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FIFA President Gianni Infantino's pre-World Cup 2022 news conference remarks

▣ *FIFA President Gianni Infantino was expected to hold a 45-minute, pre-World Cup news conference on Saturday, 19 November 2022 in Doha, Qatar, but instead launched into an [hour-long perspective](#) on the forthcoming World Cup and the criticisms it has received.*

Delivered with a casual, yet forceful tone, this session will be remembered and studied in the future as an example of an aggressive defense of a organization's viewpoint. For the record, here is a best-efforts transcript of Swiss native Infantino's remarks, taken from the FIFA video of the event. Some bracketed additions have been inserted to enhance clarity.



FIFA President Gianni Infantino

I hope you have time for the opening remarks. Of course, welcome to all of you, it's a pleasure to see you here, and to have you here.

I've been pretty quiet in the last few months, working behind the scenes, observing what was going on, trying to do my best, together with the team, and today, one day before the kickoff of the World Cup, I thought it is important to meet all of you and to discuss about some, if not all, of the topics which have been rightly or wrongly put on the table in the last few months. Some would say the last few years, but honestly what has been picked up in the last few months, it has been something quite incredible, I would say.

So let's look at that, and then let's hopefully speak a little bit about football if you're not too tired.

Today, I have very strong feeling, I can tell you that. Today, I feel Qatari. Today, I feel Arab. Today, I feel African. Today, I feel gay. Today, I feel disabled. Today, I feel a migrant worker.

And I feel this, all this, because what I have been seeing and what I've been told – since I don't read, otherwise I will be depressed, I think – what I see brings me back to my personal story. I am [the] son of migrant workers.

My parents were working very, very hard, in very, very difficult conditions. Not in Qatar, in Switzerland. I remember very well, very well and I'm not 150 years old, and I'm not speaking about apartheid in South Africa; I remember very well where the migrant workers in Switzerland were living, how they were living, what rights they had or they didn't have. And I'm not 150 years old yet, even if someday I am 150 years old. I remember as a child how migrant workers were treated when they wanted to enter the country, to look for work, at the border. I remember what happened to their passports, with their medical checks, with their accommodation. And when I came to Doha the first time, after I was elected FIFA President, I went to see some of these worker's accommodations here. And I was brought back to my childhood.

And I said to the people here in Qatar, 'this is not good, this is not right, a little bit.' And the same as Switzerland today has become an example of inclusion, of tolerance of nationalities, working together – with rights – Qatar has made progress as well. I will come back to that, because I feel many other things as well.

Of course, I am not Qatari, I am not Arab, I am not African, I'm not gay, I'm not disabled, I'm not really a migrant worker. But I feel like them, because I know what it means to be discriminated, to be bullied, as a foreigner in a foreign country. As a child, at school, I was bullied because I had red hair and I had these red – how you call them – freckles (you see, I don't even know the term); I was bullied, of course, for that. Plus, I was Italian, so imagine ... didn't speak good German.

And what do you do then? You lock yourself down, you do to your room, you cry. And then you try to make some friends. And you try to speak, to engage. And you try to get these friends to engage as well with others, and others and others. Don't start accusing, fighting, insulting; you start engaging. And this is what we should be doing.

I feel as well, very much, for the FIFA staff, for the Supreme Committee staff, for all the Q22 staff, for all the volunteers, [FIFA spokesman] Bryan [Swanson] here, all the others – also there – they are all here because they want to deliver to you and to the world an incredible football event. They are all proud to be here. I am proud to have this FIFA sign on my jacket. It's not easy, every day and every day, to read all these critics for decisions which have been taken 12 years when nobody of us was there, and now everyone knows that we have to make the best out of it, and we have to make the best World Cup ever.

And Doha is ready. Qatar is ready. It will be the best World Cup ever, of course, because you know better than me, the magic of football as soon as this ball rolls, people will concentrate on that. Because that's what people want.

So I applaud all those who are engaged here, more than 100,000 people are caring for you, for all the one and a half million fans coming from abroad, one and a half million from here in terms of giving them the necessary security, advice, help, food, cleaning, everything. And they are all proud to do that. They are all proud to do that. And I thank them for doing that.

What is sad is that, especially in the last weeks, we have been assisting on – in some places – of moral, of double moral, I would say.

So let's start with the migrant workers, if you allow me. We have told many, many lessons from some Europeans, from the Western world. I'm European – actually I am European – not just I feel European. I think for what we Europeans have been doing in the last 3,000 years around the world, we should be apologizing for the next 3,000 years, before starting to give moral lessons to people.

