

Tokyo Sexwale

FIFA presidential election, 2016, candidate manifesto

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Introduction

The forthcoming FIFA Extraordinary Congress of February 2016, scheduled by the recent Extraordinary FIFA Executive Committee Meeting is not just business as usual. This follows the unexpected announcement by the FIFA President to resign, a few days after being elected at the recent 65th FIFA Congress.

All this occurs in the midst of unprecedented action by law enforcement agencies against several leaders of FIFA. As a Presidential candidate, I fully understand that these are difficult times for FIFA, which demands extraordinary and resolute leadership.

These events, do not mean the death knell of football, the biggest sport in the world played since time immemorial and still to be played for many generations to come.

In a way, the situation can and should be utilized to turn things around to renew FIFA, now 111 years old since its inception in 1904.

This Manifesto is the basis for a turn-around strategy, not only to repair the damage done to the FIFA brand globally, but more so, to restructure the organization and win back the trust and confidence of all our stakeholders - fans, players, officials, administrators, partners, sponsors, governments, the media and other important players including children who are football's future.

1. ENHANCED DEMOCRATIZATION OF FIFA

1.1 When all is said and done, Football Associations (F.A.'s) from all 205 countries must have ownership of FIFA through directly electing the Executive at Congress, in the same way they elect the President. This will resolve the electoral discrepancy of F.A.'s only electing the President at congress whose "cabinet" is appointed elsewhere.

1.2 This full transparency of the electoral process shall ensure that FIFA adheres to the principles of international best practice and good governance which is today's yardstick for measuring global organization like ours.

1.3 This manifesto therefore, is in full support of the decision by the FIFA Executive Committee to set in motion the process of the 2016 FIFA Reform Committee, appointed by the six FIFA Confederations, aimed at recommending "significant changes to FIFA's institutional structure and operational processes". The watchword is Transparency – both in decision-making and in financial management and control systems.

2. GROWING AND DEVELOPING FOOTBALL WORLDWIDE

2.1 FIFA is an organization of relatively wealthy and needy Members Associations. This reality is a reflection of our world of rich and poor nations. Therefore, the development support and financial assistance programme for less well-to-do F.A.'s must be strengthened. While maintaining adequate cash reserves to maintain FIFA as a going concern, a prudent distribution of funds to F.A.'s will be done in an equitable and responsible manner.

2.2 Football the world's biggest sport, must continue to be enhance in all 205 nations. It is currently played by approximately 300 million people and watched by billions across the world. There is room for more growth and development. This is my strategic priority.

2.3 Thus, the vast and yet-to-be fully tapped market of football in large societies, eg. China and India, will receive more attention with the strong probability of increased revenue sources from these large economic areas.

2.4 Concerning the game in football's traditional areas eg. Europe; everything shall be done to ensure its growth because it is not in every part of Europe that football is played in major centres like Wembley, Benebeau or Allianz. There are disadvantaged areas in Europe, far away from the glare of cameras at centres such as Wembley.

2.5 The importance of the growth of football in wealthier territories of the world cannot be over-emphasised as more revenues for the game emanate therefrom. Thus, the goose that lays the golden egg needs to be nurtured.

2.6 However, the greatest area of need for the development of football away from centres like Europe is in the developing world – Oceania, parts CONCACAF, parts of Asia and parts of Conmebol. Of all these areas of vast need is Africa, which at the bottom of the ladder is the poorest of them all. Consequently, a special emphasise ought to be devoted to the development of the game among Africa's approximately 1 billion people. This is only logical.

2.7 No serious-minded football development programme can ever be complete without paying attention to one of the biggest untapped markets in the game: women's participation in football. In many societies, they constitute the majority. Attracting more women into the beautiful game, both as participants, spectators, more executive members and so on, can only enhance the growth of the sport.

2.8 The case in point has been made by the recent Women's FIFA World Cup in Canada as well as the previous one in Germany. In a word, my Presidency will labour tirelessly for football's development in all the above mentioned areas.

3. HANDS-ON PRESIDENT – WITH A PERSONAL TOUCH

3.1 The importance of being a hands-on president with a personal touch and measured authority over the Secretary General can never be over-emphasised. In this light, my track record as a former Premier, Government Minister and business executive in charge of, or having served on boards of global companies, whose asset value is larger than those in FIFA's coffers, shall come in handy to turn the situation around.

3.2 My global corporate experience with links and networks to many major global companies, is an advantage to ensure that more and high quality sponsors are negotiated into our game to bolster our coffers.

3.3 An open door policy to the President's Office shall be the norm to allow stakeholders easier access. Every FA's President will have direct tele-contact with myself. They need not bang the door to see their own FIFA President on very serious matters.

3.4 In short, as President, I shall devote sufficient quality time to FIFA to ensure that my thumb, as well as that of my executive, is always on the FIFA pulse, its policies, administration, operations and other football related matters.

4. BOOSTING THE COFFERS OF ASSOCIATIONS

Many FAs, especially those from less developed economies, run their football administrations with shoe-string budgets. Up and above the financial allocations from FIFA, in order to address this situation, and to help boost their coffers, the following shall be undertaken to ensure financial independence:

4.1 Interaction with local/country-based corporates to assist FAs in their drive for sponsorships, including other fund raising events. This will strengthen the hand of FAs in respect of running leagues and monitoring clubs both at professional and amateur levels. FAs also need to have a strong developmental system regarding football facilities such as training grounds, playing fields and football academies.

4.2 The majority of football playing fields in the world are bare brown patches versus lush green pitches. The development strategy of my presidency will ensure that at the end of the day the ratio of brown patches to green pitches improves significantly for the better in every country under the stewardship of the FAs.

