & Esquivel 2015). The current series of extremely tough anti-abortion laws passed in several states of the USA, and the threat at the United Nations from the Trump administration and its allies to veto a resolution aimed at preventing rape in conflict situations) support these reasons for concern (BBCa 2019. Do these same threats that turn back the clock on women's rights also jeopardise women's rights to sport and physical education? Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, Under-Secretary-General of the UN and Executive Director of UN Women says that it does: "At the same time, the world of sport remains plagued by many of the same gender inequalities that we see more broadly; issues such as unequal pay, gender-based violence, a lack of targeted investments and negative stereotypes and social norms" (UN WOMENb 2019)

Sport, Women & the Brighton Declaration

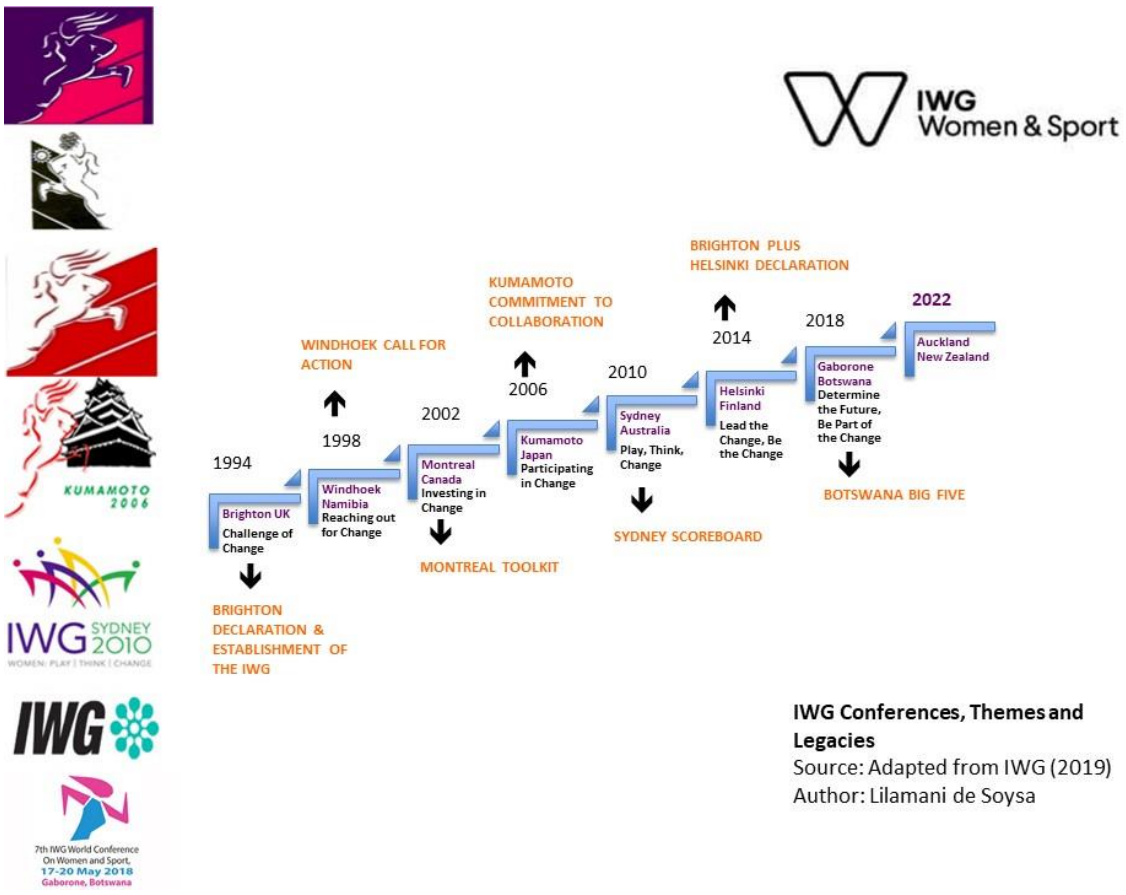
Consequently, the struggle for equality for women in and through sport is a movement that has been growing steadily, albeit slowly, over the years. This movement is clearly impacted and influenced by the global political and social movements demanding for change. Singular efforts by exceptional beings like Alice Milliat, Billie Jean King and others paved the way to the 1994 first World Conference on Women and Sport, held in Brighton in the UK. It was organised jointly by the (GB) Sports Council and supported by the British Olympic Committee and the International Olympic Committee (IOC). As stated previously, this conference produced the Brighton Declaration of Women and Sport (revised and updated in 2014 as the Brighton Plus Helsinki Declaration). At the Brighton Conference, the IWG was born and the decision was made to have a follow-up conference every 4 years. Windhoek (Namibia), Montreal (Canada), Kumamoto (Japan), Sydney (Australia), Helsinki (Finland), Gaborone (Botswana) have hosted the world conference and in 2022 it will be the turn of Auckland (New Zealand) (Figure 2). The Brighton Plus Helsinki Declaration invites "governmental, non-governmental organisations and all those institutions involved in sport to apply the Principles set out in the Declaration by developing appropriate policies, structures and mechanisms which:

