

## Roundtable Concept

The Fencing for the Planet Roundtable is an initiative strongly supported by the FIE Secretary General and it is the first one of many other ones that will follow in the future.

It took place at the 2025 Tbilisi World Championships as an event where there was the best-possible attendance and participation by members of the global fencing family who can embrace and truly effect change as part of the initiatives in the Fencing for the Planet programme.

An important part of the Roundtable was to present the work and what the FIE has already committed over several years to promote social and environmental sustainability at every level. This includes several key steps:

- The creation of the FIE Working Group “Fencing and Environment”
- The FIE headquarters adopting more and more practices aiming at reducing the environmental impact of the daily operations
- The annual Fencing for the Planet day and celebration
- Donate Your Fencing Gear programme

The FIE is one of numerous international governing bodies of sport committed to and working on integrating sustainability in their areas. The sport movement, led by the IOC, operates and cooperates within the framework established by the United Nations: the U.N. 2030 agenda for sustainable development and the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDG). Sport is a powerful tool, an important enabler, capable of achieving many of the SDG. An important factor in hosting Roundtables is to understand, develop and plan how sport and fencing are contributing to these initiatives and mandates, as well as to consider the common challenges and potential solutions that determine next steps.

## Roundtable Presentations

A number of key programmes, initiatives and concepts were presented at the Roundtable, including among them the following:

- **Ms. Platonova** presented “Fostering Sustainable Development Through Sport”, emphasizing that sustainable development has been defined as development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

- Seventeen factors support this concept, covering such areas as clean energy, water, and sanitation; ending hunger and poverty; developing sustainable communities and cities; climate action; and developing peace, justice and strong institutions.
- Goals of the programme, which were highlighted as “Not a UN agenda, but the World’s agenda” are a shared global vision for change combined with the 17 universal goals for the world to achieve by 2030. It was endorsed by all UN member states on 25 September 2015
- **Ms. Esquivel** presented a case study entitled “The Obtention of the Ecological Blue Flag for the Junior Epee World Cup in San José, Costa Rica 2024”
  - The competitions specifically promotes sustainability in the planning and execution of events for the public
  - It leaves a positive and inspiring legacy for those involved to live more sustainably
  - It evaluates and addresses sustainability elements including the following:
    - Water, sanitation, energy
    - Resource consumption
    - Solid waste management
    - Physical space
    - Mobility
    - Communication strategy
    - Safety and emergency response
    - Environmental compensation
  - For all of these areas, the driving impetus was to enhance the image and reputation of the organization, promote a clean and safe environment; support the local economy and employment; reduce organizational costs in energy, water, and waste consumption; demonstrate commitment to corporate social responsibility; raise public awareness and education; and decrease the generation of ordinary waste.
- **Mr. Schneider** used the forthcoming 2026 Rio de Janeiro Junior and Cadet Fencing World Championships – the largest and annual event for the International Fencing Federation – as an example of how sustainability concepts are being put into place for an event drawing more than 2000 competitors from over 100 nations:

- Goals of the event include alignment with ESG Principles and the UN Sustainable Development Goals, contributing to a more socially and environmentally responsible society
- These goals will be achieved by numerous actions:
  - EcoTotes with solar energy for charging cellphones
  - Bicycles and electric scooters for transportation between the hotel and the arena
  - Bicycles with trailers for equipment transport
  - Reduction of paper usage: Ophardt system 100% online; digital identification system
  - Tree planting ceremony of the surroundings
  - Squeeze distribution
  - Exclusive use of recyclable materials in staff uniforms and in the food court
  - Biodegradable bags + trash collectors + reverse logistics - agreement with a cooperative of recyclers
- Additional initiatives include social impact programmes designed to increase gender equality; transparent and responsible governance; and compliance and regulation
- Expected results of the programme include the generation of lasting impact; a more ethical, stronger organization more in tune with its time; growth of sport in a democratic and decentralized manner; and more humane, more responsible sporting events more aligned with the challenges and demands of contemporary society.
- **Prof. Mazzone** addressed the issue of Inclusiveness in Fencing, in particular addressing the issue of Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and its impact on society, including the global fencing community.
  - By building and developing inclusion in sports for those individuals with ASD, and in particular with fencing, beneficial results can be achieved in the following:
    - Reducing dysfunctional behaviors
    - Promoting positive and prosocial behaviors in naturalistic contexts
    - Providing continuity with specialized therapeutic approaches, Improving the family QoL

- **Ms. Brandule**, as a member of the FIE SEMI Commission, discussed in detail the infrastructure and technical logistics required to host and execute a major fencing event such as the World Championships. As each fencer competes with at least 10 pieces of gear – including jacket, plastron, breeches, socks, mask, weapon, wires and more – with close to 1000 participants, that is more than 10,000 pieces of personal equipment. This is in addition to spare gear, team gear, coaching bags, technicians' gear, armory equipment and more.
  - Ms. Brandule pointed out there is environmental impact to this:
    - Fuel and energy used for transportation and shipping
    - Materials consumed in venue setup and operations
    - Time, stress and resources wasted moving unnecessary equipment
    - Waste caused by overproduction, duplication and/or poor planning
    - The time, budget and staffing required to manage all of it
  - There is efficiency in reducing the footprint of the event without sacrificing performance:
    - Digital scoring, paperless operations
    - Local sourcing of equipment that can be rented or shared
    - Athletes being educated about proper equipment management and transport
    - Communicating programmes such as Donate Your Fencing Gear to recycle gear
  - Fencing is about precision, respect and control, and so is environmental sustainability:
    - Respect for the planet, as well as fencers' opponents
    - Control over resources, as well as over actions
    - Precision in planning, not just footwork