ASIS MODEL UNITED NATIONS 2026

Al Saad Indian School, Al Ain

FIFA COUNCIL STUDY GUIDE

Committee	FIFA Council (Special Committee)
Agenda	Host Selection & Modern Geopolitics: Establishing Strict Ethical, Human Rights, and Environmental Sustainability Criteria for Future Men's and Women's World Cup Bids
Prepared by	ASIS MUN Policy Department

I. Introduction to the Committee

The Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA) was founded in 1904 and is headquartered in Zurich, Switzerland. It is the world governing body of football, with 211 member associations grouped into six continental confederations: AFC (Asia), CAF (Africa), CONCACAF (North and Central America and the Caribbean), CONMEBOL (South America), OFC (Oceania) and UEFA (Europe).

The **FIFA Council** is FIFA's main strategic and oversight body. It was created in 2016, when reforms following the 2015 corruption scandal replaced the former Executive Committee. The Council has 37 members: the FIFA President, eight Vice-Presidents and 28 members elected by the confederations, with at least one woman from each confederation. It sets FIFA's vision and policies, approves budgets and regulations, and oversees the bidding process for FIFA tournaments. Since the 2016 reforms, the hosts of the men's World Cup have been appointed by the **FIFA Congress**, in which every member association has one vote, on the basis of an evaluation of the bids.

In this committee, delegates represent the member associations allocated by the Secretariat. Their task is to draft a Host Selection Framework: a set of enforceable ethical, human rights and environmental criteria for future men's and women's World Cup bids that remains fair to developing football nations and resists political manipulation.

II. Understanding the Agenda

A. How Hosts Are Chosen Today

- **Bidding regulations:** FIFA publishes requirements for each tournament, covering stadiums, transport, accommodation, security, commercial terms, human rights and sustainability.
- **Evaluation:** a FIFA task force assesses and scores each bid and publishes an evaluation report, including a human rights risk assessment.
- **Rotation:** confederations that hosted recent tournaments are not eligible to bid for the next ones, so the World Cup moves between regions.
- **Decision:** the Council confirms which bids meet the requirements, and the Congress appoints the host.
- **Human rights requirements:** for the first time, the bidding process for the 2026 World Cup (launched in 2017) required bidders to commit to international human rights standards, consult stakeholders and present a human rights strategy.

B. Recent and Upcoming Tournaments

Tournament	Host(s)	Issues raised
Men's 2022	Qatar	International scrutiny of migrant workers' conditions, including deaths, wage abuse and the kafala sponsorship system. Qatar introduced labour reforms, including a minimum wage in 2021. A Swiss regulator ruled in 2023 that FIFA's claim of a "carbon-neutral" tournament was not substantiated.
Women's 2023	Australia and New Zealand	First 32-team Women's World Cup; FIFA's total prize money of USD 110 million was a record but still far below the USD 440 million for the 2022 men's tournament.
Men's 2026	Canada, Mexico and United States	First 48-team tournament with 104 matches, raising questions about travel emissions; host cities prepared human rights action plans.
Women's 2027	Brazil	First Women's World Cup in South America, chosen by the Congress in May 2024.
Men's 2030	Morocco, Portugal and Spain, with opening matches in Argentina, Paraguay and Uruguay	Six host countries across three continents to mark the tournament's centenary; concerns about travel distances and environmental impact.
Men's 2034	Saudi Arabia	Single bid confirmed in December 2024. Human rights organisations raised concerns about migrant labour and civic freedoms; FIFA's evaluation rated the human rights risk as medium.

C. Focus Areas

Human rights

Mega-events can bring investment, but they can also lead to forced evictions, exploitation of construction workers, restrictions on protest and discrimination. The UN Human Rights Council has called for human rights to be a basic criterion for awarding major sporting events (A/HRC/30/50, 2015).

Environmental sustainability

Expanded tournaments, more host countries and long flights increase emissions. The question is how to set binding, measurable environmental requirements instead of voluntary pledges, and how to verify sustainability claims.

Ethics and governance

The 2010 decision to award the 2018 and 2022 tournaments at the same time, and the corruption investigations that followed in 2015, damaged trust in FIFA. Transparent voting, independent evaluation and conflict-of-interest rules are central to restoring credibility.

Gender equality

Women's World Cup bids have historically faced lower investment and lower standards for facilities and prize money. The agenda asks whether criteria for men's and women's tournaments should be harmonised.

Accessibility for developing nations

Strict standards and the cost of large stadiums risk excluding poorer countries from ever hosting. Joint and regional bids, smaller tournament formats and financial support are possible ways to keep hosting open to all.

III. International and Regional Frameworks

International frameworks

- **UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (UNGPs, 2011):** the core human rights due diligence standard that FIFA embeds in its bidding, hosting agreements and Human Rights Policy.
- **FIFA Statutes (Article 3):** commits FIFA to respect all internationally recognised human rights and to strive to promote their protection.
- **FIFA Human Rights Policy (2017):** applies the UNGPs to FIFA's activities and events, including stakeholder engagement and access to remedy.
- **ILO core labour standards:** freedom of association, the elimination of forced and child labour, and non-discrimination.
- **ISO 20121 (Sustainable Event Management):** an international standard used to structure sustainability management at major events.
- **UN Sports for Climate Action Framework:** signatories commit to reduce emissions by 50% by 2030, reach net zero by 2040, and report on progress every year. FIFA is a signatory.

Regional and host-level frameworks

- **Host-country laws** on labour, human rights and the environment, enforced through hosting agreements and host-city action plans.
- **Regional human rights systems**, such as the European Convention on Human Rights, the Inter-American system and the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights.
- **Confederation regulations** (UEFA, CONMEBOL, AFC and others), which increasingly include human rights and sustainability clauses in their own tournament bids.