- ensure that all women and girls have the opportunity to participate in sport in a safe and supportive environment which preserves the rights, dignity and respect of the individual;
- increase the involvement of women in sport at all levels and in all functions and roles,

- ensure that the knowledge, experiences and values of women contribute to the development of sport;
- promote the recognition by women of the intrinsic value of sport and its contribution to personal development and healthy lifestyle." (WSIa 2019, 1).

The Declaration aims "to develop a sporting culture that enables and values the full involvement of women in every aspect of sport" (WSIa. 2019, 1). There is ample scope for further research on the direct global impact of the Brighton Declaration, nevertheless, as Hargreaves (2000) points out, "the Brighton Conference and Declaration of 1994 provided a channel of empowerment for women working for female sport in countries with a wide geographic spread." But this is still not enough. Recent developments such as the legal battles launched by the American women's soccer team for equal pay and the South African runner Castar Semenya's battle to safeguard the integrity of her natural body are two examples of discrimination and disregard for the rights, dignity and respect of the individual (Zipp and de Soysa 2019). The shocking sexual abuse scandal in USA gymnastics, surrounding the national team doctor who abused young athletes for over a quarter of a century, sentenced in 2018 to 40 - 175 years in prison, brought to light the glaring connections between sport, misogyny, dysfunctional organisations and the heedless violation of the rights of the female athlete. (Levenson 2018).

Figure 2. IWG timeline – conferences, themes and legacies. Source: Adapted from IWG (2019). Author: Lilamanide Soysa.



Olympic movement, Sport for Development and Agenda 2020

From Ancient Olympia to the modern Olympics, female participation has been regarded with hostility. The modern Olympic movement began with its roots firmly planted in this inhospitable terrain. The heroic campaign of Alice Milliat and the Fédération Sportive Féminine Internationale (FSFI) to get athletics into the Olympics is a well-established episode in women's sport history. The Women's Olympic Games, which Alice Milliat organised, paved the way for the participation of women at the Olympics. She coordinated four Women's Olympic games between 1922 and 1934, providing a platform for hundreds of athletes and thousands of spectators to celebrate athletic achievements of women. Kietlinski (2011) speaking of the Japanese athlete Hitomi Kinue, who participated in the Women's Games and won Japan's first Olympic medal says "The Women's Olympics represented the pinnacle of competition for women's track and field at the time."

Milliat faced serious opposition from the IOC and the IAAF and eventually ceding to their protests renamed the event the Women's World Games in 1926. Nevertheless, Milliat's negotiations with the IOC saw the inclusion of five track and field events at the 1928 Amsterdam Games: 100m, 4x100, 800m, high jump and discus. Since then, many men's events have been joined by the corresponding women's events, however, some taking over 100 years to do so. For example, men's boxing was added to the Olympic schedule in 1904, with women's boxing only added in 2012. On the winter Olympic side, men's ski jump became an event in 1924, but women's ski jump was not permitted until 2014.