I came here six years ago and addressed the matter of migrant workers, straight on, at my very first meeting. How many of the European or Western business companies, who earn millions and millions from Qatar – or other countries in the region – billions, every year, how many of them have addressed migrant worker's rights, with the authorities?

I have the answer to you: none of them. None of them, because [that means changing] the legislation, which means less profit. Instead of one billion, well maybe you make only 900 million. But we did and FIFA generates much, much, much less than any of these companies, from Qatar.

We see here as well many government representatives from many countries, coming to Qatar. I don't have to defend in any way whatsoever Qatar, they can defend themselves. I'm defending football here. And in justice.

They all come because it happens that a country which just had sand and some pearls in the sea, well, actually they found they have something which is worth much more: it's gas. If there was no gas, nobody would care. But now they all come and they all want something, and who is actually caring about the workers. Who?

FIFA does. Football does. The World Cup does. And to be fair to them, Qatar does, as well.

I was at an event a few days ago where we explained what we are doing in this World Cup for disabled people. Today, I don't know how many journalists – how many journalists do you have here? 400 journalists are here – that event was covered by this [holds up four fingers], probably. There is one billion disabled people in the world, one billion disabled people, nobody cares. Nobody cares. Fifteen percent of the world's population is disabled; nobody cares. Four journalists.

You think they don't suffer, so we don't have to care? But workers suffer, LBGTs suffer, of course, but disabled people don't. Of course they do, and of course we have to care, and of course we have to do things to help them as well like we have to do with the workers, like we do for the LBGT and for any minority, anyone that is in any way suffering, or being abused.

So, speaking about workers, I bumped into a migrant study, not a FIFA study, a Human Rights Watch study, one of these companies that I think is also criticizing certainly FIFA, certainly rightfully, many times, I guess. What that study says, basically, is because of the European migration policy, 25,000 migrants died since 2014, in eight years. A thousand, two hundred only this year. Human beings died.

So if we take two steps back of this – I also wonder, but I always come back to that – why nobody ask for a compensation to be paid for the families of these migrants who died. Their life is not worth the same?

Where are we going? Where are we going with our way of working, guys? We have to ask this ourselves; where is the world going?

So if you go two steps back and you look at this issue of migration, and the situation of hundreds of thousands of women and men from developing countries who would like to offer their services abroad, in order to help and to give a future to their families back home, well Qatar is actually offering them this opportunity. Hundreds of thousands of workers of developing countries come here, they earn 10 times more than what they earn in their home country and help their families to survive. And within a legal way.

We in Europe, we close our borders and we don't allow practically any worker from these countries, who earn obviously very low income, to work legally in our countries, because we all know there are many illegal workers in our European countries [in] living conditions which are also not really the best.

So those who reach Europe, or those who want to go to Europe, they have to go through a very difficult journey, and survive. So if Europe would really care about the destiny of these people, of these young people, well, Europe could also do as Qatar did: create some channels, legal channels, where at least a number, a percentage of these workers could come to Europe, low revenues, but give them some work, give them some future, give them some hope.

This doesn't mean that we should appoint what doesn't work, here in Qatar as well. Of course, there are still things that don't work and they need to be addressed. But, this moral lesson-giving, one-sided, it's just hypocrisy.

So I wonder why nobody recognized the progress that has been made, since 2016. The kafala system was abolished, minimum wages were introduced, heat protection measures were taken. ILO [International Labor Organisation], international unions acknowledge that, but media don't, or some don't.

It's difficult for a worker who comes to Qatar to go back home because, thanks to him coming here, even in difficult situations, which were comparable to situations of European migrants in Europe a few decades ago, but thanks to that he can make his family live in his country because he earns 10 times or even more a year. So why? Why couldn't we do something like this in Europe and so something much better for many more people all over the world.

So, I really don't understand, or have difficulties to understand this criticism. I think we need to invest in helping these people, of course. I will come back to that. We need to invest in education, to give them a better future, to give them more hope, speaking about the workers or their children.

But I am speaking about all of us. We should all educate ourselves, and whilst many, many things are not perfect, reform and change takes time. It took hundreds of years in our countries in Europe – where we think we’ve achieved the top – I wonder if that’s the case. It takes time everywhere and the only way of obtaining results is by engaging, searching the dialogue, not by hammering, insulting. When your child does something bad at school and you tell him, ‘you’re an idiot, you’re useless’ and you put him in his room, what do you think his reaction will be? If you engage with him, if you speak to him, if you ask him why you did this, let’s work together and you will have better grades, or whatever, he will recognize that. And he will be better. I don’t want to give you any lessons of life. I’m just realizing that what is going on here is profoundly, profoundly, unjust.

