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**PRESS RELEASE
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

BLUEPRINT FOR ENSURING SAFER SPORT IN CANADA UNVEILED

Ground-breaking report sets out a framework for protecting athletes from abuse, harassment and discrimination through a national safe-sport body

Toronto, Ontario – December 8, 2020 – Canada is taking a major step forward in protecting athletes from abuse, harassment and discrimination, with the publication of McLaren Global Sport Solutions’ (MGSS) final report and recommendations for implementing the Universal Code of Conduct to Prevent and Address Maltreatment in Sport (UCCMS or Universal Code).

The report is one of the most comprehensive analyses of the Canadian safe sport landscape ever conducted and addresses the challenges inherent in putting in place a pan-Canadian mechanism to deal with maltreatment in sport.

PROTECTING ATHLETES

“The urgency of getting on with the task of accepting the Universal Code and having a body to administer it is underscored by several high-profile abuse cases in Canada in recent years,” said Professor Richard McLaren, O.C., CEO of MGSS. “Until the development of the Universal Code there has been limited enforcement and an inconsistent system of safeguarding Canadian athletes. It is time to put a mechanism in place that effectively implements the Universal Code to protect athletes at every level.”

The UCCMS, developed by the Canadian sport community, addresses maltreatment broadly and comprehensively, covering all types of conduct that inflict physical or psychological harm by a person against another person, within the sport community. Adoption and integration of the UCCMS into organisational policies and procedures will become a condition of all federally funded, national-level sport organisations by 1 April 2021.

Professor McLaren, MGSS senior vice president Bob Copeland, and lawyer Diana Tesic co-led the project and were assisted by a dedicated research team.



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A NATIONAL SAFE-SPORT ORGANISATION

The 411-page report includes a total of 101 recommendations.

MGSS undertook extensive consultation including significant feedback from stakeholders in the Canadian sport sectors as well as international experts in maltreatment and subject matter experts in investigations, child protection, and sexual violence. This included personal interviews with more than 90 individuals and survey responses from 104 national and provincial sport governing bodies.

The result of the work led the MGSS team to recommend the structure, responsibilities and phases of implementation for a National Independent Mechanism (NIM) to administer the UCCMS at the national level.

“Our recommendations outline a robust national mechanism that can scale to support provincial and community sport over time. The jurisdictional issues in Canada are complex, but it is important that any framework provide the flexibility and autonomy for provincial sport organisations to participate as time goes on and the environment evolves,” said Diana Tesic, a co-lead on the report.

The report also provides an independent analysis of existing research and evidence-informed best practices both in Canada and internationally.

“We are encouraged by the level of consensus amongst the amateur sport community in Canada for the need for a completely independent mechanism to prevent and address maltreatment in sport. This mechanism needs a champion, a singular focus on maltreatment in sport, and resources to ensure sustainability,” said Professor McLaren.

MGSS was selected through a public request for proposals process in June 2020. The MGSS team brings a deep understanding of the Canadian and international safe sport landscape and an independent lens to this project – both critical to conducting a credible analysis that will help inform how the UCCMS is implemented and scalable to all levels of sport within Canada.



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The Report is available at the following link: <https://sirc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/MGSS-Report-on-Independent-Approaches-December-2020.pdf>

The RFP for the Independent Safe Sport Mechanism is available at the following link: <https://www.canada.ca/en/canadian-heritage/services/funding/sport-support/independent-safe-sport-mechanism.html>

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