The IOC, which is the supreme authority for international elite sport, with its strong influence and power, stepped more firmly into the gender equality movement, when it created the IOC Women and Sport Working Group the year after the Brighton Conference (it became a fully fledged Commission in 9 years later, in 2004). In 1996 the first IOC World Conference on Women and Sport was organised in Lausanne, Switzerland, thus giving its own momentum to the movement for better equity through sport. Since then, the trend in the participation of women in the Games and in the structures of international sport federations shows growth. Nevertheless, as research shows, "despite the increased participation of women athletes in the Olympics, greater representation of women in the IOC and significant improvements in policy, leadership, advocacy and participation for women in sport outside of the Olympics, gains for sporting women have been uneven globally and still are not fully on par with the participation and leadership opportunities for men in sport" (Donnelly and Donnelly 2013; Lenskjy 2012).

In parallel, IOC and UN relations have been progressing slowly but surely with several UN agencies signing memorandums of understanding (MOU) with the IOC. The IOC has contributed significant resources, in particular to "the World Food Programme (WFP), the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and, mainly through NGOs and National Olympic Committees, the UNAIDS" (Olympism in Action, 2013, 8). In 2000, the year the Millennium Development Goals were adopted, the 2nd IOC Women and Sport Conference was held in Paris and its recommendations invited "intergovernmental organizations, and UNESCO in particular, to raise awareness about the positive influence of CEDAW articles on the development of physical activity and sport for girls and women" (Japanese Center for Researc on Women in Sport n.d.). The recommendations specifically highlight the role that UNESCO can play in the advancement of gender equality in sport. UNESCO's potential to impact international sport through the IOC is established, sport for development joins ranks with international elite sport. The movement for gender equality in sport has now interconnected with the international development movement.

The SDP movement, which is sometimes called the sport for development (SFD) movement, emerged in the late 1990s. Athletes turned advocates, such as Norwegian skier Johan Koss, began raising money to support fellow Olympic athletes from the Global South. Soon after, Koss and his community of athletes created Olympic Aid, an NGO devoted to delivering sport programmes for children in refugee camps (Kidd 2008). Eventually, corporations such as Nike joined in, along with various charities. In 2001, Adolf Ogi was appointed the first UN Special Advisor on Sport for Development and Peace. The concept that sport could serve as a platform to support development goals was catching fire and becoming more formalized (Zipp 2017). Two years later, Switzerland hosted the first major conference on sport and development. From that conference, the Swiss Academy for Development (SAD) launched the web platform www.sportanddev.org, which has become and expanded database of the SFD network, including researchers and practitioners, as well as a resource for tools, news and research (Swiss Academy for Development n.d.)

Interest, awareness and funding for SDP initiatives grew alongside the UN's launch of the MDGs (2000) and the updated SDGs (2015). The goal of gender equality in both the MDGs and SDGs provided structure for organizations to promote sport-based initiatives for girls and women. Related gender components of other goals, such as universal education, were also a driving force behind the growth of girl and women focused programming. The Swiss Academy lists gender equality amongst its primary SDP themes on the sportanddev.org platform. NGO's such as the Women Win Foundation, which works with 26 partners across the Global South, developed programmes and funding aimed to empower girls and women through sport (Women Win n.d.).

In fact, a sub-sector on female empowerment, girls' and women's rights, gender-based violence (GBV) and various gendered health education programmes (e.g. Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights (SRHR)) developed within the SDP movement. These efforts helped form what SDP scholar Lindsay Hayhurst coined as the "girling of development," (Hayhurst 2011, 532). In other words, girls are often placed at the centre (or as the target) of development initiatives because empowering and/or protecting girls can have profound societal benefits. For example, preventing child marriages and keeping adolescent girls in school can delay child-bearing and lift girls (now women) and their families out of poverty. These narratives are powerful and many are based on strong evidence. However, research on exactly how SDP plays a role in improving the lives for these girls and women is still lacking, with critical researchers calling for more in-depth and larger scale studies (Chawansky and Hayhurst 2015; Zipp and Nauright 2018; Oxford and McLachlan 2018; Saavedra 2008).

Despite the momentum of the SDP movement, the power of sport to support development goals is unclear. Many critical researchers are concerned about the neo-liberal approach to SDP that often marginalizes girls and women, while overpowering local voices and failing to address the larger post-colonial factors that often create the very problems the movement is aiming to resolve (Chawansky and Hayhurst 2015; Forde and Frisby 2015; Oxford 2018; Zipp and Nauright 2018). How this power is harnessed and by whom are the questions that have to be answered.