Many international organizations – ILO, ITUC [International Trade Union Confederation], BWI [Building and Wood Workers’ International] – have recognized that the workers’ standards here are similar to those in Western Europe, to those in Western Europe. The salaries might be lower, but the workers’ standards, the safety and security are similar. I’ve never read this anywhere, except in the reports of these organizations. This is not the case 10 years ago, it is the case now.

Let’s see what happens, as well, in the next 10 years. And in this respect, since we talk about workers, then I will move to other topics as well – I think it will be longer than 45 minutes – but we have time, the World Cup only kicks off tomorrow night; let me tell you three things, regarding workers.

Since I was receiving there as well many, even personal – I don’t know how to call it – even threats, there was a demand somewhere about a center, or whatever, because workers don’t know where to go if they have questions or if they need help. And I am very pleased, I don’t know whether the text I have it here, yes. I am very pleased to be having discussions with the government in Qatar, and the Director General of ILO – I met him two days ago in Bali at the occasion of the G20; [Director General] Dr. Gilbert [Houngbo] from ILO, he was there – and I am happy because there is a real prospect and there are some formalities to be carried out, of a dedicated office, that would be a permanent office, ILO office – International Labor Organisation office – which will be having its headquarters here in Doha.

This is a real progress because this is a place where workers can go through as well, their unions will be integrated, of course, in the ILO office, can go and seek for assistance. I believe this is a big commitment, by both the Qatari government and ILO. Not something that FIFA can influence; Qatar is a sovereign state. ILO is a U.N. organization. FIFA cannot tell them what they have to do, but we can engage with them. We can spend days and nights speaking with them, and we are there. There will be an ILO permanent office which will serve exactly the purpose which was asked for to assist everyone who is here, show them their rights and remedies possible.

And there is one. The second one that has been brought to us, and I want to tell you again, we do not react based on whatever pressure we receive. We act when we decide the time to act has come. So I have been speaking with many from football – I will not mention them – or outside of football, who tell me, ‘you know, we have to say these things in public because we have a lot of pressure from our media, but in reality, you know, we are with you or this or that or the other.’ We are not like that. We don’t react to pressure. Pressure is negative. Engagement is positive. So when we are ready, we do

things. When it comes to compensation of workers as well, you should know that there is a legal framework to cover worker's compensation, in a sovereign country. Do you think FIFA can go to England, or to the U.S. or to Italy, and tell the governments, 'you know what, we come and we establish a system of compensation for migrant workers in your country.' Already they have a lot to deal with; workers with or without papers, who have no compensation at all. At least all workers in Qatar, because they are legally here, they have a compensation scheme. And Qatar established a Worker's Support and Insurance Fund, to support compensation claims.

Since 2018, this fund has paid over 350 million U.S. dollars to workers in need, the majority of that for unpaid wages. But also for accidents, of course, of workers. Because every worker that has an accident receives a compensation by law. And depending on the gravity of the accident, the compensation can be several years of salary. And if in the last four years, 350 million were paid, I suspect that in the next four years, nothing changes and we have the same types of unpaid wages and incidents that we had in the last four years, another 350 million will be paid, bringing us to 700 million, hypothetically, in eight years time.

Could be more, God forbid, if something bad happens. Hopefully, will be much less, because the companies who are operating here who don't want to pay the wages – Western companies – they realize it's better for them to pay the wages, or enhance the security, so we will have less accidents and much less you will have to pay.

And this is one thing and the second thing that I was pleased about is that the Minister of Labor himself mentioned at the European Parliament, that if in the past – when we are speaking about the recent past, the last four years, and the future, the next four years – if in the past, there is a worker who has not received due compensation in accordance with the laws of Qatar, which are public – you can go and see them, Article 110 and following of the Qatar Labor Code. If somebody has not received it, he or his family can go to the Ministry of Labor and seek for compensation.

And if you don't get it, let us know. And we will help you. Because this is new, by law. It's not new because somebody asks us to do something that then will have to be managed in a way that nobody knows how, where also all unions would have been against.

