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The Confederation of North, Central America and Caribbean Association Football

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CONCACAF unveils Embrace Diversity anti-racism and discrimination campaign

Gold Cup kicks off with social responsibility awareness initiative

LOS ANGELES (Sunday, July 7, 2013) CONCACAF launched its Embrace Diversity campaign prior to the Gold Cup's first game at the Rose Bowl in Pasadena. CONCACAF President and Chairman of FIFA's Anti-Racism and Discrimination Task Force, Jeffrey Webb, and CONCACAF General Secretary, Enrique Sanz, presented the vision of this regional initiative created to provide a strong, recognized, effective and influential voice to promote integration within the football community and society.

"We have a special responsibility in the way we can impact football and society," said Webb during his opening remarks. "CONCACAF has the opportunity to lead the way by implementing its first awareness campaign that supports the basic social principle of integration among cultures, religions, genders and races. We need to recognize that we have a great deal to learn about each other and must embrace this opportunity for the evolution of our beautiful game."²

The Embrace Diversity campaign, unveiled before the Gold Cup opener between Canada and Martinique, will be showcased on field boards throughout each of the competition's 25 games. By working towards creating an environment of deference that fosters football's continuous journey to impart positive role models to society, CONCACAF has initiated a long-term crusade to instill values that advocate integration.

³Even though we have come a long way in the pursuit of integration, discrimination still plays an active role as an unfortunate reflection of society within our game,² added Sanz. ³The CONCACAF family is committed to enhancing the benefits of embracing diversity within our region in our quest to eliminate any type of discrimination from our fields. These are the first steps into a broader global mandate led by President Webb.²

Following FIFA Member Associations¹ approval of the Anti-Racism and Discrimination resolutions during its 63rd Congress held in Mauritius, the implementation of CONCACAF's campaign will support the goal of bringing universality to the mechanisms that combat racism and discrimination across all regions. The resolutions proposed by FIFA's newly-formed task force, led by Webb, were developed to promote equality of rights to all people and eliminate race-based discrimination in every region and every country where football is played through sanction, education and prevention.

"I am extremely pleased that the football family has finally united with a firm stance to provide a strong, effective and influential voice against all forms of racism and discrimination through focusing on education, prevention and sanctions," said Webb. "I am honored to have been asked to chair this crucial task force."

Supporting this important landmark, CONCACAF's Embrace Diversity campaign was developed as a first step to take action on discrimination concerns raised within the football community in the region. In the future, it may include educational and awareness activities, coalition campaigns, prevention and legislation that can facilitate the referral of concerns around discrimination incidents within football.

³By safeguarding the basic principle of respect amongst all individuals in our stadiums, we hope to contribute to remove discrimination barriers within society,² added Webb. ³Ignorance and prejudice are the ill of humanity. We want to make sure that nothing steers the focus away from the game of football.²

Webb was appointed Chairman of FIFA's Anti-Racism and Discrimination Task Force by President Joseph Blatter in March 1st, 2013, with the directive to oversee all matters related to racism in football.

³Needless to say the challenges are numerous, but creating an environment of cooperation and establishing a clear roadmap to the desired goal will surely advance football's continuous journey to fostering integration within the football community,² concluded Webb.