In 2009, the IOC joined the ranks of the United Nations when, it was granted permanent observer status by the UN General Assembly, with the right to speak at General Assembly meetings. International sport gets unprecedented recognition as a potential partner for global development.

In 2010, the first UN-IOC Forum entitled "The Importance of Partnership" took place in Lausanne, Switzerland where the participants affirmed, amongst other recommendations, "the importance of sport as a vehicle for the achievement of gender equality" and to strive to increase women in leadership positions within the Olympic Committee and the wider world of sport (Olympic.org(a), 4)

Three years later, in 2012, at the 5th IOC World Conference on Women and Sport, which brought forth The Los Angeles Declaration (IOC 2019, 2) the following is specifically requested:

> vii. That the IOC must leverage its historic achievement of Permanent Observer status to the United Nations to contribute to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, especially as they relate to gender development and the empowerment of women;
> viii. That the IOC should establish closer working partnerships with the UN and its agencies, especially UN Women, and share in the work of the UN Committee on the Status of Women in order to foster its own gender equality agenda. Similar partnerships should be established at local levels between national sports organisations, UN country teams and civil society;

In the same year (2012), the IOC signed an MOU with UN Women, a new organisation established the previous year. In April 2014, five years after it obtained permanent observer status, an agreement was signed between the UN and the IOC to strengthen collaboration at the very highest level. That same year, in December 2014 the IOC adopted its Agenda 2020, which is its "strategic roadmap for the future of the Olympic Movement" (Olympic.org(b), 2019).

The Olympic Agenda 2020 (IOC 2014, 15) states its gender equality plans as follows:

> Recommendation 11: Foster gender equality
> 1. The IOC to work with the International Federations to achieve 50 per cent female participation in the Olympic Games and to stimulate women's participation and involvement in sport by creating more participation opportunities at the Olympic Games.
> 2. The IOC to encourage the inclusion of mixed-gender team events"

Three years later, in 2017, the IOC approved a major review to study gender equality within the Olympic movement to be carried out by the IOC's Women in Sport and Athletes' Commissions (Butler 2017). The review came up with 25 gender equality recommendations that touch different aspects of Olympic sport. According to the President of the IOC, Thomas Bach, the recommendations should lead to effective change and the respect of human rights. It was the same year, 2017, when the UNOSDP office was closed and the leadership of the global SDP movement was shifted to the IOC's new Public Affairs and Social Development through Sport commission. "As the leader of the Olympic Movement, the IOC has an important responsibility to take action when it comes to gender equality - a basic human right of profound importance and a fundamental principle of the Olympic Charter." (Olympic.org(c) 2019.

Once again this reference to "human rights", which seem so elusive and impossible to pin down. Words and promises, implemented at a snail's pace, are not enough because generations of girls and young women get left behind. In particular in sport and physical education, where young girls face enormous social, physical, structural and cultural barriers. Restrictive gender norms, religious regulations and lack of opportunities prevent millions of girls and women full access to this fundamental human right (Chawansky and Hayhurst 2015; Forde and Frisby 2015; Zipp and Nauright, 2018). Opportunities for children to play sport has a long-term impact on lifelong participation. The girls left behind today are more likely to avoid sport throughout their lives. Furthermore, if the IOC wants to meet its stated goals of more female athletes in the Olympic Games, they will need to support talent development of elite athletes. The time lapse between decisions, signing MOUs and implementing are crucial years where young people may be deprived of accessing or progressing in their sport(s). Access denied to children and young people today have an important impact on performance and hinder the development of future world-class athletes. In 2017, the MINEPS met in Kazan to produce the KAP, which includes a new proposal to address this concern and other gender equality issues.