4.3 To seriously explore the possibility of having the national jersey, as happens in other sporting codes, bearing the logo of the main sponsor – not only the jersey-maker as currently is the case. There is space there for much value worth millions of dollars which will be destined directly into FAs coffers!

5. ANTI RACISM TO OCCUPY CENTRE STAGE

5.1 FIFA Unites – Racism Divides! Of all threats to the united spirit of our game the greatest of them all is racism and other forms of discrimination. This is because racism in particular divides human beings and destroys the game itself – it is toxic!

5.2 Therefore, to address the growing criticism that FIFA is too soft on this question, the Anti-Racism Task Force shall be elevated to a FIFA Standing Committee, to be chaired by one of the FIFA Vice Presidents with myself as the President being an ex-officio member. The time has come for severe steps to be taken against this evil, for the sake of the beautiful game.

6. CONFEDERATIONS – THE SIX PILLARS OF FIFA

6.1 Football cannot be controlled from Zurich. Confederation will still remain the mainstay of co-ordination notwithstanding the envisaged reforms. This applies particularly to their right to organise their own international competitions and fund raising campaigns.

6.2 FIFA Vice Presidents, from the Confederations, shall continue to enjoy direct and personal links to the FIFA President to ensure maximum co-ordination between the FIFA Executive and Confederations.

6.3 Regarding funds, the FIFA Exco shall review the financial situation to ensure that there is a much fairer distribution of funds, so that each Confederation can exercise greater financial independence.

7. NUMBERS TELL A STORY OF 111 YEARS

CONFEDERATIONS:	MEMBERS:	FIFA WCUP SLOTS:	EXCO:
CAF	54	5	4
UEFA	53	13	7
AFC	46	4.5	4
CONCACAF	35	3.5	3
CONNEBOL	10	4.5	3
OCEANA	11	0.5	1

After 111 years of its existence, FIFA needs to take a hard look, with sensitivity, at these imbalances – not in opposition to any grouping but in favour of football.

8. FIFA WORLD CUP

8.1 The most prized and powerful of all FIFA's events is the FIFA World cup. The potential of this event in bolstering FIFA's finances is a key-factor. Each World Cup is unique in itself and is critical for FIFA's negotiating stance in respect of the next one.

8.2 Thus the recent occurrence of awarding two World Cups simultaneously should never be repeated. Similarly, because of the above, I fully support FIFA's EXCO's decision to postpone the awarding of the 2026 World Cup until this has been thoroughly considered by the next FIFA Executive Committee.

8.3 Concerning the number of national teams in the World Cup qualifications, it is proposed that this should be above the current 32 teams – subject to an inclusive discussion by the FIFA EXCO which should consider the administrative practicalities of any changes towards the enhancement of the World Cup.

9. FIFA INTERNATIONAL ADVISORY BOARD

9.1 As part of the effort to win-back the trust and confidence of various stakeholders following the disruptive corruption allegations which have damaged the FIFA brand, I plan to establish a FIFA Independent International Advisory Board.

9.2 This will be composed of ELEVEN internationally respected eminent persons from various walks of life including football. Such a board shall meet once annually to share its critical views with and about FIFA. As such, FIFA can only become stronger and more trusted around the world.

10. IN DEFENCE SPONSOR ACTIVISM

10.1 The principles of international best practice nowadays demand that shareholders of companies should know what their companies are doing with their funds. Thus shareholder activism is the norm. In this respect, several sponsors and partners of FIFA have expressed disquiet regarding recent corruption related media reports. Therefore, sponsor-activism should be more than welcomed and defended – after all it is their money that is at stake.

10.2 This manifesto however, sounds a word of caution regarding unintended consequences of such noble activism. Nothing should ever leave an impression that any sponsor may exploit the nobility of activism to try and influence decisions regarding who should/should not be a leader of FIFA or any sporting code for that matter.

10.3 Such a situation may lend itself to the corruption of FIFA's decision-making processes. Two wrongs don't equal to one right. Nevertheless a Sponsor's Forum shall be established in order to give comfort to sponsors that their concerns are addressed. This is aimed at demonstrating our Open Books Policy and Financial Transparency.

11. PROTECTION OF PLAYERS FROM EXPLOITATION AND PREVENTION OF FOOTBALL CHILD TRAFFICKING

11.1 My Presidency, working in collaboration with all 209 FAs, will ensure that players are protected from crass exploitation by unscrupulous persons. While it is acknowledged that there are good managers of players, it is also true that there are fly-by-nights to whom players are seen as commodities for making a quick buck. The recent FIFA rules in this regard shall be strictly enforced.

11.2 One of football's hidden shame concerns the exploitation of young children who are taken away from their parents/guardians under false pretences by dodgy characters with promises to turn them into football stars in Europe in particular; only to leave them languishing in hovels in the backyard of some foreign countries.

11.3 Children, football's grassroots, are future stars of the game and should be protected. Zero tolerance, in collaboration with law enforcement agencies, shall be undertaken against the abhorrent child trafficking practises for severe criminal action against perpetrators.

Conclusion

This manifesto is aimed at FIFA's Renewal to bring our football organization in line with international best practices around its policies and good governance; Around its administration, transparency in its decision-making processes as well as finances. All focussed upon the development of football. This Manifesto talks to the upholding of basic principles, ethics and integrity concerning the conduct of the game's leadership.

My Presidency will ensure that all these are undertaken for the sake of the beautiful game and FIFA's Football Family across the world. Afterall, football as a sport, a lifestyle, a culture, an economic multiplier, a social unifier, has become something more – IT IS MORE THAN JUST A GAME!