

REPORT

Round Table Meeting

Organized by CEQUIN & supported by UNDP

'Road map for Women's Soccer in India: Challenges and Strategies for Action'

1st October, 2013, New Delhi

Prepared on behalf of CEQUIN

By

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INTRODUCTION

SPORTS: A HUMAN RIGHT

“...sports is a birthright. We humans are the only species on earth that take part in sport and we deserve to have access to the joys that sports bring.”¹

-Anita DeFrantz, Executive Board, International Olympic Committee and former Olympic medalist

International Law recognizes sport as a basic human right. The right to play sports has its roots in the bedrock of human right legislation, the **Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR)**², however it was only with the adoption of the **United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization’s (UNESCO) International Charter of Physical Education and Sport (ICPES)** that a clear and specific right was granted.³

This right paved the way for specific obligations being imposed upon the State by International Law, among them, obligations with regard to youth and sport and women and sport. The **Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)** imposes an obligation to ensure that the child’s education includes development of the child’s personality, talents and physical ability⁴. With regard to women, the **Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)** places accountability on the State to take appropriate action to ensure the fulfillment of the right to engage in sports.⁵

Furthermore, international law has stepped beyond merely granting rights and imposing obligations, it has started recognizing the importance of sports as a tool for development. *“Over the past decade, there has been a growing understanding that access to and participation in sport and physical education is not only a right in itself, but can also be used to promote a number of important*

¹ As contained in ‘*Women 2000 and Beyond*’, Division for the Advancement of Women of the United Nations Secretariat, New York, 2008, p.16 and http://www.huffingtonpost.com/anita-l-defrantz/stop-child-abuse-in-sport_b_3241122.html

² Art. 24 UDHR- “Everyone has the right to...leisure”, Art. 25 (1) UDHR- “Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself...”, Art. 26 (2) UDHR “Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality...” and Art. 27 (1) UDHR “Everyone has the right freely to participate in the cultural life of the community” as set out in <http://www.un.org/en/documents/udhr/>. UDHR was adopted in 1948.

³ Art. 1 ICPES establishes that “The practice of physical education and sport is a fundamental right for all” and Article 1.1. ICPES goes on to elaborate that “Every human being has a fundamental right of access to physical education and sport, which are essential for the full development of his personality”. This legislation was adopted by the General Conference at its twentieth session, Paris, 21 November 1978.

⁴ Art. 29 (1) (a) CRC- “States Parties agree that the education of the child shall be directed to: (a) The development of the child’s personality, talents and mental and physical abilities to their fullest potential” was adopted in 1989 and came into effect on 2 September 1990

⁵ Art 13 (c) CEDAW- “States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in other areas of economic and social life in order to ensure, on a basis of equality of men and women, the same rights, in particular:... (c) The right to participate in recreational activities, **sports** and all aspects of cultural life.” CEDAW was adopted in 1979 and came into force on 3 September 1981.

development goals through facilitating democratic principles, promoting leadership development, and encouraging tolerance and respect, as well as providing access to opportunities and social networks. All areas of development can be influenced by sport, including health, education, employment, social inclusion, political development and peace and security...In 2004, the General Assembly...recognized the power of sport to contribute to human development and proclaimed the year 2005 as the International Year of Sport and Physical Education.”⁶

IMPORTANCE OF SPORTS FOR WOMEN AND GIRLS AND LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

Sports is a multi-faceted activity leading to a myriad of benefits which extend far beyond physical development and health advantages. It leads to development of leadership and team work skills, especially in the case of team sports, increases communication, negotiation and coping skills. As such, in recent times, there has been an increased interest in sports by both the development sector as well as the corporate world. Sports is indeed unique in that it has been able to create an overlap in two otherwise very separate worlds. The development sector appreciating it for its potential use as a powerful developmental tool and the Corporate world seeing it as a powerful economic propellant. Governments have also become more aware of the physical as well as social benefits of sport and are actively promoting it through various schemes and programmes.

Historically women have always been viewed as the weaker sex and in a male dominated arena of physical prowess such as Sport it was a given that women would never be able to hold their own. A statement made in 1896 by Baron Pierre de Coubertin, founder of the modern Olympics, summed up mainstream attitude in a nutshell *“It is indecent that the spectators should be exposed to the risk of seeing the body of a women being smashed before their very eyes. Besides, no matter how toughened a sportswoman may be, her organism is not cut out to sustain certain shocks.”⁷*

However, no more...

Sports has empowered women and girls and promoted gender equality. Achievements by the Williams sisters who turned the women’s tennis world upside down with their powerhouse tennis and Mia Hamm’s incredible achievements in the field of football has stilled the tongues of many skeptics and earned them their due respect as sportspersons.

⁶ As contained in ‘*Women 2000 and Beyond*’, Division for the Advancement of Women of the United Nations Secretariat, New York, 2008, p.4-5

⁷ As contained in <http://www.northnet.org/stlawrenceaauw/timeline.htm> and referred to in ‘*Women 2000 and Beyond*’, Division for the Advancement of Women of the United Nations Secretariat, New York, 2008, p.16 as well as http://www.huffingtonpost.com/anita-l-defrantz/stop-child-abuse-in-sport_b_3241122.html

*“Sport also provides women and girls with an alternative avenue for participation in the social and cultural life of their communities and promotes enjoyment of freedom of expression, interpersonal networks, new opportunities and increased self-esteem. Their social networks increase and horizons broaden. They learn more about their community and the world beyond, and thus see possibilities for themselves that they might not have imagined otherwise”.*⁸

It is therefore with hope and optimism that we must move forward in the path of further recognition of women in sports as worthy contenders and equal partners of their male counterparts.

Somewhere behind the athlete you’ve become and the hours of practice and the coaches who have pushed you is a little girl who fell in love with the game and never looked back... play for her.”

– Mia Hamm, former professional football player

FOOTBALL AND WOMEN AND GIRLS

“Today there are 29 million women and girls playing football worldwide.”

- Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA)

Further to this *“A large-scale FIFA survey involving its then 207 member associations shows that football has strengthened its position as the world’s number one sport since the last Big Count in the year 2000. Among the most pleasing signs is the continuing growth of the women’s game.”*⁹ Findings from FIFA’s 2006 Big Count also shows that *“265 million male and female players in addition to 5 million referees and officials make a grand total of 270 million people – or 4% of the world’s population – who are actively involved in the game of football.”*¹⁰

Football is clearly one of the most popular sports in the world. Its mass appeal hinges mainly on its high entertainment value as well as low cost infrastructure. A football and open space is all that is required to play the game, making it an accessible sport for all.

Football is also an excellent platform for leadership building as it is a sport which involves quick decision making, strength and weakness assessments and strategising. It also enhances ability to work with others and treat them with respect. In the case of young girls, especially in a country like

⁸ As contained in [Annexure A- CEQUIN Concept Note for Round Table Meeting](#)

⁹ Kunz, Matthias, *“265 million playing football”*, [FIFA Magazine](#), July 2007, p.10

¹⁰ Findings of the 2006 Big Count, a FIFA survey of its then 207 member associations as set out in Kunz, Matthias, *“265 million playing football”*, [FIFA Magazine](#), July 2007, p.10

India, football gives them an opportunity to see a future for themselves beyond the four walls of their homes and instils in them a sense of confidence and self-worth. *“Women’s football effectively shatters all stereotypes associated with this supposedly ‘masculine’ game. It encourages girls to stake a collective claim for their right to play outdoor sports along with boys.”*¹¹

There are many examples where football has been used effectively as a development tool for young girls. Moving the Goalposts Kilifi, is a Kenyan NGO that engages girls in football and *“uses it as an entry point for peer education on reproductive health”*. They do so by conducting group discussions on very relevant topics such as reproductive health, HIV/AIDS, assertiveness and decision-making.¹² In Rwanda, Women Without Borders provides football training to a mixed group of Tutsi and Hutu girls with the intention of awareness creation, building self-confidence and promoting peaceful co-existence.¹³ On Global Girl’s Football Day, 11th October 2003, **Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA)** joined hands with United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) to create gender equality by linking sport’s to girls’ education.¹⁴

CHALLENGES

There are numerous challenges on the path to engaging women and girls in Football. One of the biggest setbacks faced in South Asian countries like India, especially in the more rural areas where football is very popular, is that women and girls are viewed as ‘homemakers’ and this role is thrust upon them as being their obligation, not a choice. This has led these women and girls themselves having reservations with regard to failing society and their own families by not doing their duty and daring to step outside of their clearly defined ‘role’.¹⁵

Sexual harassment and lack of safe spaces is yet another problem faced by girls and women playing football. For instance *“girls playing football in the Mathare Youth Sports Association (MYSA) programme in Kenya spoke of the taunts and jeers of the boys who teased them as they walked in the community and of the risk of being harassed by street boys who were present near the playing field.”*¹⁶ Some of these girls and women are subjected to domestic violence due to daring to step out

¹¹ As contained in [Annexure A- CEQUIN Concept note for Round Table Meeting](#)

¹² As contained in *‘Women 2000 and Beyond’*, Division for the Advancement of Women of the United Nations Secretariat, New York, 2008, p.10

¹³ As contained in *‘Women 2000 and Beyond’*, Division for the Advancement of Women of the United Nations Secretariat, New York, 2008, p.11

¹⁴ As contained in *‘Women 2000 and Beyond’*, Division for the Advancement of Women of the United Nations Secretariat, New York, 2008, p.12

¹⁵ The Olympic Movement. (2004) as contained in *‘Women 2000 and Beyond’*, Division for the Advancement of Women of the United Nations Secretariat, New York, 2008, p.16

¹⁶ White, Anita, and D. Scoretz (2002), *From Windhoek to Montreal, Women and Sport Progress Report 1998- 2002*. Tokyo—Chiyoda Central Station.Japan: International working group on women and sport—IWG Secretariat. Available from

of their stereotypical roles of 'mother' or 'daughter' or both. "...one of the girls in the MYSA programme noted, *"When I started playing for MYSA my father would say that there is no football for girls, and he would beat me up."*¹⁷