UNESCO and the Kazan Action Plan

To better understand where UNESCO and its partners fit into this larger puzzle, we will examine the history of UNESCO and gender equality in sport, leading up to the passing of the KAP. In 1976, UNESCO created the International Conference of Ministers and Senior Officials Responsible for Physical Education and Sport (MINEPS). MINEPS is responsible for creating an international strategy in the field of quality physical education and sport as well as for mobilising governments, the sport movement, research institutions and NGOs to implement impactful policies and actions globally. MINEPS has played a significant role in the creation, in 1978, of the UNESCO Charter on Physical Education and Sport (UNESCOa 2019) as well as the creation of the Intergovernmental Committee for Physical Education and Sport (CIGEPS). CIGEPS was also established in 1978 with its goal to "to promote the role and value of sport and its inclusion in public policy" (UNESCOb 2019). Six MINEPS conferences have been held around the world until today (1976 Paris, France; 1988 Moscow, Russian Federation; 1999 Punta del Este, Uruguay; 2004 Athens, Greece; 2013 Berlin, Germany and 2017 Kazan, Russian Federation).

Through the work of MINEPS and CIGEPS, the UNESCO Charter on Physical Education and Sport was revised in 1991 to state that physical education and sport were a "fundamental right for all." The UN and UNESCO specifically, took more leadership on sport and human rights in the early and mid 2000s. In 2001, Kofi Anan, Secretary General of the UN, established the UNOSDP in Geneva. In 2004, the first International Day of Sport and Peace was celebrated and 2005 was declared IYSPE with the specific aim of encouraging the sport world to help achieve the MDGs. By 2015, when the SDGs replaced the MDGs, UNESCO and the UNOSDP were key players in supporting the SDP movement.

The UN together with the SDP community have long recognized and strived for the promotion of sport as a valuable tool for development and peace as well as empowerment of women and girls. This is reiterated strongly in the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which specifies that, “Sport is also an important enabler of sustainable development. We recognize the growing contribution of sport to the realization of development and peace in its promotion of tolerance and respect and the contributions it

makes to the empowerment of women and of young people, individuals and communities as well as to health, education and social inclusion objectives." (UNa 2019).

In 2015, the Charter was revised again in order to recognise sport as an important enabler of the goals for international development and peace. It specifically mentions gender equality and connects the SDGs to sport and physical education. In the words of the UNESCO Director General, Irina Bokova "The adoption of the revised Charter should mark a shift away from words towards action, from policy intent to implementation. It sets the tone for a new international sport policy debate, which should now focus on the exchange of good practice, education and training programmes, capacity development, and advocacy. This is also a strong recognition of physical education as a driver for promoting gender equality, social inclusion, non-discrimination and sustained dialogue in our societies" (UNESCOc 2019).

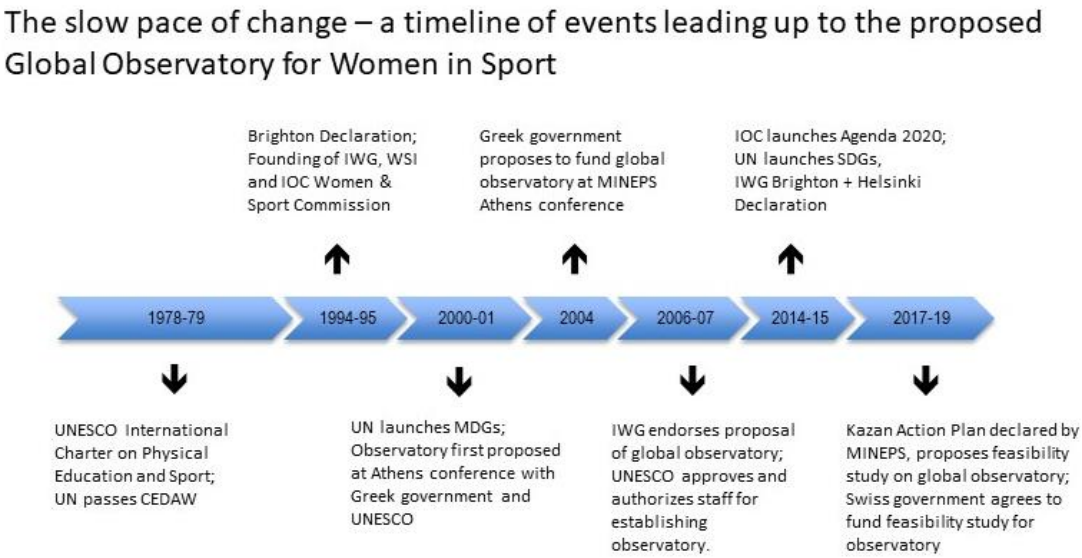
Two years following this statement, MINEPS VI was held in Kazan in the Russian Federation where the KAP was drafted and approved. The KAP can be hailed as the "foundation of the global framework for leveraging sport for development and peace" (Müller-Wirth 2018). As a "a tool for aligning international and national policy in the fields of physical education, physical activity and sport with the United Nations 2030 Agenda, the Kazan Action Plan addresses the needs and objectives identified in the UN Action Plan on SDP" (Müller-Wirth 2018). It is the KAP that will "ensure better coherence and synergies within the UN system, as well as a more effective mobilization of Member States and partners" (Müller-Wirth 2018). Consequently, the KAP supports the following 5 actions, in order to stimulate multi-stakeholder cooperation at international and national levels:

> 1. elaborate an advocacy tool presenting evidence-based arguments for investments in physical education, physical activity and sport;
> 2. develop common indicators for measuring the contribution of physical education, physical activity and sport to prioritised SDGs and targets;
> 3. unify and further develop international standards supporting sport ministers' interventions in the field of sort integrity (in correlation with the International Convention against Doping in Sport)
> ***4. conduct a feasibility study on the establishment of a Global Observatory for Women, Sport, Physical Education and Physical Activity;*** (UNESCO Digital Library 2019, 3). (emphasis added)

Where IWG, IOC and UNESCO meet

The idea of establishing a global observatory has been around for many years, since 2001 but more concretely at least since it was approved, by the UNESCO General Conference in 2007 (UNESDOCc 2019). In August 2001, Athens was home to an international conference titled "The Position of Women in the Administration of Sport", which adopted the Declaration of Athens, which recommended that an observatory should be established, in collaboration with UNESCO. The Greek conference came in the wake of other conferences and forums such as the Brighton Conference on Women and Sport in 1994, followed by the Windhoek conference in 1998. In the meantime, the IOC had created its Women and Sport Group and the UN had launched the MDGs (Figure 3).

Figure 3. Timeline of events leading up to the Global Observatory for Women, Sport, Physical Education and Physical Activity.



Initially, the role of the observatory was to "evaluate progress made at national and international level on the promotion of women in all areas of sport" (UNESDOCc 2019, 4). At MINEPS IV in Athens, the Greek government undertook the responsibility of establishing the UNESCO observatory as well as financing it. An agreement was signed between UNESCO and the Greek government. Unfortunately, this agreement was never activated and the practical launch of the observatory was delayed and is yet to become operational.

Though the reasons for wishing to establish such an observatory have evolved over the past 10 years, they remain valid today and prevail within the strategic priorities of UNESCO. Therefore, when the CIGEPS decided for the MINEPS VI meeting held in Kazan, Russia on 14th and 15th July 2017, to "focus on the development of a call for action to implement the commitments of ministers expressed in the Declaration of Berlin and expectations and norms embodied in the International Charter of Physical Education, Physical Activity and Sport in the context of the Sustainable Development Goals / the 2030 Agenda", it resulted in the KAP. The KAP emerged as a framework that links all three documents, with a specific action (Action 4) - conduct a feasibility study on the establishment of a Global observatory for Women, Sport, Physical Education and Physical Activity. The KAP also emerges as the only framework that brings together the UN system and its member states, the women and sport movement and the Olympic movement.

The KAP was adopted on 15th July 2017 by MINEPS VI. The idea of establishing a global observatory was revived and the task of conducting the feasibility study on the hosting and running of the observatory became incumbent upon UNESCO member states. At the time of writing this article, the state of Switzerland has committed to financing the feasibility study and UNESCO together with relevant women and sport organisations are working to get the tender for the feasibility study off the ground.

