

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY / Friday, 11.3.2022, 3:00-5:15pm CET, ZOOM

THEME: ADVANCING GENDER EQUALITY IN SPORTS

At this occasion last year, we dwelt largely on the celebration of the 50th anniversary of the Right of vote of women in Switzerland and the implication for the African Diaspora women in Switzerland.

This year, we shall explore the world of sports which is unfortunately still predominated by evident gender disparity with resultant effect of under-coverage and payment of women in sports. This has among others led to the inauguration of SPORT FOR GENERATION EQUALITY INITIATIVE by the UN Women. It is in line with this, that Fatma Ahmed, a Generation Equality Champion of UN Women and Founder of the Girls' Inclusion in Sports Campaign based in Zanzibar, Tanzania, posited that the attainment of all of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) depends on the equal and meaningful participation of women and men in all sectors, including sports.¹

Sport has the power to change lives. The ability to drive gender equality by teaching women and girls teamwork, self-reliance, resilience and confidence. Women in sport defy gender stereotypes and social norms; make inspiring role models, and show men and women as equals.²

The debate around gender equality in sports remains a controversial topic, unfortunately. Even the founder of the modern Olympics, Baron Pierre de Coubertin, said in 1896, "No matter how toughened a sportswoman may be, her organism is not cut out to sustain certain shocks."

The debate that had been simmering under the surface and was often confined as a topic of family barbecues or gatherings amongst friends, was ignited and reinvigorated globally in 2019 after the U.S. Women's National Soccer Team (USWNT) won the World Cup and the crowd chanted "Equal Pay!", thus taking a bold stand against 'institutionalized gender discrimination' against the team.

Now we'll be the first to say that the sporting industry is making steps towards an equal future. However, there is still a way to go. Sport has long mirrored society, so the discrepancy in equal pay between men and women has persisted within sport, just as it has in other professions.

Women make up 40% of sportspeople, however as of 2020 they continue to only receive 4% of the total sports media coverage in print and broadcast devoted to them. This is even despite fluctuations during key events like the Olympics or World Cup. The American goalkeeper, Hope Solo, expressed the sad situation succinctly thus: *"We are the best in the world, have three World Cup championships, four Olympic championships, and the men get paid more to just show up than we get paid to win major championships,"*³

The objective of this conversation is to explore together the gender disparity in sports and in support of UN Women, challenge all stakeholders from across the sports ecosystem to be part of a powerful coalition to make gender equality a lived reality in and through sport. Participation in English and French with simultaneous translation is open to all.

1. <https://www.unwomen.org/en/news/stories/2020/4/i-am-generation-equality-fatma-ahmed-on-women-in-sport>

2. <https://www.unwomen.org/en/news/in-focus/women-and-sport>

3. <https://www.athleteassessments.com/gender-equality-debate/>

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DRAFT PROGRAMME: 3:00pm - 5:15pm / ZOOM ID :896 1485 6024, Password : 918359

3:00pm-3:10pm	Introduction and welcome remark	Woman leader African Diaspora Council of Switzerland
3:10pm-3:30pm	Opening remark	Hon Dr. Margaret Kibuchi Mithamo, County Executive Committee Member (Minister) in charge of Gender and Youth, Kirinyaga County, Republic of Kenya
3:30pm-4:00pm	Keynote address	Billie Jean King Founder, Women's Sports Foundation New York, NY 10001
4:00pm-4:45pm	PANEL DISCUSSION	1. Representative of UN Women 2. Representative of the Swiss Women Football Association
4:45pm-5:15pm	Q & A, contributions, observations, initiatives, recommendations / End	Participants

ORGANISERS:

- African Diaspora Council of Switzerland (ADCS)
- African Foundation for Migration and Development (AFMD)
- Ajere African Heritage
- Youth African Leaders
- Jeunesse en Détresse
- Africa Link
- Les Amis du Monde Entier, AME
- ADEPT / Africa Europe Diaspora Development Platform