

FIFA's Total Disregard for Democracy and Well-being of people



In Brazil, FIFA does dirty work for alcohol industry, ignoring evidence and social needs.

On Tuesday, a special committee of the General Chamber of Delegates of the Brazilian parliament is going to vote on the so called “World Cup Law” (“Lei Geral da Copa”), a key bill to regulate the Football World Cup 2014.

Meanwhile, the relations of Fifa, football’s world governing body, with the Brazilian government and other public figures of society have broken down, as Fifa continues to bully and insult Brazilians. Fifa Secretary-General Valcke is quoted: “We should have received these documents signed by 2007 and we are in 2012. You have to push yourself, get a kick up the backside and just deliver this World Cup.”

The Brazilian government reacted to this vulgar statement through the Sports Minister who will deliver a letter to Fifa demanding Mr. Valcke’s removal. “In the light of these statements, which are unacceptable comments for any type of relationship, the Brazilian government no longer accepts Secretary-General Valcke as an interlocutor.”

“We all know by now that Fifa has had problems with corruption, and living up to democratic values,” says Mr. Sven-Olov Carlsson, the President of IOGT International. “But to pressure and insult a democratically elected government and attempt to alter policies put in place to protect Brazilian people, this really tops the list of Fifa’s failures.”

In efforts to reduce alcohol-related violence and protect public health and social development, Brazilian football stadiums have been kept free from alcohol sales since 2003. These measures go along with scientific evidence from, among others, a WHO study, which included Brazil, showing that ca. 46% of violent incidents seen in emergency rooms are related to alcohol use.

Mr. Bruce Lee Livingston, Executive Director/ CEO of Alcohol Justice, an industry watchdog, comments the current developments: “Congratulations to the Brazilian government for thoughtfully considering whether public safety and national sovereignty is more important than dancing to the beat of Fifa. Fifa needs to back off on doing the dirty work for the alcohol industry to get back into the stadiums of Brazil.”

The problem for Fifa is that World Cup hosts Brazil, Russia (2018) and Qatar (2022) all have bans on alcohol sales to protect society, especially children and families. But Fifa even speaks of a “right to sell beer”.

“Fifa totally ignores a country’s needs, and what’s best for children and youth,” says Mr. Sven-Olov Carlsson, President of IOGT International. “Nobody but Fifa and the alcohol industry has ever heard of ‘a right to sell beer’. What we do know comes from the Convention of the Rights of the Child: children have the right that their best interest is given primary consideration whenever policies are made. It’s simple. Obviously the Brazilian government is trying to live up to this. But whose interest is Fifa giving primary consideration to?”