Conclusion

We hope this paper helps explain the journey of gender equality within sport, SDP and human rights. For generations, the intertwined feminist movements in sport, human rights and international development have made slow, but steady progress toward gender equality. All genders have benefited from the gains made through these movements. Yet, there is still so much further to go. This slow, often disjointed march has also left millions of girls and women behind, with rights and advancements coming along too late to fully benefit their lives and families. One hundred years ago (1919) women in the United States gained the right to vote, yet American women today are marching in the streets to protect their reproductive health rights, demand equal pay and to voice their concern over popular acceptance of misogyny displayed by their President. On a global stage, gender equality activists were dismayed this year when the UN Security Council, led by the US Ambassador, removed language in a resolution that protects and supports rape survivors in war zones (BBCa, 2019). The question looms large – how far have we really come?

Whilst we share this concern, we also take a more forward-looking perspective and ask, what next? For the immediate future, the next step in drawing these parallel movements tighter together is the proposed Global Observatory for Women, Sport, Physical Education and Physical Activity. Certainly, the observatory is not a cure-all, but it is an important step in the right direction. The timing and placement of the observatory is key. In 2020, the Olympic Agenda 2020 will come to its conclusion and the Olympic Games will be held in Tokyo. The Olympic Games brings visibility and credibility to women's sport, with events like women's gymnastics taking centre stage. Politically speaking, critical elections in the US and UK, including the turmoil over Brexit are all unfolding in the coming months and years. The location of the observatory is also relevant, with Switzerland committed to funding the feasibility study and well positioned to unite entities across the three movements. Switzerland is an important global home for; Olympic sport (IOC, international sport federations), human rights (UN member organizations (e.g. UNESCO) and international development (UN Development Programme, SAD, IOC commission on sport for development).

Timing and location are important, but what should the observatory do? Many organizations already exist to support girls and women in sport, yet the observatory has a unique capacity to do more across these inter-related sectors. We propose several key aims the observatory should be designed to conduct: *education, research, public engagement, advocacy, promoting inclusion and coordination across/within sectors.* In terms of *education*, the observatory can conduct workshops, seminars and develop resources for leaders and other end-users in sport. Furthermore, disseminating education materials from and across related networks should be a priority. This network would include relevant partners from the UN system and its member states, the women and sport organisations, universities, international sport and para sport organisations, SDP movement, youth organisations, and corporate supporters. A high level of engagement and commitment from member states, that are ultimately responsible for the KAP, would make every difference.

The education programming and resources should be rooted in evidence-based *research*. High quality research is vital to effectively engaging in all of the other aims listed above. Toward that end, the proposed observatory is expected to support critical research on gender equality and sport. From bio-mechanic research on athletic performance to understanding gender norms in sport to critical perspectives on gender and SDP, this research should cut across all sectors of the corresponding movements. Funding and support for such research

should remain as free as possible from corporate or political influences and be available open-access to the public. Beyond academic research, the observatory should conduct and support monitoring and evaluation activities. Furthermore, in line with ongoing research calls from academics, the perspectives of minorities, people from the Global South, people with disabilities, the LGBTQ community and other marginalized groups should be included. In particular, SDP research should prioritize subaltern voices of local scholars (Lindsey, et al. 2017).

The value of research and education programmes can be enhanced through *public engagement*. One of the observatory's tasks should be to translate complicated research into understandable articles and resources for non-academic audiences, such as coaches, athletes and grassroots practitioners. Overall, raising awareness and promoting dialogue on relevant issues, new developments, policy information, campaigns and achievements should be a primary role of the observatory. Essentially, it can serve as a clearinghouse for sharing information within its partnership network and the general public. This role is further defined in the framework from MINEPS VI. Publishing news and material, hosting conferences, conducting workshops and running media/social media campaigns are some ways in which the observatory might engage with the public. Additionally, campaigns featuring prominent figures, athletes and role models in sport could be an inspirational approach to public engagement.

Building from pubic engagement, the observatory should actively *advocate* for policies, campaigns, initiatives, opportunities, organizations and individuals that promote gender equality in sport. Such advocacy cuts across all three movements and could be critical in speeding up the slow pace of change. The observatory would be partnered and linked to very influential systems and organisations, within the UN and the Olympic systems. Advocacy from such a well-connected organization would carry legitimacy in both worlds.

