



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization



FCBARCELONA
més que un club

**Joint message from Irina Bokova,
Director-General of UNESCO
and Joan Laporta i Estruch
FC Barcelona's President
on the launching of an Anti-racism Campaign**

Football possesses truly extraordinary powers to unite people of all origins, filling giant stadiums and drawing vast global television audiences.

On the field, too, almost no other sport can boast football's multi-cultural credentials. The players who make up the world's greatest football teams hail from all parts of the globe, and football matches provide us with some of the best examples of co-operation in action, when players pull together, putting the interest of the team first.

Yet with all its potential to unite, "the beautiful game", as football fans call it, continues to be hijacked by those who would turn it ugly, by insulting or causing physical harm to players and supporters on the basis of racial hatred. We believe strongly that the vast majority of football players and fans would like to give racism the red card.

Today, on this International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, UNESCO and FC Barcelona are pleased to announce the start of a year-long anti-racism campaign.

The campaign will kick off at FC Barcelona's fixture against Osasuna on March 24th, 2010, at Barcelona's Camp Nou Stadium with messages rejecting racism. The launch will be followed by a number of activities throughout the year, commencing

with a press conference featuring Barcelona players adding their voice to the public rejection of racism.

The campaign is a new initiative resulting from the partnership between UNESCO and FC Barcelona, launched in November 2007.

One of the partnership's milestone projects was "Youth Voices Against Racism". Launched in collaboration with the European Parliament and UNESCO's European Coalition of Cities against Racism, the groundbreaking scheme involved young people between the ages of 15 and 18 in policy-making and the design of activities to combat racism at the municipal level. Many of their suggestions will be put into practice in this new campaign.

Already since July 2009, the European Club Association (ECA), which represents 144 clubs, is promoting at the initiative of FC Barcelona the idea of anti-racism clauses in athletes' contracts. This recommendation of the Youth Voices project puts players at the forefront in setting the best possible example for their fans.

The injustice of racism doesn't only undermine the spirit of football, it is a scourge on society as a whole, eroding social cohesion, spreading hatred and fear and making society less safe for all of us.

Stricter laws and penalties do much to help tackle racism, as do partnerships such as the one between UNESCO and FC Barcelona. But everyone's help is needed.

Sports men and women, football fans, opinion leaders, media, educators, and all those with influence to bear, join us in blowing the final whistle on racism. PUT RACISM OFFSIDE.



Irina Bokova
Director-General of UNESCO



Joan Laporta i Estruch
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