SUCSESSES

"India's National Women's football team is the current South Asian Football Federation (SAFF) Champions and currently ranked 10th in Asia and 50th in the world. This is about 90 places higher than the Indian National Men's team."¹⁸

-Joy Bhattacharjya, Sports Expert

Changing mindsets that have been created due to centuries of stereotyping and cultural norms is a very long drawn out process that doesn't happen overnight. However, all is not bleak. Baby steps and endless efforts are indeed being taken by numerous stakeholders, especially NGOs, and evidence of the results are starting to seep through. *"The attitudes of parents are particularly important for promoting girls' participation in sport. While some fathers strongly resist their daughter's participation, others are gradually accepting it, such as Rajkumar Singh, a poor farmer in the Indian state of Bihar, who admitted: "Initially, I had a lot of doubts. But today I feel proud of being father to two national football-playing daughters . . ."*¹⁹

Yuwa, a NGO which promotes football as a tool for development of young tribal girls in rural Jharkhand in India is yet another success story. *"Of the first 15 girls who came on the football field, many of their older sisters were married off at ages 13 to 15," says Franz Gastler, [founder of Yuwa] "But only one girl out of the whole football group has now been married off at 15."...*²⁰ *"Thirteen-year-old Shivani says her father encouraged her to play. He died last year from diabetes but before his death, he told her that she would play for India one day. A few months later, she was selected for the India girls' Under-13 national team and was part of the final 18 who travelled to Sri Lanka. Shivani says she only wants to play football. When asked if she thinks she will earn enough, she thoughtfully nods her head. But her expression says money is not the reason why she plays."*²¹

http://www.sportdevelopment.org.uk/html/women_progress_report_2002.html as contained in 'Women 2000 and Beyond', Division for the Advancement of Women of the United Nations Secretariat, New York, 2008, p.27

¹⁷ White, Anita, and D. Scoretz (2002), *From Windhoek to Montreal, Women and Sport Progress Report 1998- 2002*. Tokyo—Chiyoda Central Station. Japan: International working group on women and sport—IWG Secretariat. Available from

http://www.sportdevelopment.org.uk/html/women_progress_report_2002.html as contained in 'Women 2000 and Beyond', Division for the Advancement of Women of the United Nations Secretariat, New York, 2008, p.27

¹⁸ As contained in Annexure B- Transcript of Meeting

¹⁹ "Bihar's football crazy girls", BBC News, 26 June 2006, available from http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/south_asia/5094308.stm and as contained in 'Women 2000 and Beyond', Division for the Advancement of Women of the United Nations Secretariat, New York, 2008, p.12

²⁰ "How football is changing lives of Indian slum girls", 23 January 2013 as contained in <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-india-20929762>

²¹ "How football is changing lives of Indian slum girls", 23 January 2013 as contained in <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-india-20929762>

In most cases, it appears that women and in particular the girls are as determined as ever to break stereotypes and come out on top of the male dominated sport of football. *“Why do the girls of Barauni excel in football? ‘They are more disciplined and they show greater energy to excel. The boys here play football too but they are inconsistent and undisciplined,’ says coach Sanjiv Kumar Singh.”*²²

ROUND TABLE MEETING

CEQUIN, INDIA: INVOLVEMENT WITH WOMEN’S FOOTBALL

As stated by Lora Prabhu, during her presentation, the **Centre for Equity and Inclusion (CEQUIN)** is a NGO that primarily works with women and girls. They have 4 areas of work

- Leadership building
- Addressing violence against women
- Promoting women’s economic empowerment
- Promoting health and wellness

And they use sports to achieve all these outcomes.

According to Lora, there were many reasons for choosing football as the medium of development of women and girls. The main ones being, a) it is a team sport which provides opportunities to develop interpersonal relationships, team spirit and leadership qualities; b) the physicality of the game has long term health benefits; c) as an outdoor sport, it encourages girls to assert their right to safe public spaces to play; d) girls’ participation in football effectively challenges stereotypes and enhances their self confidence; and lastly e) the promising national and international scenario for women’s football makes it the right choice to invest in.²³

CEQUIN has signed an MOU with **All India Football Federation (AIFF)** to promote women’s football in India. They have been running a Sports for Leadership Project in Jamia Nagar, New Delhi since 2011 and have worked with over 100 girls since the project started. Recently, Sara Pilot [Chairperson, CEQUIN] has been appointed Chairperson of AIFF’s Women’s Committee, for the period 2013-16.²⁴

²² *“Bihar’s football crazy girls”*, BBC News, 26 June 2006, available from http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/south_asia/5094308.stm

²³ As contained in Annexure B- List of Participants

²⁴ As contained in Annexure A- CEQUIN Concept note for Round Table Meeting

ROUND TABLE MEETING: STAKEHOLDERS

This meeting was attended by critical stakeholders from across the board: Government, AIFF, FIFA, Corporates, Sports Clubs, Media, UN Agencies, NGOs, and others.²⁵

As pointed out by Joy Bhattacharjya, Moderator at this meeting *“I have seen such a high powered panel across the room a few times in Indian sports where everyone is represented but never have I seen such a gathering put together when the sole agenda is women’s football. So I think it is a really powerful agent for change. The kind of people we have across this room represent media, corporates, they represent absolutely the most important stakeholders in the AIFF and most importantly they represent people on the ground, on ground zero of Indian women’s football- people who are coaching , people who are running camps or people like Franz [Gastler, Founder of Yuwa] who are running organizations and running football at the ground line.”*²⁶

ROUND TABLE MEETING: AIM OF SEMINAR

At the very outset, Joy Bhattacharjya clearly carved out the agenda for the day, setting the tone for the meeting.²⁷

“A bit of now, a bit of understanding where we are and a lot of saying where do we want to go now and what are the 2-3 single most important things for us to move forward.”

The main objective of the meeting was to examine in detail, through presentation and discussion, the following:

- Current status of women’s football in India
 - What are the challenges now- challenges at both top and ground level, challenges with regard to sponsoring women’s football, is it close to being sponsored?
 - What is the reality- especially administratively?
 - Examples of barriers in women’s football as well as successes
- The way forward- the stakeholder group to discuss issues and take a concerted decision regarding what needs to be done to move the game forward.
- ‘Do-able’ Action points to take things forward.

²⁵ For list of participants and further details regarding participants please see [Annexure B- Transcript of Meeting](#) and [Annexure C- List of Participants](#)

²⁶ As contained in [Annexure B- Transcript of Meeting](#)

²⁷ See Annexure E- Agenda

ROUND TABLE MEETING: KEY ISSUES

BARRIERS FOR GIRLS' PARTICIPATION

1. Lack of resources to develop the sport

One of the points raised at the meeting by Mr. Kushal Das, AIFF was that despite strategic plans and targets that the AIFF is trying to put in place for women's football, they are struggling with a lack of resources to fund such plans. He felt that the budget allocated to the AIFF for women's football was insufficient to meet the requirements of their ambitious plans and it would require additional financial support. Another related point was insufficient human resources. At the present time, there are only two dedicated staff members for women's football at AIFF.

Mr. Das also raised the point that even State Associations were limited due their lack of financial resources. *"The State Associations do not have the money to create a structure and unless they create a structure they won't get the money so it's a strange situation. To a certain extent the AIFF is also in the same boat, but the State Associations are much worse off, many of them."*²⁸

2. Lack of accountability measures in place for National Team coaches

Franz Gastler felt very strongly that the AIFF needed to put in place some form of accountability measures or reporting mechanisms for players who are on the National Women's Team to enable them to report back about their experiences. He felt that at the moment this was a very big gap in women's football and something that could hinder the progress of these teams as well as affect the welfare of the women footballers. However Mr. Das felt that it was not so relevant at this point. *"I mean in terms of reporting back is something I don't know whether that is relevant here."*²⁹

3. Infrastructure issues

Anjan Roy felt that there was an underutilization of existing infrastructure, especially in Delhi. He pointed out that there is world class sporting infrastructure in Delhi, or rather which was world class at the time it was set up, which has been completely unused and due to lack of proper maintenance was just going to waste. He wanted to know who exactly was responsible for maintaining such

²⁸ See Annexure B- Transcript of Meeting

²⁹ See Annexure B- Transcript of Meeting

structures. Was it SAI, was it AIFF or yet another third party? He wanted to understand the lay of the land, in terms of how many bodies were involved in this. Mr. Das explained that stadiums were mainly owned by the state government and in some cases SAI which is part of the Sports Ministry. For example the Jawaharlal Nehru stadium comes under SAI so the control and maintenance and upkeep of the stadium is completely the responsibility of the Government. He went on to explain the AIFF is trying their best to ensure that this infrastructural resources are not wasted. He spoke of a instance when the Nehru stadium was shut down after the Commonwealth Games fiasco how the AIFF reached out to the sports minister and sought permission to use the grounds to play some football games such as the SAFF championship, Nehru cup and Bayern Munich game. Mr. Das went on to explain that in order to do so, AIFF spent a lot of money (approx. 40 lacs) and refurbished the pitch. However there was no maintenance at all from SAI and when the AIFF wanted to use the grounds for another Nehru cup they discovered that they would have to re-do the pitch again thereby wasting valuable financial resources. He went on to point out that therefore support from the Government not only meant financial support, it is support for maintaining the infrastructure. Priti Srivastava said that IMG Reliance was in talks with SAI with regard to handing over maintenance of the Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium and that as of this time, this matter is under consideration by SAI.

