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President, Football Association of Iceland
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President, Swedish Football Association
Mr. Jesper Møller
President, Danish Football Association
Mr. Terje Svendsen
President, Football Association of Norway

Zurich, 22 May 2017
P/fad/agr

Dear Presidents, dear colleagues,

Thank you for your letter regarding the reports on the temporary presence of North Korean workers on the construction site of the Zenit Arena in St. Petersburg.

I can assure you that FIFA is fully committed to ensure respect for human and labour right throughout its operations, in accordance with article 3 of our Statutes. As you are well aware of, we have in recent months significantly stepped up our efforts in that regard. Monitoring and enforcing decent working conditions on construction sites related to the FIFA World Cups is an important part of that work. In Russia, FIFA together with the LOC has set up a Decent Work Monitoring System to identify and address adverse impacts on the rights of workers. Through this mechanism, FIFA and the LOC have, in fall 2016, found strong evidence for the presence of North Korean workers on the construction site in St. Petersburg and have taken measures to address the situation.

Please let me use this opportunity to provide you with some additional detail on the steps taken by FIFA and its partners in Russia to monitor and ensure decent working conditions on the stadium construction sites, the situation in St. Petersburg and also share with you some more general information about recent developments of our human rights work.

Decent work monitoring ahead of the 2018 FIFA World Cup in Russia

As part of the preparation for the 2018 FIFA World Cup in Russia, FIFA in collaboration with the Local Organising Committee (LOC) has developed a comprehensive Sustainability Strategy and Action Plan. Ensuring decent working conditions on stadium construction sites is one of the priority issues of that work. In order to address human rights risks related to construction, FIFA and the LOC have developed a Decent Work Monitoring System. On a quarterly basis, a monitoring team visits each stadium construction site for two days. The monitoring system is implemented by the independent expert Institution Klinsky Institute for Labour Protection and Working Conditions, and the inspections are regularly accompanied by FIFA and LOC representatives.

The inspections follow a methodology which was developed specifically for the purpose of monitoring the working conditions on the sites of the 2018 FIFA World Cup in Russia. The inspection team requests and reviews relevant documentation from the companies, inspects construction sites, and interviews construction workers in group interviews and individual on-site interviews. After each monitoring visit, the contractors receive an oral debrief as well as a report with details about the incompliances found and the requested action to be taken. Where incompliances are recurrent or particularly severe, the situations are escalated to the LOC and FIFA as well as, where appropriate, to the Russian authorities.

In an effort to further strengthen and validate the effectiveness of the monitoring system, FIFA and the LOC have signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Building and Woodworkers' International BWI and the Russian trade union for construction workers RBWU. As part of this collaboration, the monitoring visits are regularly accompanied by representatives of BWI and RBWU. Furthermore, the trade unions have provided their input to the monitoring system's methodology.

The situation in St. Petersburg

Many of the adverse human rights impacts described in the Josimar report were detected during our monitoring visits at the Zenit Arena in St. Petersburg in September and November 2016. The incompliances identified included issues related to health and safety, timely payment of salaries and accommodation. As a consequence of the relatively high number of incompliances compared with the other FIFA World Cup stadiums found in St. Petersburg and due to the fatal accidents that happened on that construction site, FIFA and the LOC have required the general contractor to take immediate steps to rectify the issues identified.

With regards to the situation of North Korean workers, FIFA is aware of and firmly condemns the often appalling labour conditions under which North Korean workers are employed in various countries around the world. During its inspection of 22-23 November 2016, which was also accompanied by BWI and RBWU representatives, the monitoring team found strong evidence for the presence of North Korean workers on the construction site in St. Petersburg. The inspection team then engaged in efforts to gain additional information on the working and living conditions of these workers. The issues found were subsequently raised with the respective company and with the general contractor. At the next inspection visit carried out in March 2017, the monitoring team again investigated the presence of North Korean workers and concluded, based on the evidence available, that no nationals of this country were working on the site anymore. This conclusion is also supported by information received separately from BWI.

As a reaction to the findings of the November 2016 inspection in St. Petersburg, FIFA and the LOC decided to expand the scope of the monitoring system. This includes gathering specific information on the potential use of North Korean workers as well as requiring an official written statement from the general contractors on the presence of North Korean workers at the construction sites. FIFA has no evidence of North Korean workers currently being employed on any of the monitored construction sites. In addition to requiring additional information on North Korean workers, FIFA and the LOC decided in January 2017 to expand the scope of the monitoring system to include additional emphasis on accommodation outside the premises of the construction site.

Additional information on FIFA's human rights work

The decent work monitoring system for the 2018 FIFA World Cup in Russia is one example of FIFA's enhanced work on human rights. FIFA's statutory human rights commitment, which came into force in April 2016 was further detailed in October 2016 in the organisational strategy 'FIFA 2.0: The Vision for the Future'. Based on these commitments, FIFA has engaged in a dedicated effort to strengthen and systematise its human rights due diligence processes in line with the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (UNGPs). It thereby also follows guidance from the March 2016 report on FIFA and human rights which FIFA commissioned from Professor John Ruggie, the author of the UNGPs. Furthermore, FIFA is supported in this work by an independent expert Human Rights Advisory Board, comprising representatives from the UN system, civil society, trade unions and FIFA sponsors.

Let me highlight two important elements of our recent work on human rights. The first one is the development and approval of FIFA's Human Rights Policy. The policy follows international best practice and was widely consulted with external stakeholders. It has been approved by the FIFA Council earlier this month and will be published together with an update report on FIFA's activities on human rights in due course. The second element I would like to mention is the integration of human rights requirements in the bidding and hosting process for the 2026 FIFA World Cup. These requirements were equally approved by the FIFA Council at its recent meeting in Bahrain. We are currently in the process of consulting the detailed requirements with the members of the Human Rights Advisory Board and will, in a second phase, include additional stakeholders in that process.

Dear Presidents, I would like to thank you for your interest in our human rights work. We will continue to collaborate closely with our partners in Russia and beyond to pro-actively identify and address adverse human rights impacts that may occur in relation to FIFA's activities. We thereby aim to ensure the highest possible transparency and continue to engage with our stakeholders on an ongoing basis. In that spirit, we look forward to future exchanges with you on that topic.

Yours in football,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'Gianni Infantino', written in a cursive style.

Gianni Infantino