But that's not the end of it, because the third announcement linked with workers is with regard to the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022 Legacy Fund. So we have been seeing [1] there is a permanent office of ILO, or there will be – and we will be back, we will be here to check, don't worry, because you will be gone – [2] compensation for workers who are not paid or who have accidents, exists, in very significant amounts, and [3] FIFA has a Legacy Fund for this World Cup. Now the amount of this Legacy Fund will be decided after the World Cup. It will certainly be a percentage of the revenues of the World Cup, but since so many people around the world have been speaking out on this topic – for the first time – FIFA is opening its compensation ... Legacy – sorry, it's Legacy – Fund to anyone who wants to invest in it. We'll publish the details; anyone who wants to invest in the FIFA World Cup 2022 Legacy Fund shall invest, and also invest[ing] a certain amount, will be part of a Board that can decide where the money goes. Now, where should this money go?

The two ideas that we have, we shall submit them, of course, to the Council; they should go first to education, because we believe that children, especially children in developing countries, should receive appropriate education, so they can build a better future. We signed an agreement two weeks ago with the state of India, where we help 25 million children in India through education. So we want to focus on education and especially education of girls and women, because it's very important, especially in certain countries. So part of this Legacy Fund will go into education and I would like to thank the Qatari authorities for accepting this because normally FIFA Legacy Funds for World Cups, they go to the local football community. Here, we bring it international.

This is one thing, and the second element of this Legacy Fund is that we will, jointly with ILO – International Labor Organisation – establish a labor excellence hub. We are in discussion for a memorandum of understanding with the ILO, the Director General will be coming here in the next few days and we want to establish programs based on the experience that we make here in Qatar – I would never have thought that I would have to deal with labor matters – based on the experience we made in Qatar, we have to share through this excellence hub, best practices all over the world, in particular when it comes to future hosts of FIFA tournaments and competitions. So take from our learnings, partner with the no. 1 partner in this area – ILO – and work to make the lives of workers all over the world a little bit better.

So this is what we do in labor matters. Let me mention as well the LGBT situation.

I have been speaking about this topic with the highest leadership of the country, several times, not just once. They have confirmed and I can confirm that everyone is welcome.

If you have a person here and there who says the opposite, well it's not the opinion of the country. And certainly not the opinion of FIFA. This is a clear FIFA requirement; everyone has to be welcomed. Everyone who comes to Qatar is welcome, whatever religion, race, sexual orientation, belief she or he has. Everyone is welcome. This is our requirement and the Qatari state sticks to that requirement.

Now you will tell me, 'yeah, but this legislation which prohibit that and whatever', you have to go to jail, I don't know what. Yes, these legislations exist in many countries in the world. These legislations existed in Switzerland, when Switzerland organized the World Cup in 1954; I was not born yet.

So again, like for the workers, these are processes. So what do you want to do about it? You want to stay home and hammer and criticize and say how bad they are: these Arabs or these Muslims or whatever, because it's not allowed to be publicly gay? Of course, I believe it should be allowed, as FIFA President. But, I went through a process, I went through a process. If I ask the same question to my father, who is not here any more, he would probably have a different answer than me. And my children will have again a different answer than me. So if somebody thinks by just hammering and criticizing, and hammering and criticizing, we will achieve something, well, I can tell you it will achieve exactly the opposite. Because this will be viewed as provocation, and then if you provoke me, I react. And that's bad.

Because the reaction will be to be more closed, now that the doors start to open. I often give the

example of the vote for women. Switzerland again, I am Swiss so I allow myself to say good things about Switzerland. You know when women were granted the right to vote in the last Swiss canton? I tell you when, in the '90s. Not the 1890s, in the 1990s, and not because the men – who had the right to vote, of course – voted that, 'yes, our women should be allowed to vote', no, because they voted no. It was the Swiss Supreme Court who forced the men of this canton to say, no, women have to have the right to vote, of course, of course. These were the mentalities of years ago in Europe. Let's look at ourselves in the mirror, see where we come from and try, if we are convinced that we defend the right causes, try to convince the others by engaging. That's the only thing I ask you.

The only thing I am asking you: engage, help, don't divide, try to unite. The world is divided enough. We are organizing a World Cup. We're not organizing a war. We organize a World Cup, where people who have many problems, everyone in his or her life, want to come and enjoy. Look at the city, it's beautiful. It's beautiful, it's geared up, people are happy, to celebrate. They were happy when the teams come, and when the teams come, they go to see the teams and what do I read, 'well, these people they don't look like English so they shouldn't cheer for English.' Because they look like Indians. I mean, what is that? Can somebody who looks like an Indian not cheer for England or for Spain or for Germany? You know what this is. This is racism. This is pure racism. And we have to stop that. Because everyone in the world has the right to cheer for who he wants; (If I would have said what I wanted to say, it would have been the title of the ...) for who he wants.