4. Existence of multiple players and lack of inter agency coordination

A lot of participants felt that the involvement of multiple stakeholders in football has also led to some difficulties. As pointed out by Sunny Narang of Anglian “...we have too many players in this country for everything. India has a problem of too much democracy, we all know that”³⁰ For instance, AIFF does its own things, IMG Reliance plays a key role, clubs pursue their interests, Air Force focuses its efforts on Subroto, NGOs keep working on the other side. As most of these efforts, which are in themselves commendable, are done in isolation due to lack of communication between the parties, this inevitably leads to unnecessary duplication of tasks or at the other end of the scale passing the buck and blame.

5. Challenge of changing mindsets

As a part of an NGO engaging in grassroots programmes using football as a development tool for young girls, Lora Prabhu felt that one of the biggest challenges faced was just getting the girls out of their homes and on to the playing fields. Generally families of these girls, especially the male figureheads, are unwilling to accept this change as it doesn't fit in with their perceptions of what a

³⁰ See [Annexure B- Transcript of Meeting](#)

woman or a girl's role is. Socio-economic issues also come into play here as most of these families are poor and expect that their daughters should stay at home and even in her free time, help her mother run the household in order to allow her brother to go to school and engage in extra curricular activities which will help him develop and go on to become the breadwinner for the family, like his father before him.

"This is the fundamental issue- a little girl will sacrifice for her brother, the mother will sacrifice for her husband, she will always eat last, brother goes out to play the little girl stays at home to do housework. So really positive embodiment talks about a space for yourself, a space for self care and that personal time and space is not something selfish but something which is absolutely essential and in the cultural context, how do you instill that?"³¹

Sonal Kapoor of Magic Bus which also works at grassroots level, echoed this thought *"when we train our kids, girls and boys both but more specifically girls, first of all it is a social stigma for them to come out and play. That is the biggest challenge to actually get them out of their homes."³²*

Another stigma faced by female footballers, which was discussed at this meeting, is the required football apparel, i.e. shorts and t-shirt. This form of dress for girls is unacceptable to many families, especially in the more rural areas, where they are opposed to their daughters going out in public and 'prancing around in scantily clad clothes'.

6. Lack of career prospects for footballers

Anita Sarkar, National coach pointed out that as most of the top level footballers were women and girls from poverty stricken backgrounds there was a dire need to figure out how these footballers could sustain themselves in between games, which were few and far between or even after their football career, which in itself is relatively a short one, had ended. *"Actually sir a lot of girls playing football they are coming from very poor family right, so they are struggling a lot, they don't have jobs even after playing for our country and so many tournaments so actually how can we sort this out? They should get some long term incentives to enable them to live their lives even after these tournaments etc. so as to encourage them to play for the country and in various tournaments. This is my question."³³*

7. Footballers' dietary requirements not being met

³¹ As contained in [Annexure B- Transcript of Meeting](#)

³² As contained in [Annexure B- Transcript of Meeting](#)

³³ As contained in [Annexure B- Transcript of Meeting](#)

Not receiving adequately balanced meals is a problem currently faced by most sportspeople, including footballers, both men and women. This is usually caused due to poverty, lack of jobs and income etc. Sunny pointed out that even National athletes being trained at the **National Institute of Sports, Patiala (NIS)** are not receiving balanced and wholesome food. A specialized diet is a must, especially in the case of National level players, who are elite athletes. Sunny went on to add that such diets required a lot of additional ingredients which is actually very costly. In the case of women footballers in India, even at National level, the kind of money that they make is just not enough to meet their living costs let alone special dietary requirements.

8. Inadequate grounds and lack of safe spaces for girls

CEQUIN's girl's football team coach Meenu explained that she was facing a big challenge in that she was unable to provide the girls with a proper grounds for training and she was also worried about their personal safety *"...we had two months of football practice at the Jamia University football grounds after that we were evicted so that they could cover the ground. The grounds that we have got at the moment is not very good. A lot of undesirable people come and hang around there, so we cannot practice properly there. This poses a safety concern for the girls. It is a question of security. It is basically not a ground. We have a small area where we practice and there are empty alcohol bottles and glass thrown everywhere. A week back I was playing and fell down and cut myself. If I can get hurt, then the danger of injury posed to the children is much greater."*³⁴

Sonal Kapoor of Magic Bus, also agreed that providing safe spaces for girls was a problem they faced. *"...of course there are things like eve teasing, leg pulling which is quite common. We do not have any safe spaces for them to play... If we cannot provide safe spaces to our girls who are playing sports I do not think there is any way in which we can develop sports among women."* She also went on to explain that procuring adequate grounds was also a big financial strain. *"NGOs like ourselves or CEQUIN or others, when we go out there, there are huge amounts that we have to pay, on a daily or monthly basis, which ranges from INR 15,000 - 20,000 for a monthly rental of a ground which we can use only for about 2 hours in a week."*³⁵ She went on to explain that most of the girls in these grassroots development programmes were from poor families and many of the times schools were hesitant to rent out their grounds for these children to play football in as they believed that they would be undisciplined and dirty the grounds.

9. Majority of the talent pool exists in poverty stricken rural areas

³⁴ As contained in [Annexure B- Transcript of Meeting](#)

³⁵ As contained in [Annexure B- Transcript of Meeting](#)

Throughout the day's discussions it became obvious that the majority of India's football talent was to be found in the remote poverty stricken areas and that it was mainly in these areas that the popularity of football was spreading. As discussed by Anjan Roy, not only does this narrow their chances of being discovered, but also it means that they also have less infrastructure and resources to harness and nurture this talent. *"It is a sport that seems to be popular and is being played in some of the poorer parts of the country where resources themselves are scarce."*³⁶

STEPS NEEDED TO POPULARIZE GIRL'S SOCCER AT A MASS SCALE

1. Need to develop Icons to create 'pull'

Participants felt that there was a clear lack of Indian football icons or superstars in both men and women's football and that steps needed to be taken to create such icons. *"...the truth of it is no game in the world has only worked with push which is what we are looking at. It has to have 'pull' as well. Pull comes from icons, from achievements... Pull comes from 'wanting to be'. People wanted to be Sachin Tendulkar, Vishwanathan Anand. ... So somewhere we need a story, we need an inspiration."*³⁷

Sunny spoke of Anglian's investment in a Danish Superliga Team and the fact that their ultimate goal in making this investment was to identify and propel talent in India. *"...we wanted to get Indian players to start playing and we have tried a lot of Indian kids over the last two years and you see there is not a single Indian players, of Indian parentage right now who plays any second division football in all of Europe. So till you get players from India, forget women, even men till there are some players playing in some of the top leagues of the world you will not get that kind of pull factor".* He said that this problem was further exacerbated by the fact that there are so few good Indian football players that those who are quite talented are overpaid by Indian clubs, as a result they have no interest in joining the international circuit and benefitting from this exposure and developing their skill base. *"So the thing is we have to start with younger players to build iconic players. We have been told by top Indian footballers don't pay attention to us, only pay attention to under 16. Try and get them. This I am talking about men's football. They are of the opinion that women's football is behind men's football. So, like you are saying, the first part is looking at the reality and this is the reality. Till there are icons there wont be media reporting, if everyday some footballer, even in a*

³⁶ As contained in [Annexure B- Transcript of Meeting](#)

³⁷ As contained in [Annexure B- Transcript of Meeting](#)

second division, in Europe is scoring goals then that will come in the news. But till that happens, football doesn't get that iconic sense."

Michele Kerri of FIFA agreed that role models and icons are of paramount importance to give football the push it needs and she agreed that all efforts should be made to create such icons. *"I think girls always need someone to aspire to and you know little kids, if you are from the National Team and you go down and visit little kids...they are happy.... But you must choose the right people in terms of promoting the right image for the game... I think it is important that they can play obviously but they also need to be articulate and promote football in the right way."*³⁸

2. Create a tipping point in Indian Women's football

Joy emphasized the need for some big football event in India, which would integrate women's football and thereby create an opportunity for giving the much needed push to India's women's football. He spoke of how when the Americans won the first women's world cup, the Times Magazine carried women's football on their cover for the first time thereby putting women's football on the map. *"...we have got to find our own tipping point, we have got to find out how we can build our own tipping point in this part of this world."*³⁹

3. Establish links with foreign football associations, clubs etc

Mr. Urs Zanitti of FIFA was keen to know if the AIFF had established any links with foreign Association, Federations, clubs, or entities that engaged in and/or provided support to women's football from the US, UK and so on. Mr. Das responded that at present there were no such links. Sunny felt that Urs had raised a very important point in that there are numerous women's leagues around the world which are run very efficiently. He felt that such partnerships would prove to be very useful to the AIFF as it would instill confidence in investors and corporates that they are doing things the right way. Furthermore such links could also prove to be a learning experience for Indian women's football, which has a long way to go, by way of an exchange of best practices and methods followed.

4. Provide more information to media regarding developments in women's football

A hotly debated point at this meeting was the need for better links between the media and the AIFF as well as the media and all other key stakeholders in women's football in general. Rica Roy from

³⁸ As contained in [Annexure B- Transcript of Meeting](#)

³⁹ As contained in [Annexure B- Transcript of Meeting](#)

NDTV was very keen to know AIFF's plans with regard to engaging the media. Rica also wanted to know if the AIFF had considered using a celebrity ambassador for women's football, which had proved to be a very successful manoeuvre for cricket. Kushal Das explained that he felt that this was not the time as his main focus at this point was getting a comprehensive structure in place. *"Once the structure is in place then we will probably try and see how we can take it to the media but at this point in time the total focus is on creating the right structure. Because it must be a product which is saleable in the first place, there is no point getting media hype around a product which is not saleable. So we want to ensure that we want to create the right structure first."*⁴⁰ Rica argued the point that there is never a perfect time for such things and went on to explain that the media did not require big stories all the time, all they needed were threads that they could weave into newsworthy items. *"To involve the media you don't have to have a league or infrastructure in place, all of that can keep coming but what my suggestion is sir, there are a lot of stories happening around us which we don't know about. I believe there are wonderful stories of women's football happening in the Northeast which are not really relayed to us back in Delhi. If we can just pick up threads from there. Someone give us the information we could go and follow up those stories."*⁴¹

Rica also raised the issue that on average the sports team at NDTV receive about 50-55 emails from AIFF pertaining to men's football but no information at all about the women's team. She pointed out that the last correspondence she had received from AIFF with regard to the National Women's Team was back when they had won the **South Asian Football Federation (SAFF) Cup**. Mr. Das accepted her point and said that he would try and ensure better information sharing with regard to women's football too.