For example, the observatory could advocate for closing the gender pay gap by supporting the US women's national team in football as they sue for equal pay (Zipp and de Soysa 2019). Such advocacy could extend beyond that particular team and garner support for better financing of girls and women's sports around the world, including development, promotion and creating opportunities for women in leadership roles.

The observatory could weigh in on other contentious issues, such as the International Association of Athletics Federation (IAAF) rule preventing South African runner Caster Semenya from competing without hormone altering drugs. At the time of writing, the UN Human Rights Council had expressed support for Ms. Semenya, calling the IAAF rule "humiliating," (BBCb 2019). Although IOC President Thomas Bach expressed his "sympathy" for Ms. Semenya, the official IOC stance is to respect the new IAAF rule and subsequent ruling by the international Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS) (Oteng 2019). The observatory could be a strong voice against the unfair, sexist treatment of Ms. Semenya because of its unique standing as a link between the UN and Olympic systems.

As a black, lesbian athlete from the Global South, Caster Semenya represents many of the intersectional identity and diversity concerns that are often marginalized within feminist movements. The observatory should be a platform for promoting *inclusion* within the women and sport movement and across the parallel sectors. A recurrent criticism of the international women and sport movement is that it is driven through western, northern ideologies that do not take into account the diverse heterogeneous experiences of women from around the

world. According to feminist scholar Jennifer Hargreaves, the “future of a global sport feminism and the Women's International Sport Movement lies in the potential to unite women across existing divisions of culture - in relation to ability, age, class, race, religion and sexuality,” (2000, 233). There is no doubt that stories from the global north have paved the way and sustained the global women and sport movement but stories of role models like Hassiba Boulmerka, Nawal El Moutawakel, Dutee Chand, for example, seem like peripheral stories in women and sport history. Their impact and real contribution to the empowerment of women is yet to be researched.

Similarly, in the history of women's rights, Eleanor Roosevelt would stand out as a principal defender of women's rights at the time the UN Charter was being formalised. However, recent research by two young researchers from the Centre for International Studies and Diplomacy (CISD), Fatima, Sator and Elise Luhr Dietrichson found out that it was not the Western women that got women's rights into the UN Charter, but women from the global south led by Professor Bertha Lutz from Brazil (Braithwaite 2016). "Agency from outside the Great Powers was critical as women from non-western countries played a pivotal role in ensuring that women were explicitly mentioned in the United Nations charter. Female delegates from Brazil, Dominican Republic, Uruguay and female participants from Mexico, Venezuela and Australia promoted feminist views that demanded an explicit reference to women’s rights in the Charter. Research reveals that it was one person in particular that would not stand back, that continued to claim the need to reference women, it was the Brazilian delegate Dr Bertha Lutz. In her memoirs she assert that other female delegates from the United States and the United Kingdom told her "not to ask for anything for women in the Charter since that would be a very vulgar thing to do”. Luckily for the world, Bertha Lutz was not willing to back down on her demands on the reference to women" (SOAS 2019).

The observatory should ensure that the decision-making structures put in place and the activities undertaken represent diverse global perspectives so that actions effectively affect every "body.” As Mona Eltahawy aptly puts it, “Misogyny has not been completely wiped out anywhere. Rather, it resides on a spectrum, and our best hope for eradicating it globally is for each of us to expose and to fight against local versions of it, in the understanding that by doing so we advance the global struggle” (2015, 29). The Observatory should be a global voice, which echoes local voices. A "glocalised" voice for equality in sport.

Finally, *coordinating* across and within different sectors, systems and organizations can help to further unify the broader movement for gender equality in sport. The observatory should serve as a platform to bring all stakeholders together, creating stronger links and helping to synergize the larger movement. For example, the observatory could bring stakeholders together to create a (more) unified understanding of what constitutes gender equality in sport, one that is inclusive of all voices and respects cultural differences. The observatory should not only work with international organizations, it should also seek partnership directly with member states and sport federations that work with larger entities such as UNESCO and the IOC. *In essence, it could be the role of the observatory to weave the thread of gender equality across the varied systems and organizations that interconnect with the gender equality movement in sport.*

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