And this is what people want. They are genuine, they have difficult lives, every one of us has difficult lives for whatever reasons, for different reasons. We want a moment where we don't have to think about this. A moment where we can concentrate on something that we love, on football.

The problems don't go away, they will stay there, don't worry, after the match. But maybe we will be able to contribute, a little bit, to make them a little bit better. So tolerance starts with ourselves, and we shouldn't spread aggression. We have to spread understanding.

FIFA is a global football organization, as you know. We have 211 countries which are part of FIFA. 211. For me, as FIFA President – unfortunately for some of you, it looks like I will be here for another four years – but fortunately for over 200 associations and six confederations in the world, every association is the same. Every association is the same, because we are football people. We want to be football people, we don't want to be politicians or whatever else, and football brings people together.

If we could organize an event in any country of the world, in North Korea, well, I would be the first to go there. I actually went to North Korea some years ago, to ask the North Koreans if they were ready to host part of the Women's World Cup together with South Korea. Well, I was not successful, obviously. But, I would go another 100 times if it would help, in spite of everything. Because only engagement can bring real change.

So we are a global organization and we want to remain a global organization that unites the world. And I was convinced and I am still convinced, even though now I don't know how optimistic I still am that this particular World Cup will help to open the eyes of many people from the Western world to the Arab world. We are living in the same world. We have to live together. We have to understand

each other, we have to understand that we are different as well. We have different beliefs, different history, that we come from different backgrounds, but we are in the same world. We need to get along with each other and to get along with each other, we need to know each other. That's why you have to come here and you have to tell what you see.

And when you see something that is wrong, say it, and say also how it can be rectified, please.

So that maybe we can help everyone to understand each other a little bit better.

I want to tell you as well, another little story about Afghanistan. Last year, when the Taliban took over again Afghanistan, the United States left, many people were in a difficult situation as far as football is concerned, many female football players in particular. We wanted to see how we can help them. It was very difficult, then through an American friend, I got in touch with the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Qatar, Sheikh Mohammed [Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim Al Thani], who I want to thank, as it was already 2 a.m. in Switzerland, so it must have been 3 a.m. or 4 a.m. In America, it was still early, that's why we got in touch; he immediately replied and thanks to the help of Qatar, we have been able to rescue over 160 girls and women mainly from Afghanistan to Qatar.

We did so because we were promised by many countries in our Western world, that before we got them out, that they would of course welcome them. 160, not 1,600 or 16,000. My feeling is that we were promised that because they believed they would never be able to get them out of the country. But once we got them out of the country, thanks to the help of Qatar, we brought them to Doha and they were actually staying in one of the compounds which was built for the World Cup. All European countries and American countries, the North American countries, close their doors. 'Oh, sorry, we cannot, we cannot ...' The only country that said, 'well, bring them here,' because we know what it means to suffer and to run away from your country, was Albania. And my friend [Prime Minister] Edi Rama, he said, 'They are welcome here, in Albania, where they can build a future.'

So Albania opened the doors, from all countries, Albania opened the doors to the Afghani refugees who had to run away because they were playing football in Afghanistan. We still have around 400, women mainly and men from the Afghan football community that we have not yet been able to get out of Afghanistan, but if they come out, we don't know where they should go. I was speaking to the German Interior Minister [Nancy Faeser], maybe there is an opening there, but let's see. Nobody speaks about these things.

Nobody speaks about the fact that we have managed to make sure that for the first time again in history, 11,000 people will fly from Tel Aviv directly to Doha, Palestinians and Israelis together, in the same airplanes. These things don't happen on their own. These things are not part of the checklist of the organizer of a World Cup, but we made these things happen because we believe we can do something for good.

So, I would have many more things to say, one maybe, the alcohol question. Budweiser, let me mention that as well, since you know now the latest news. Let me say a couple of things there as well. I mean, honestly, if this is the biggest issue we have for the World Cup, I will sign immediately and go

to the beach and relax until the 18th of December.

Let me first assure you that every decision that is taken in this World Cup is a joint decision, between Qatar and FIFA. Every decision. It is discussed, debated and taken jointly.