A question was raised as to whether AIFF had a PR Agency working for them and Mr. Das clarified that they do not, however they do have an in-house media department. Another point was raised that the AIFF should increase their efforts to market women's football because if they do not market it properly then the media would not pick it up and women's football cannot afford to lose any opportunity to be in the public gaze.

Joy raised the point that we should not discount the fact that sometimes even if women's football news is not covered on national channels, there are numerous media that cover local events and that perhaps we could also focus some of our efforts on reaching out to the local media as well. *"Maybe NDTV doesn't have the time but that paper in Shillong if it covers it well that is also a huge job... the truth of it is we all understand that women's football probably has maybe 3 decent or 4*

⁴⁰ As contained in [Annexure B- Transcript of Meeting](#)

⁴¹ As contained in [Annexure B- Transcript of Meeting](#)

*decent bases across the country - we have talked about parts of Jharkand, parts of the Northeast, parts of Bengal, parts of Goa maybe Kerala. We should also look at information dissemination systematically across these areas, because they are low hanging fruit. They are already areas which are susceptible to football and women's football has some sort of a growth. If in these areas you can systematically push football stories, push stuff out there in the local media as well. Because the really the fact of it is that when we do word cum national television it is really like dropping water in the ocean, it is one little drop, one little story and it is gone. Whereas if you say, okay in Jharkand in this area I am really going to make sure that Yuwa is going to be in the news, lets try and see if we can get 3-4 stories about them. Lets try and make them local heroes. I think that is also a very big thing.*⁴²

Sunny seconded Joy's point about local media and said that more tie ups and creative partnerships need to be done with local media. He said that for instance, *"what we [Anglian] do is, if Shiva Thapa wins any medal, we have a whole PR team and we flood the whole press in the Northeast. We have also taken another step, there are two very popular magazines in the Northeast one is called Eclectic and the other one is called The Northeast Today (TNT) we are supporting them to run a 12-16 pager sports thing within the magazine. We will underwrite the cost of the paper and everything for the next 3 years and we will find the sponsors for local and international coverage in that magazine. So all new kinds of tie-ups need to be done"*⁴³

Joy also felt that this debate about need for a better informed media, led to one very obvious conclusion and that was the need for some form of common website or platform focusing on women's football developments, a pool of Indian women's football resources or something of the sort. Then the media would not have to run around trying to gather information. There is one place they can go and check. Or perhaps it could be made even easier for the media, by receiving regular updates from this common site. *"So I think if there are 70 organisations from Magic Bus to Subroto cup to Anglian's contributions to this meeting, first and foremost it is staring us in the face as to whether we need to have a common website saying Indian women's football resource or something like that saying if you want anything on Indian Women's Football it will be here. And emails of this newsletter will go out to 200-250 journalists on our list every week"*⁴⁴

5. Create more job opportunities for existing and former female football players

⁴² As contained in [Annexure B- Transcript of Meeting](#)

⁴³ As contained in [Annexure B- Transcript of Meeting](#)

⁴⁴ As contained in [Annexure B- Transcript of Meeting](#)

With regard to the point raised by Anita that female footballers were faced with a lack of job opportunities, Bikram offered a possible solution. He said that in Delhi and NCR there were quite a few wealthy schools that were offering girls' football as a part of their curriculum and were always on the lookout for talented female coaches for these their football teams and that this would be an option worthy of being explored. *"There are about 30 teams in the NCR and these are rich schools that have money to pay and they need coaches, they are looking for lady coaches so any ladies who have played football they have a big opportunity to earn at least minimum INR 15,000 a month and upwards to get gainfully employed and these schools are starved of good coaches so there is a huge opportunity. I have about four girls from Manipur who are still a part of the Indian National team who are working for such schools and they are getting at least INR 15,000 a month...So I am saying, the story is not all drab and grim there is opportunity and these have to be connected"*.⁴⁵

Joy also suggested the possibility of encouraging women footballers to undertake coaching courses to enable them to be eligible for coaching. *"So Anita you are talking about players who have a need for jobs. Maybe one of the things you could focus on is getting the players-anyone about 21, 22 years to start getting at coaching license as well because that will help them go and start coaching in schools."*⁴⁶ Anita confirmed that the girls are already undertaking these courses.

6. Acknowledge importance of and promote school level girl's football

Throughout the day's discussions, Bikram strongly advocated for school girls' football, highlighted its merits and explained that he was a big believer in the Subroto Cup. Joy re-iterated the importance of school girls' football to attract the masses to the game. *"...if I am from Modern school and Modern school is playing in Subroto cup I have a much better chance of picking up support. So in fact, in a very funny way, school teams have a better chance of picking up support than even State teams do because State is too big an entity it doesn't have much meaning to me. But if my school is playing I will support it and the truth is that's where we have got to start we have got to face it that women's soccer is not going to turn into the IPL tomorrow and we need to create sustainable pockets of interest because that is what is going to push it forward, not one big over winning thing and those 30-40 schools are going to make a difference."*⁴⁷

Michele also felt that school level football was of paramount importance as it could really propel the game. *"I absolutely think from listening to the conversation that the schools need to be a real port of*

⁴⁵ As contained in [Annexure B- Transcript of Meeting](#)

⁴⁶ As contained in [Annexure B- Transcript of Meeting](#)

⁴⁷ As contained in [Annexure B- Transcript of Meeting](#)

*call because there as you see, they have already made a market, they are already there. It should be in the curriculum because girls need to sample sport to know what they like and of course if it is in the school then the parents think ok if the school is doing it so it must be ok. The AIFF can also support them technically with coaches and so on and even having 'have a go' day like we heard about from someone today, where they can trial the game in a festival like activity, but the important thing is to give them a weekly chance to be able to play the game. So even if they have a festival, even if it just an hour every week at the same venue so they can come to and try the game and then do it regularly."*⁴⁸

ENHANCED INVESTMENT IN TRAINING, RESOURCES AND REWARDS

1. Investment in developing grassroots

As discussed above, the AIFF's strategic plan, which will be discussed later, contains in it a commitment to developing football in the grassroots. Mr. Das said *"I think it is fundamental and critical to carry on with the grassroots and youth development. No footballing country in the world has progressed without that... it is a long drawn process but it has to go on. There is no way it can stop."*⁴⁹ Acknowledging that Indian footballers had a long way to go before competing with their foreign counterparts, he stressed that the grassroots programme would help identify new talent in India. *"You are absolutely right Sunny when you say the Indian players are not yet good enough to play in any second division league that is a plain and simple fact. That can only happen if there is a proper development programme. The under 16 team for example is a great casing point and the way they are playing they can possibly aim to play in European leagues in the future. The current under 16, the under 15 team actually. So the grassroot programme is absolutely critical"*⁵⁰

In her presentation, Michele strongly advocated for grassroots programmes saying that this is what had revolutionized football, both men's and women's, in New Zealand. She explained their grassroots programme briefly⁵¹ and how they marketed women's football very successfully through this programme – by providing the children with a welcome pack upon registration that had the photo of New Zealand's well known and respected ex-captain Ryan Nelson on the cover along-side a same sized photo of female footballer Maia Jackman thereby granting her equal status and creating a role model out of her for little girls to emulate. This programme, which was externally funded also resulted in the creation of coaching manuals which enabled uniform and good coaching to be

⁴⁸ As contained in [Annexure B- Transcript of Meeting](#)

⁴⁹ As contained in [Annexure B- Transcript of Meeting](#)

⁵⁰ As contained in [Annexure B- Transcript of Meeting](#)

⁵¹ More details of programme contained in [Annexure B- Transcript of Meeting](#)

provided to these children despite some of the coaches being amateurs and also giving gift vouchers and award certificates to the children which allowed plenty of brand advertising and kept sponsors happy as well.

2. Investing in foreign leagues with a view to pole vaulting Indian footballers into the international circuit

As discussed previously, Sunny spoke of Anglian's investment in a Danish Superliga Team and their ultimate goal in making this investment. *"...was that we wanted to get Indian players to start playing and we have tried a lot of Indian kids over the last two years and you see there is not a single Indian players, of Indian parentage right now who plays any second division football in all of Europe."*

3. Creating opportunities for talented young footballers to gain international exposure and training

Franz spoke of how at Yuwa, they had plans for a selected few of their most talented footballers who showed special promise. *"...for a small percentage we would like them to go to play football in the US in the university soccer team, get their 4 years of education and come back and be in the National team and all of a sudden the Indian National team might go from 50th up to 10th or 8th."*⁵²

4. Central Government support for AIFF programmes

In her presentation, with regard to procuring funding for the game, Michele spoke of an example in UK where an organization had linked their programme to a health issue which was of concern to the Government, thereby aligning interests and procuring the required funding for their programme. *"A good example was England where they recognized that England was fast becoming the most obese nation in Europe, so they went to the government and said okay we can help deliver physical activity programmes by getting girls into football because we have got research to say that they want to play football, and we can help deliver your objectives of getting girls more active and less obese. This programme was so successful that the Government then re-invested. The initial project funding was about GBP 5 Million, the Federation then came up with a very good idea to deliver physical literacy programmes because they also found that the kids at 5 years old, only 4% of them had the right motor skills that they should have for their age... in terms of running, jumping, throwing and so on. So you imagine what that does for your talent pool later on. So what they did is they said we can*

⁵² As contained in [Annexure B- Transcript of Meeting](#)

come in, we have specialized coaches who can deliver motor skills programmes but use football as the country's favourite sport to do that."⁵³ Michele went on to explain that in India, we would need to find what our nation's critical issues for women were and try and create a link with those issues and football because "linking the government's social messages to your programme in a smart way is a very good way of getting a lot of funding into the game."

Based on this idea, Michele asked Dr. Ayyangar, Joint Secretary, Government of India, what were the chances of government support if the AIFF had an amazing evidence based programme which they could prove that they could improve the physical literacy skills of all children across India and help you increase the elite talent base. "How would they go about coming to you or the government for funding for that? Is that something that would be considered?"⁵⁴ Dr. Ayyangar responded that as long as it fell within the stipulated 20 disciplines recognized by the Ministry of Sports and Youth Affairs they would be very happy to get involved. He informed the participants that he was already working closely with Mr. Das and there was no reason why this should not continue. "If any of these 20 disciplines are concerned we would be very happy to get associated. We are already in touch with Mr. Kushal Das to organize certain things in 3-4 States, we would be happy to extend the same to other places also"⁵⁵.

5. Central government to develop existing academies and also set up sports universities

When the question was raised as to the present level of Central Government's investment in Indian sports colleges in terms of resources, human resources, text books and also the syllabuses in the sports colleges that the government supports, Mr. Ayyangar responded that there was no real investment at present, however he assured all present that "That is what we are trying to do under the **Urban Sports Infrastructure Scheme (USIS)**. We are going to try and encourage not only creation of the facilities but also going to encourage two items. One is related to the Sports Academies like the Gopichand Academy and the Mary Kom Academy, PT Usha Academy, in addition we are going to have Sports Universities. The Sports Ministry is hoping to develop two National Institutes of Sports Coaching which is going to come up at NIS Patiyala. Another one is the National Institute of Sports Medicine and Sports Science. Each one of them is roughly around 500 crores. "

6. Availability of Central funds for sending suitable footballers for training abroad

⁵³ As contained in [Annexure B- Transcript of Meeting](#)

⁵⁴ As contained in [Annexure B- Transcript of Meeting](#)

⁵⁵ As contained in [Annexure B- Transcript of Meeting](#)

Sunny explained that in order to reach the top of one's sport and win championships and gain medals, it was essential to have specialized instruction. Such specialized instruction may have to be obtained in specialized agencies abroad, albeit for short periods, in places such as Europe, America etc and wanted to know of if there was enough funds for that. Mr. Ayyangar confirmed that there was no dearth of funds belonging to the Ministry for such programmes.

STRATEGIC PLANNING AND ENHANCED EMPHASIS FOR NATIONAL/INTERNATIONAL EXPOSURE FOR WOMEN PLAYERS AND SPECIFIC TARGETS

Strategies

1. AIFF's strategies:

a) Strategic plan to have a separate section dedicated solely to women's football

According to Kushal Das, AIFF's strategic plan for the next 4 years that they were currently in the process of developing was going to have a separate section dedicated solely to women's football. Michele Cox aired her concern that this strategy posed a risk and perhaps needed to be reconsidered. *"I think when it is separated out from the rest of the strategic plan as a separate area there is a real danger that the organization, apart from the one person that might be working on women's football, just says oh it is their job, it has nothing to do with me. And particularly when you don't have the resource in place to support the game I think it is really important for it to be integrated into the whole plan because, for example we need marketing support, we need media support, so they should have accountability to work on women's football because as a federation we all have a responsibility for all areas of football not just the Men's National team or the National league. So I think it is important that everybody in the organization feels that they have a responsibility to support the women's game not just the women's football department or the women's committee."*⁵⁶ Kushal understood Michele's point but went on to explain that it was on advice from a FIFA Consultant, Monika Staab, that this step had been taken and that its intent was to give increased attention and focus to women's football. *"I take your point. Initially it was how we were structuring our strategic plan, but it was from specific advice by FIFA to ensure that more than due importance was given to women's football that a separate section was created in the strategic plan. You are absolutely right, it will be integrated with the rest of the plan, you know as far as media is concerned or even the other departments of the AIFF, but the idea was to create a specific focus on women's football."*⁵⁷

⁵⁶ As contained in Annexure B- Transcript of Meeting

⁵⁷ As contained in Annexure B- Transcript of Meeting

b) Establishing leagues

Mr. Das also explained that the AIFF wanted to establish a female football league so that the players could be engaged in the sport at least 5-6 months in a year, rather than just take part in one off competitions and then go back to their normal lives without having any structured plans for developing their skills. But he was quick to point out that it must be a relevant league. *“It must have teams coming up from places where they have a basis for selecting the right players. That means the State must have a league. So what is planned is a zonal league first and then at the top level a National Championship which will again be a league-cum-knockout based on the Champions League, that sort of a format. And we feel that it would help engage the players and it would help us identify talent for at least 5-6 months which I think is very critical”*.

Sunny felt that State leagues at this stage may be too ambitious but agreed that zonal leagues would definitely help. He also felt that there were a number of I-league team sponsors who would be interested in doing women’s teams but were hesitant as there is no National Women’s league which is funded so why would you spend that extra money to have a women’s league extension. *“I feel that we should start working at zonal levels first because we have seen the interest even in cities like Delhi and Bombay among upper class and upper middle class girls. When we had our study done all over Western India we spoke to hundreds and hundreds of girl students who go for Maharashtra matches even being in upper class and sharing 30 girls to a single bathroom in local leagues in Maharashtra, so there is a lot of passion and so we can get even sponsorship from women’s school teams in Metros and if daughters of parents from corporate backgrounds start playing it could go far. I think it needs be built up at all levels from school leagues upwards that’s how it will begin because that is where you have an audience, you already have 3,000 people in a school and they get to know about it. So I think you need to work at all levels at community levels, at school levels especially.”⁵⁸*

c) Developing grassroots football

As discussed previously, the AIFF has decided to focus on youth and grassroots in their strategic plan. However Mr. Das emphasized that this grassroots programme was not only about identifying talent. *“Let me just explain the philosophy of grassroots football. It is about people asking the kids to come out and play. Identification of talent is not the main purpose. The main purpose is for the young boys and girls (6-10 years) to come and play football and enjoy the game and talent identification is merely incidental. We do identify talent and then they do go back to the academies but the whole*

⁵⁸ As contained in [Annexure B- Transcript of Meeting](#)

*philosophy is to come and play.*⁵⁹ Kushal explained that they have already started their grassroots programme in 6 different states- Mizoram, Manipur, Goa, Kerela, Maharashtra and Bengal. He also stated that the programme has, thus far, been very successful in Mizoram where the AIFF has been able to set up about 8-10 grassroots centres. He was very pleased to note that there is equal participation from boys and girls in these grassroots programmes and at the end of each programme they hoped to host a festival.

d) Establishing academies

AIFF felt that the key to developing the women's game lay in developing the players' skills leading to the birth of iconic players in Indian women's football. In order to do so there was clearly a need for establishing football academies of international standards. *"...while we completely appreciate the good work being done by CEQUIN, Yuwa and Magic Bus and other such entities, you know the inspiration and the motivation will come only if the National team starts doing well. If you get iconic players, stars and the National team starts winning, that would actually help more women come into football. So we have to establish academies."*⁶⁰ Mr. Das shared his plans regarding the academies. *"...we were thinking of establishing a 14-16 year age group academy to start of with and then go onto a higher age group 16-18 years which we will call the Elite Academy. Ideally we would like to start 4-5 academies but resources are a bit constrained but at least in the next couple of years we would definitely like to start a Regional Academy (14-16 years age group) and 1 Elite Academy (16-18yrs age group)."*⁶¹

e) Improving coaching

Mr. Das felt that another very important aspect that required special focus in Indian football, both men's and women's, was coach education. He spoke of how the coaching methodologies in India needed to be modernized. *"We need to improve the level of our coach education and it is important to understand the philosophy across the world its changed and one of the reasons why we have not been able to pick up, in this part of the world, is that we have still not been able to change that philosophy we are still stuck in the 60s and the 70s. So coach education is absolutely critical and that is something which again is a significant part of our strategic plan."*⁶² He went on to explain that AIFF's Technical Director has formulated a technical plan 'Lakshya' which has clearly identified a path for educating coaches for both men's and women's football. Kushal also emphasized that the AIFF

⁵⁹ As contained in [Annexure B- Transcript of Meeting](#)

⁶⁰ As contained in [Annexure B- Transcript of Meeting](#)

⁶¹ As contained in [Annexure B- Transcript of Meeting](#)

⁶² As contained in [Annexure B- Transcript of Meeting](#)

can create the structure and set the foundation but unless finances as well as other resources are in place, it would not work. He strongly felt that *“therefore corporate and government support like State Authority of India (SAI) is essential to help us set up these academies.”*⁶³

Franz was also very keen that a concerted effort should be made for coaches education and said that he himself would be happy to help by acting as the link to enable procurement of good international coaches, as he has already such contacts who were helping him with Yuwa. *“What I am personally really interested in is concerted and continuing efforts at educating the coaches, trying to modernize the way coaches interact with kids both at grassroots and all the way up to the National teams and this is something I could help with and bring in the right people for that. Because they are already advising our programme and eventually we could even get them to do something with the AIFF and maybe be at Dr. Sagar’s university or Ranchi.”*⁶⁴

f) Hosting a ‘pull’ event

Mr. Das informed the participants of the meeting that AIFF, together with IMG Reliance were in the process of planning a big ‘pull’ event. *“That is precisely the thinking- what you mentioned the pull event- is what we had in mind when we partnered with IMG Reliance we feel that such an event can bring in the necessary pull. We are not sure, but unless we try it out we will never know.”*⁶⁵

Joy felt that if such an event was being designed to bring in the masses and lift up football, it was essential that, in whatever way possible, women’s football also needed to be integrated into this. *“Kushal can I just say one thing, if you are planning to do such a high profile event like what you are planning to do with IMG Reliance that we are hearing about now, is there some way, obviously it is not a question of women playing football, but is there some way that we can give exposure to women’s football integrated into this. In some way you have a high profile event that is happening which is going to catch a lot of eyeballs, a lot curiosity, lot of attention, we believe the best footballers in the world past their prime are going to be there playing football can we just think of some way to integrate the fact of women’s football awareness at the event? How will we do it? We promise to do it smartly without being preachy or anything like that but I am sure we can find a way to do so.”*⁶⁶ Mr. Das responded positively to this suggestion and said he would take it into consideration.