There will be, I don't know, how many fan zones – eight, 10, big fan zones – over 200 places where you can buy alcohol in Qatar anyway; over 10 fan zones for over 100,000 people can simultaneously drink alcohol, 100,000 people at any particular moment. I think, personally, if for three hours a day you cannot drink a beer, you will survive. Especially because, actually, the same rules apply in France, or in Spain or in Portugal or in Scotland, where no beer is allowed in stadiums. Now here it seems to become a big thing because it's a Muslim country, or I don't know why, I don't know why. We tried, and that's why – that's the one I gave you, of course – the late change of policy because we tried until the end to see if it was possible.

But one thing is to have the plans and the designs. Another thing is when you start putting it in place. You look at the flows of the people, you look at their safety going in and going out, going to attend different matches. This is something new, this World Cup is new in that respect because in any other World Cup if only one match in one given city which usually is three times the size – at least, the smallest one – of Doha. Here we have four matches the same day so we have to make sure that people can go in and go out and these whole flows function in the right way and that's why we had to take the decision about the beer. But, having said that, because I am also hearing this is very bad and whatever for Budweiser and so on. Budweiser is a great partner of FIFA since a few decades already, and a few weeks ago, we have been shaking hands with their Chairman/CEO, of course, to continue our partnership as well until 2026, and partners – we are discussing often these last few days – partners are partners, in good and bad times, in difficult and easy times, and when times are a little bit more tense then the partnership gets even stronger.

So, I'm very grateful to Budweiser in this respect and to [AB InBev chief executive] Michel [Doukeris] for the collaboration we had, in the last years, in the last couple of weeks when we decided the future, and now that we make sure that Bud Zero will be sold in the stadiums and Budweiser in plenty of places in the whole city.

I think we can move then, as well, to the World Cup, because I was also ... I was told that some were saying, 'ah, sponsors jump out of FIFA, people will switch off their TV, they will not watch the World Cup because it's a big scandal, nobody will come anyway to Qatar because it's in winter because this and that and the other. And it's not a safe country, I don't know what.'

When it comes to the commercial success, we have been selling media rights for this World Cup – which is shorter than any other World Cup, as you know – where we have four games a day, never happens, so we sold the rights for around \$200 million more than the last World Cup. We sold sponsorship rights for also around \$200 million more than the last World Cup and as far as ticketing and hospitality rights are concerned, we are at almost \$2-300 million more than the last World Cup. So, all in all, this World Cup will generate for FIFA around, I don't know, \$6-700 million more than another World Cup. What the global figure of revenues of FIFA will be in this four-year cycle, I will

keep it for tomorrow for the Summit to announce to the associations, because it's good news for them.

But the point I want to make here is that if so many people around the world are investing so much money in the World Cup in Qatar, they invest because they believe in FIFA, they saw what FIFA has done to clean up the organization, to make progress in the football areas and also in the social field and also because they trust Qatar. They know that they can come here, they know they can enjoy, they can celebrate, and that they can expect a great World Cup.

So either all these people are stupid or somebody of those who say that nobody will watch this and nobody cares about this World Cup might be a little bit wrong as some of the polls in some elections in some countries were wrong as well in the last years.

Having said that, I hope I remember at the last World Cup I was always getting angry because at every press conference, the first 45 minutes I had to deal with doping matters of the Winter Olympic Games and Skeleton and I don't know what, which had nothing to do with football and the World Cup. Here, I have to deal with other topics. It's sad that we cannot focus on football. I hope I have given you enough information to write everything you want about these topics. If you need to criticize somebody, don't criticize the players. Don't put pressure on the players. Don't put pressure on the coaches. Let them concentrate on football, let them concentrate on making their fans happy. You want to criticize someone, come to me. Criticize me, here I am, you can crucify me: I'm here for that.

Don't criticize Qatar, don't criticize the players, don't criticize anyone. Criticize FIFA, criticize me if you want, because I am responsible for everything, but let the people enjoy this World Cup. Let the people enjoy this World Cup, it comes once every four years. How many occasions do we have to unite the world? How many? Or do we want to continue to divide? Do we want to continue to spit on the others, because they look different? Of they feel different?

We defend human rights. We do it our way. We obtain results. We obtain them: women had access to stadiums in Iran. We obtained that a women's league was created in Sudan. We obtain results. It's a step-by-step process. Help is in doing more. Don't divide, don't split.

Let's concentrate on football, we have 32 great teams, 33 with Team One, the referees, we have beautiful stadiums, we have a city that wants to welcome the world. Let's please, please celebrate and hope that we can give some smiles to some people around the world.

And now the questions are open.

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*Gianni Infantino
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