⁶³ As contained in [Annexure B- Transcript of Meeting](#)

⁶⁴ As contained in [Annexure B- Transcript of Meeting](#)

⁶⁵ As contained in [Annexure B- Transcript of Meeting](#)

⁶⁶ As contained in [Annexure B- Transcript of Meeting](#)

Michele strongly advocated for 'pull' events based on the success of such events in her experience. She felt that it was an excellent strategy. She spoke of how in Chile they found that although women's football was played and there were a reasonable number of women playing, it was not being treated as an elite or a serious sport. So Chile decided to host an Under 17 World Cup to draw in the crowd and kick start women's football in the country. The under 17 World Cup in Chile and proved to be an excellent strategy. Subsequent to this World Cup *"They had ten thousand players who registered after this event. The government was so delighted with them because they had an issue with the hooliganism and what happened was the people who came for this World Cup were families, so they saw the return of the families into the stadium and of course they were left with the legacy of the four brand new stadiums in a country which had to upgrade its infrastructure"*⁶⁷. And as FIFA age-group World Cups for women and girls are completely funded by FIFA, they were able to use someone else's money to build their women's team as well as infrastructure.

Joy acknowledged that applying to host a FIFA World Cup would be a great idea as far as pull events went but wanted Michele's advice as to what other type of pull events could be generated. Michele suggested bringing in women's teams from other countries for exhibition matches. *"...you can bring in the women's teams for example Bayern Munich, the women's team went to Jordan to play a match there and of course everyone goes yeah its Bayern Munich lets go watch them and they don't care that it's the women's team and they are always looking for personal development opportunities for their girls and if you talk to the Bayern girls now they say that their trip to Jordan was better than anything that they have ever done because it allowed them to experience another environment and culture and again all of these clubs and teams that have the resources to do this are happy to involve the women and the federation so those discussion with those top federations and clubs you can use those as exhibition matches also."*⁶⁸

Joy felt that with these pull events seemed to work better when hosted in the smaller towns. *"I think that's another very big key that small cities are the way to go. In Delhi you could have a big European Club playing and people would not be that interested. So this is also an important point to note. Even if we bring in people from abroad lets pick our spots, places where we can make an impact."*⁶⁹

2. Creating a list of saleable assets

⁶⁷ As contained in [Annexure B- Transcript of Meeting](#)

⁶⁸ As contained in [Annexure B- Transcript of Meeting](#)

⁶⁹ As contained in [Annexure B- Transcript of Meeting](#)

Joy explained that *“we need to create... a sub-committee to... see the 4-5 assets we can sell now and truth being told maybe one of two of them will be sold tomorrow, fix a price, fix a way, fix a value we can do for them and make them, as sad as it is to use this word, as ‘sexy’ as possible to sponsors and to everyone...In many ways, football ticks all the right boxes, it is interesting yet it is women’s empowerment as well, women’s soccer is all in the right places, now it is just a matter of us trying to collate our assets and make it work.”*

3. Creating coaching manuals/pamphlets

Sukhvinder of Libero Sports, felt that one of the key takeaways from Michele’s presentation was the coaching manuals she talked about during her presentation. He felt it would be a very simple yet very helpful step for Indian football. *“One of the key takeaways from your presentation is certainly the coaching manual, it’s a very simplistic and fantastic idea. Somewhere or the other is that knowledge transfer can happen of what the AFDP is doing or your experience from the global side of football to the AIFF. I think we talked about the coaching side of it so much. I think this can be a very well documented structured pamphlet... and then at least if we are not able to send out the instructors physically at any particular place, there will be all these groups who are going to percolate it down through all their networks. I think if some work can certainly happen on this, it would be great.”*⁷⁰ Joy pointed out that if such documents are created they should also be translated into Hindi and other local languages to enable wider use.

Targets

As stated by Kushal Das, following on from the AIFF’s strategic plans they hope to try and attain the following targets over the next four years:

- 1) In the next 3-4 years, the Indian Women’s National Football team ranking to come down from 50th to 35th
- 2) The National Women’s Football team ranking to come down from 10th to 5/6th in Asia.
- 3) India’s Under 19 Women’s Football team to aim for a top 4 finish in the Asian Champions qualifier in 2014
- 4) India’s Under 20 Women’s Football Team to qualify for the World Cup in 2016
- 5) India’s Under 16 Girls Football Team to aim for a top 4 finish in the **Asian Federation Cup (AFC)** under 16, 2015 qualifiers
- 6) India’s Under 17 Women’s Football team to qualify for the World Cup 2016

⁷⁰ As contained in [Annexure B- Transcript of Meeting](#)

COMMERCIAL VIABILITY

With regard to the commercial viability of football, Sukhvinder seemed very confident that in the near future a more structured approach will enable football to attain its commercial peak. *"...there are numerous organizations, units, institutions, federations, government included who are working towards the development of football but the direction is so different. Right from the NGOs who are doing fantastic work, there are agencies like ours who are trying to contribute, people like him [Franz] on ground. We have seen a great bit of change in AIFF, now you have a good young brigade of 55 people who are thinking about football day in and day out and trying to make some improvements. There is this bit of industry which is a bit haphazard right now, there is this bit of industry which is completely unstructured and what it lacks is a bit of unison- a common objective which then people can align with and try to contribute to. I am sure that in the next 5 years I am certainly going to see that unison, that unification which then is going to create this boom in this country."*⁷¹

He also felt that it was with continued efforts and contributions by key players such as AIFF, NGO, Corporates etc that commercial viability can be attained. *"Now what can help? Certainly the IMG Reliance investments up to 700 crores which are going into creating a bit of profile for the game. We are essentially talking about, with the help of government and the help of AIFF, bringing an under 17 world cup in 2017 that certainly is a point where we can expect the industry to really phase it around. We are hoping that Anglian goes out and achieves their dream of getting one player out, and hopefully that's through Libero, to go out and play in a foreign league and thereby create an Icon that Joy always talked about. Franz, we certainly believe the pervasiveness of your programmes, go far and wide essentially to create that bit of mass participation and thereby a revolution which certainly feeds in to not only the elite programming but also a lot to do with the technical side of football such as coaching, referring, turf technology, whatever you may have. So somewhere or the other I do see this particularly industry going places."*⁷²

With regard to the point raised by him about the need for additional resources to fund AIFF's ambitious strategic plan, Mr. Das explained that their Marketing Partner IMG Reliance was fully involved in their strategic plan and that it would have to be a culmination of efforts by various stakeholders to try and raise the required funds. However, he was fully aware of the fact that it was not going to be easy to sell as it is a catch 22 situation - right now there is huge potential but at this point in time there is no structure, so people would be hesitant to invest as they would first wish to

⁷¹ As contained in Annexure B- Transcript of Meeting

⁷² See Annexure B- Transcript of Meeting

understand what the structure is. Therefore he emphasized that creating such a structure that could be sold to investors was AIFF's main focus at the moment, with regard to Women's Football. Sukhvinder Singh felt that monies were available for such projects and that it was a matter of locating such resources. More importantly, he felt that there was a clear need for better information flow of such plans to the corporate world by creating linkages. He said that gradually, not only in women's football but also men's football, the need for packaging and organizing of these properties is being recognized and it has started happening a lot and hopefully when the new property kind of comes in it will give everybody that bit of confidence that maybe football can organize itself and attract the desired resources. He also felt that better use could be made of existing resources and that we would need to be smarter in terms of utilization and integration.

Priti Srivastava of IMG Reliance seconded this thought. She too has been looking into this issue extensively. She explained that she had been dialoguing with government as well as sponsors of men's football. She felt that they were all keen to invest, but as pointed out by Mr. Das there was hesitancy in light of the lack of a structured plan because from the point of view of corporate sponsors, the deliverables would be very different if you are a sponsor to a National Team or you are a sponsor to a League of women's football. "Right now Airtel and IMG Reliance are still debating, we don't have answers. The day the product is ready, we have an answer, which should be very soon. Finding a sponsor will not be difficult."⁷³

With regard to the point raised about inadequate maintenance of football infrastructure, discussed previously, such as stadiums, Anjan added that it was very important to address this issue. Because from a corporate point of view, there is always going to be great willingness to support an initiative but a key concern for them would be whether to invest a lot of money in setting up the infrastructure and then have that money go to waste because the running cost to a corporate, for example of an IPL or any other league, is much less and much more tangible in terms of what they would get out of it. But if a corporate has to set up the infrastructure cost without really knowing whether it is going to decay over a period of time because of the Government not actually looking after it then it becomes a big concern for a corporate.

Sukhvinder felt that in order to make football more commercially viable for investors there was a clear need to better organize properties and assets. *"I will come back to the very specific topic of women's football. What I haven't really seen in this particular industry and what I certainly propose as a solution is to organize the assets and properties and this is where 2 key stakeholders- (1) AIFF,*

⁷³ See [Annexure B- Transcript of Meeting](#)

(2) IMG Reliance- which certainly has committed to creating a better profile for these properties come in. The properties and the assets which essentially are the tournaments, age group championships, senior women's championships are pretty much existing, then we have the efforts of the National Team which are pretty much existing but somewhere or the other they are done, and thankfully they are happening now as compared to a decade back, but somewhere or the other we haven't really given them an identity. We don't even know what an under 15 girls' championship is called. Today we know what a boys under 15 championship is called, it is called the Coca Cola Cup. It has an identity. It has that bit of coolness quotient to it which I don't see existing for under 15 girls."

Joy was keen to know whose responsibility it would actually be to set about creating inventory for assets. *"When you say identity what you also need is therefore saying ok this tournament is going to be touching x number of people across x states, because if that doesn't happen, unless you tell us inventory, no marketer will come into the business. So whose job is it to create the inventory for the assets, would the AIFF for example for its National Tournaments have an inventory saying that okay it is touching so many children in so many states etc, whether it is going on television, not going on television because any marketer will ask you these questions because otherwise he cannot invest in a property."*⁷⁴ Sukhvinder responded that *"it is not only about AIFF, it is about a core programme, it is about something a group in Delhi might be doing, it is about something Magic Bus, the way they have wonderfully executed certain programmes."*⁷⁵ Joy wanted clarification whether this meant that all the assets which women's football has in its various forms or shapes should be under a single central repository. Priti added to this *" I will just try and answer it. When we signed the Agreement with AIFF the clause in the Agreement said that all the existing properties of AIFF goes to IMG Reliance and I had raised this question and it just says women's football. It doesn't go into any detail and this is something we are talking about and we can tell IMG Reliance there are no description. So AIFF is completely at liberty to create as many layers before that. That's what I am saying, whether it is a league and it is very important this is a gap, it just says women's football, what women's football – the National Team? So it is high time we define the market."*⁷⁶ Sunny re-affirmed Joy's point about the need to take inventory. *"...everyone asks us this when we are creating tournaments also when we conceptualize tournaments that how many students will see that, how many schools would be involved and now when Subroto Cup happens they say we have 700 schools and there are 10 international schools coming in and there will be telecasts of this because now it is a very numeric driven game and like he [Joy] is saying they are looking at the number of people watching, outreach, so who is pulling all these numbers together?"*⁷⁷

⁷⁴ See [Annexure B- Transcript of Meeting](#)

⁷⁵ See [Annexure B- Transcript of Meeting](#)

⁷⁶ See [Annexure B- Transcript of Meeting](#)

⁷⁷ See [Annexure B- Transcript of Meeting](#)

Sukhvinder also explained that unlike in cricket where pitches are made to investors in the form of an exchange, in football the sell is to provide the sponsor with a vision or a dream about the future that is logically driven. *“So ultimately the sell, be it to a Panasonic or a Coca Cola, is not what I can give you today but a dream about the future which was logically driven. Yes we certainly can talk about visions and dreams and all of that but when is a corporate going to really buy your particular dream? When it has those logical steps integrated into it, be it a 3 year programme, be it a 5 year programme or even 10 years, people are going to believe it if you have put in enough logic into it.”*⁷⁸

Sukhvinder also felt that if football properties can be developed in conjunction and in partnership with the key stakeholders as well as the investors they will have a far reach. He gave an example of the fact that when Coca Cola renewed its association with the AIFF for the Coca Cola cup they brought in a new partner, IMG Reliance. *“Now the whole idea essentially was not only about getting that bit of branding and board on to the ground when the national championship happened but about ultimately going down to a district level where they want to see at least 20 schools participating per district across 250 districts over a period of 5 years. How can that happen? That certainly needs investment which is pretty much coming but that also needs that bit of energy that needs to be conveyed right from the Federation to the State Association now, thanks to the IMG Reliance coming in and brining in their expertise onto this particular table.”*⁷⁹

Joy spoke of the importance of subdividing assets in women’s football to make it more attractive potential sponsors and investors. *“one of the ways you will get value out of this is subdivide your assets as well, for example Kushal mentioned a few things, supposed you said okay somebody is looking after the women’s under 19 because this is a specific thing, so you go to a Horlicks. Someone who is interested in a women of a particular age-group of a particular category , so I can go and attack that particular category, the amount of money is less , and when I say women’s football it is a very large pie in terms of what I am saying. If I am saying under 19 women’s football this team is going for the next year, sponsor it and what you will get is the value around this team then that’s an asset I can sell separately, and the more small the asset, because my sense today is that there is nobody who wants to come in and put blanket money on Indian women’s football. We have got to break that asset into smaller and smaller things that are all sustainable.”*⁸⁰

⁷⁸ See [Annexure B- Transcript of Meeting](#)

⁷⁹ See [Annexure B- Transcript of Meeting](#)

⁸⁰ See [Annexure B- Transcript of Meeting](#)

Sukvinder agreed with this point, *“the point in discussion that I basically wanted to bring in was how can we start looking at a larger property breaking it up, creating assets, properties and giving them those identities and creating that bit of meaning to connect it back to the investors. That certainly is going to help us a lot.”*⁸¹

In her presentation, Michele spoke of how, on an international level women’s football is coming into its own as a viable piece of commercial property. *“...the last Women’s FIFA World Cup in Germany made a profit so outside the men’s World Cup this is the only event, of all the FIFA World Cups that has made a profit outside a major event. So the women are coming to the fore and the markets are actually understanding, hey this has actually got legs as a commercial property.”*⁸²

ROUND TABLE MEETING: OUTPUTS

At the end of the meeting, all participants engaged in a brainstorming session and as a direct result a number of action points were jointly formulated by the participants to be taken forward. While some of these recommendations were immediately actionable others were more long-term measures that required a bit more time and work.

ACTIONABLE POINTS

1. Getting Football included in the Women’s National Sports Festival

It was felt that this was something tangible that could be taken forward immediately and followed up, as Dr. Ayyangar, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Sports and Youth Affairs seemed to be open to this. *“Now that you have raised this issue, we will take care of it in the new Guidelines”*⁸³. Manjushree Roy, SAI had also promised to go back to the Ministry, relook at their guidelines and rectify this oversight. *“...a question coming from somewhere that football is not included as one of the disciplines for the women’s festival or the rural festival... I do not see any reservation in including football as one of the disciplines. I would be going back and as Dr. Ayaangar said one would have to have a look as to the reason why football has not been included because I think it is a sport which needs to be promoted at all levels...I don’t see any reason why it should not be included in the 2*

⁸¹ See [Annexure B- Transcript of Meeting](#)

⁸² See [Annexure B- Transcript of Meeting](#)

⁸³ See [Annexure B- Transcript of Meeting](#)

schemes. I will definitely like to go back to my Ministry and see whatever can be done in my capacity as a welfare officer of SAI as well.”⁸⁴

2. Creating a common women’s resources platform

Sunny was very keen to pursue this idea and pledged Anglian’s commitment to it. “Common platform- I think a media platform thing this is something we should look at. See we would have to make it ‘sexy’ so there would have to be social media, youtube etc. If CEQUIN would be willing to take this on, I feel that Anglian would be willing to support CEQUIN. I think there needs to be a coalition. As I said earlier NGOs had done earlier and dealt with media. There needs to be a common platform which needs to be a website like a ‘coalition for women’s football’ or something like that, you have to think of a brand, everyone together and as partners. So what is happening here goes out and its available online and Shubhankar Mukerjee could be saying something which could come as a blog or something Coerver Coaching is doing, something IMGR is doing, I think something which is news worthy, something which has images etc. It is very do-able. So CEQUIN and Anglian can work on the costing of it and we can see how to get others also to support it. This is something which needs to get out, that there are all these people stakeholders- who are talking to each other. I feel that this also should get out. Like Rica said, how do these stories get out? This itself should be a story. So this whole thing needs to continuously buzz. Maybe we can even get sponsorship just for the website, just to cover its cost.”⁸⁵

Lora added that while CEQUIN would be happy to act in the capacity of a secretariat for this proposed common platform it was important that all the key stakeholders should take ownership of it and contribute otherwise it would be a wasted effort. “This is THE Network. It can expand but I think we are all stakeholders and CEQUIN is happy to act as a Secretariat for this. But this is a stakeholder group and everybody should have a stake and ownership of this coalition. When we have a coalition like this together, things like the stories going out to media, you have this resource. Each of us has a story so we put it out there so it is a collective effort and it is not an exclusive forum so we can bring in even more people so any of the stakeholders who may identify another key stakeholder and we coopt them and maybe have a key structure, a structured way of going forward, keeping this partnership and going with it so that we don’t just leave it off after but continue to engage and share as it is not always possible to meet in the same city, but yes online engagement is possible. This

⁸⁴ As contained in [Annexure B- Transcript of Meeting](#)

⁸⁵ As contained in [Annexure B- Transcript of Meeting](#)

common space will also enable knowledge sharing even among stakeholders and feed into each other's work and make outcomes bigger.”⁸⁶

3. Creating and logging of assets

Joy asked Sukhvinder if he would take on the responsibility of creating a document which would help identify the 3-4 tangible assets in women's football right now that require pushing. - *“...what are the 5-6 assets that the AIFF owns and what are 3-4 other assets in football, what are the assets we can go and sell, what are the number of people who it will reach because that is the one thing you are the only person with some sort of handle on it because you have done marketing for the AIFF, so if you can say these are the 7-8 things in women's football, then Shubhankar Mukerjee can say the women's team is doing that, then immediately you know okay the focus area is this, can we raise five lakhs for this, can Nike give us kits for this team, you know then break it down cash or kind but it is required.”* Sukhvinder said that he would be very pleased to oblige.

4. Dovetailing women's football with AIFF-IMG Reliance big 'pull' event

As stated above, it was decided that Priti would approach the franchisees with a proposal that they should promote women's football as part of their CSR initiatives. Joy felt that such an event could have a lot of promotional value for women's football only if all opportunities were fully explored and made use of. He provided an example of how women's football could be promoted *“Another thing that you are going to have is a lot of high profile footballers in the country for a while so if someone says here is our top footballer can you take a picture with her and promote that most of them would be more than happy to do that. So let us take every opportunity we can, if top footballers are coming to the country let us use them to push women's football.”⁸⁷*

5. Continued meetings between key stakeholders

The participants all felt this meeting had been a very conducive one and therefore something that should continue. Franz mentioned that *“...this should not be a one-time get together and if there could be a forum where we could get together and discuss and plan and have a feedback on how things are playing out at the grassroots level that would be great- not just conferences but something like this where we are actually talking about specifics and actionable items.”* From a

⁸⁶ As contained in [Annexure B- Transcript of Meeting](#)

⁸⁷ As contained in [Annexure B- Transcript of Meeting](#)

sustainability point of view, Sunny felt that the group should aim to meet physically at least 4 times a year.

6. Supporting the AIFF to achieve their strategic goals and targets

The group also felt that it was extremely important to rally behind the AIFF and provide support in whatever way possible to enable them to carry out their ambitious plans and thereby propel women's football to the forefront in India.

Shubhankar Mukerjee informed the group that he would now be focusing on next year's Asian games for the women's team. *"...so I will pick up the players for the games in January and then put them in to camps and foreign exposures for the next 6 months before they go to the games in South Korea."* Joy expressed his view that it is from such points that India would have to focus on creating idols and stars. He therefore asked Shubhankar Mukherjee to send an email to CEQUIN containing details about whatever he had planned for the Asian Games team then CEQUIN could simply distribute it amongst the rest of the stakeholders. *"...so immediately we all can step in and say okay we can support this, we can push this, we can run this etc."*⁸⁸ Mr. Mukherjee confirmed that he would do so.

Michele offered to advocate on behalf of India at AFDPs roundtable in order to help establish links between foreign football associations, federations, clubs etc in order to facilitate friendly matches between local and foreign football teams.

Urs extended a kind offer of assistance to the AIFF. *"I have been working for over 10 years in women's football now and if I understood you correctly you have your strategic plan in progress now and that you have been receiving assistance on the technical part from Monika Staab. I would like to offer as the AFDP a comprehensive strategic advice that includes media marketing, we have these kinds of experts, we just need to receive request and we need to discuss but we can deploy people here to help you set up because we need to have strategic plan that then we can go out to sponsors and talk to them but we need to, not just on the technical side with Monika Staab we need to talk about media, marketing about all these aspects. So I would like to make this offer to you here and now and if you say yes I will send someone."*⁸⁹ Mr. Das said he was happy to accept on behalf of AIFF.

7. Enhanced focus on improved coaching

⁸⁸ As contained in [Annexure B- Transcript of Meeting](#)

⁸⁹ As contained in [Annexure B- Transcript of Meeting](#)

Offer was made by Michele Cox to provide advice and help with creating coaching manuals adapted to suit India's needs - using her experience of the grassroots programme coaching manuals created in New Zealand as well as her experience with AFDP. These coaching manuals could also be translated into Hindi and if possible other local dialects.

Franz Gastler and coach Bikram Thockchom offered their support in sharing best practices and contributing positively to existing processes.

ACTION PLAN FOR STAKEHOLDERS

| | |
|------------------------------------|--|
| CEQUIN | Plan how to proceed with creating a common platform, structure it and assess its viability and present this to the rest of the participants of the Round Table meeting. |
| | Follow-up with Ministry of Sports regarding inclusion of football in the Women's National Sports Festival. |
| | Work closely with Priti Srivastava to create ideas as to how women's football can be dovetailed into the big 'pull' event being organized by AIFF- IMG Reliance. |
| | Follow up with AIFF on prioritizing women's focus |
| AIFF | Organize a big 'pull' event for women's football next year together with IMG Reliance. |
| | Formally accept AFDP's offer of strategic advice to AIFF. |
| | Consider dovetailing women's football to the big 'pull' event being organized by AIFF-IMG Reliance early next year. |
| | Follow up upon Michele's work on behalf of AIFF and to contact PerRavn.Omdal@fotball.no |
| Sukhvinder Singh, Libero Sports | Prepare a Knowledge Report for a complete assessment of Women's Football in India which will be the basis of identification and structuring of the properties and assets which shall be critical to attract investment for the relevant competitions and projects. |
| | Liaise with AIFF with regard to the possibility of Libero sponsoring a girl's under 15 tournament (discussion started at the meeting). |
| Priti Srivastava, IMG Reliance | Approach the Franchisees for the big 'pull' event and convince them to promote women's football as a part of their CSR initiatives. |

| | |
|-------------|---|
| | Work closely with CEQUIN to create ideas as to how women's football can be dovetailed into the big 'pull' event being organized by AIFF- IMG Reliance. |
| | Work closely with Michele Cox to see about the possibility of creating links with foreign football associations, federations, clubs etc in order to facilitate friendly matches between local and foreign football teams. |
| Michele Cox | Provide advice and help due to her experience working on New Zealand's grass roots programme's coaching manuals and AFDP manuals and help India create similar coaching manuals which would also be translated into Hindi and if possible other local dialects. |
| | Advocate on behalf of India at AFDPs roundtable in order to help establish links between foreign football associations, federations, clubs etc in order to facilitate friendly matches between local and foreign football teams. |
| | Liaise with Priti Srivastava to take it further, regarding creating links with foreign football associations, federations, clubs etc in order to facilitate friendly matches between local and foreign football teams. |

CONCLUSION

The Round Table meeting organized by CEQUIN with the support of UNDP, was a success and indeed a step in the right direction for women's football. It achieved effective outputs in terms of chalking out strategy and action for the stakeholder group to take forward women's football in India.

It enabled key stakeholders from all areas and levels – from Corporates, NGOs, media and top level Government officials to federations, players and coaches, all involved with women's football at the ground, to come together on one platform. Stakeholders were able to share their stories, air their grievances, discuss their views, share knowledge, take stock, discuss strategies and most important of all jointly compile a list of action points derived from the day's intensive discussions.

It is therefore hoped that this meeting which is just a starting point, together with continued efforts from all key stakeholders, will act as a springing board to propel Indian women's football forward and fulfill the prediction that

"The future of football is feminine."⁹⁰

-Joseph S. Blatter, FIFA President

⁹⁰ <http://www.insidethegames.biz/sports/summer/football/1012271-the-future-of-football-will-be-feminine-says-blatter> and <http://www.fifa.com/aboutfifa/organisation/president/presidentcolumn/newsid=1393938/index.html>



ANNEXURE A

Round Table Meeting: List of Participants

| <u>S. No.</u> | <u>Name</u> | <u>Organization</u> | <u>Designation</u> | <u>Email ID</u> | |
|---------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------|--|-----------|
| 1 | Mr. Kushal Das | AIFF | Gen Secretary | kushaldas@the-aiff.com | (SPEAKER) |
| 2 | Mr. Franz Gastler | YUWA | Director | franz.gastler@gmail.com | (SPEAKER) |
| 3 | Mr. Sukhvinder Singh | Libero Sports | MD | sukhvinder.singh@liberosports.com | (SPEAKER) |
| 4 | Dr. GSG Ayyangar | Min of Youth Affairs & Sports | JS, Dev | | (SPEAKER) |
| 5 | Dr. Michele Cox | AFDP | Director | kerimichele.cox@gmail.com | (SPEAKER) |
| 6 | Ms. M. S. Roy | Sports Authority of India | Admin TKSP | | (SPEAKER) |
| 7 | Ms. Rica Roy, | NDTV | | rica@ndtv.com | (SPEAKER) |
| 8 | Mr. Shubhankar Mukherjee | AIFF | Director | shubhankar.m@the-aiff.com | |
| 9 | Ms. Indu Choudhary | AIFF | Team Manager | indu@the-aiff.com | |
| 10 | Mr. Urs Zanitti | AFDP | CEO | zanitti.urs@gmail.com | |
| 11 | Ms. Priti Srivastava | IMG Reliance | VP, Corp. Affairs | Priti.srivastava@rilindia.org | |
| 12 | Mr. Sunny Narang | Anglian Holdings | Chairman | sunny@anglianholdings.com | |
| 13 | Mr. Nikhil Sharma | Anglian Holdings | COO | anandolan@yahoo.com | |
| 14 | Ms. Sonal Kapoor | Magic Bus | Manager Training | sonal_k@magicbusindia.org | |
| 15 | Mr. Bikram Thockchom | Coerver Coaching India | Chairman | thocks5@gmail.com | |

| | | | | | |
|----|-------------------------|----------------------------------|---|--|--|
| 16 | Dr. Mukesh Sagar, | Women's Committee, AIFF | Vice Chairperson | msagar51@gmail.com ; jdmcollege@hotmail.com | |
| 17 | Ms. Anita Sarkar | Football Association, WB, | Coach | | |
| 18 | Ms. Mutum Surmala Chanu | All Manipur Football Association | Member Women's Committee, AIFF | amfa@rediffmail.com , surmachanu23@gmail.com | |
| 19 | Ms. Lise Grande | UNDP | Resident Representative | | |
| 20 | Anjan Roy | Elephant | | anjan@brandplanet.in | |
| 21 | Gulshan Kalra | Coca Cola | Director, Public Affairs & Communications | | |
| 22 | Anjan Roy | Elephant | | anjan@brandplanet.in | |
| 23 | Joy Bhattacharya | Sports Expert | Consultant, CEQUIN | | |
| 24 | Meenu Choudhary | CEQUIN | Coach | | |
| 25 | Sara Pilot | CEQUIN | Chairperson | saracequin@yahoo.com | |
| 26 | Lora Prabhu | CEQUIN | Director | lora.prabhu@gmail.com | |
| 27 | Udiksha Batra | Rapporteur | | udiksha@hotmail.com | |