IV. Past Action

- **2016 FIFA reforms:** replaced the Executive Committee with the FIFA Council, separated political and management functions, introduced term limits and required at least one woman per confederation on the Council.
- **"For the Game. For the World." (2016):** an independent report by Professor John Ruggie, author of the UNGPs, recommending how FIFA should embed human rights.
- **FIFA Human Rights Policy (2017)** and human rights requirements in the 2026 bidding process.

- **Swiss Fairness Commission ruling (2023):** found FIFA's carbon-neutrality claims for Qatar 2022 to be unsubstantiated.
- **December 2024 Congress:** confirmed the 2030 and 2034 hosts, in each case from a single bid.

V. Regional and Development Perspectives

Developed countries

Developed countries generally have strong legal institutions, transport networks and the financial capacity to meet strict standards on stadium safety, labour inspection, accessibility and emissions reporting. They should not automatically be treated as low-risk hosts, however. Their risks are often less visible: high carbon emissions, public subsidies that benefit companies more than communities, and displacement through urban redevelopment. They also have the technology to reduce a tournament's footprint, so the UN Sports for Climate Action targets could serve as minimum bid requirements rather than voluntary commitments.

Developing countries

Developing countries may see strict standards as necessary but potentially unfair, fearing that wealthy states will dominate future bids because they can afford advanced stadiums and compliance systems. The answer is not to lower ethical standards, but to distinguish between non-negotiable rights and technical requirements that can be supported through finance and capacity building. Weaker institutions and fast-tracked construction can increase the risk of abuses, including loss of homes and livelihoods, trafficking and inadequate consultation or compensation (UN Human Rights Council, A/HRC/30/50).

Least developed countries

Least developed countries may have the strongest moral case for inclusion but the weakest ability to host a conventional World Cup, given infrastructure gaps, limited public revenue, debt and climate vulnerability. A model requiring many large stadiums and major airports effectively excludes them. Allowing them to host without safeguards would expose vulnerable people to serious risks, so the solution is not to waive standards but to redesign the event model: joint or regional bids, smaller formats and guaranteed legacy funding.

Key actors

Member association	Why it matters
United States, Canada and Mexico	Joint hosts of the first 48-team World Cup in 2026; their host-city human rights action plans are a model for future bids.
Spain, Portugal and Morocco	Main hosts of the 2030 centenary World Cup across two continents, raising questions about joint bids and travel emissions.
Argentina and Uruguay	Host the 2030 centenary opening matches; strong voices for South American football.
Saudi Arabia	Host of the 2034 World Cup, awarded from a single bid; at the centre of the human rights debate.
Brazil	Host of the first Women's World Cup in South America in 2027.
England, Germany and France	Influential European associations that have supported stronger human rights and sustainability criteria.
South Africa	Hosted Africa's first World Cup in 2010; its experience shows both the benefits and the costs, such as under-used stadiums.
Australia	Co-hosted the 2023 Women's World Cup with New Zealand, a model for joint and gender-equal hosting.

VI. Key Challenges

- **Enforcement and sovereignty:** FIFA is a private association and must respect political neutrality, yet its criteria apply to sovereign host states. What happens if a host breaks its commitments after being chosen?
- **Lack of competition:** recent tournaments were awarded from single bids, which weakens FIFA's ability to demand improvements.
- **Cost and exclusion:** higher standards can price out developing nations unless support is provided.
- **Climate impact:** 48-team tournaments and multi-country hosting increase travel and emissions.
- **Politicisation:** bids can be used for "sportswashing" or bargained for through bloc voting and side deals.
- **Gender inequality:** investment, facilities and prize money for women's tournaments still lag far behind the men's.

VII. Possible Areas of Debate

1. **Binding human rights criteria:** which human rights standards should be mandatory for eligibility, and who assesses them.
2. **Independent oversight:** whether to create an independent body to monitor hosts before, during and after the tournament, with powers to recommend sanctions.

3. **Environmental requirements:** whether to make emissions targets, independent carbon accounting and limits on travel distances mandatory.
4. **Support for developing nations:** concessional finance, shared infrastructure, joint bids and smaller formats.
5. **Transparent decision-making:** published scoring, open voting records and conflict-of-interest rules.
6. **Equal criteria for women's tournaments:** harmonising standards, investment and prize money between men's and women's World Cups.

VIII. Guiding Questions

1. To what extent can FIFA impose binding human rights and environmental conditions on sovereign host nations without breaching its principle of political neutrality, and what enforcement mechanisms are appropriate if a host does not comply?
2. Should host selection criteria apply equally to all member associations, or be adjusted for a nation's economic development, infrastructure and region, to prevent developing football nations from being excluded?
3. What composition, powers and reporting obligations should an independent oversight body have to monitor hosts throughout the bidding, preparation and post-tournament phases?
4. How should the criteria for men's and women's World Cup bids be harmonised to ensure real equality in standards, investment and respect, while accounting for the different histories and commercial positions of the two tournaments?
5. What safeguards are needed to stop host selection from becoming a tool of geopolitical bargaining, bloc voting or economic pressure among member associations?

IX. Key Terms

Term	Meaning
FIFA Congress	FIFA's supreme legislative body, in which all 211 member associations have one vote each.
FIFA Council	FIFA's 37-member strategic body, which replaced the Executive Committee in 2016.
Hosting agreement	The legal contract between FIFA and the host association, government and cities.
Bid evaluation report	FIFA's published assessment and scoring of each bid.
Rotation principle	The rule preventing confederations that recently hosted from bidding for the next tournaments.
Human rights due diligence	The process of identifying, preventing and addressing human rights risks, as set out in the UNGPs.
Kafala system	A sponsorship system tying migrant workers' legal status to their employer, criticised for enabling abuse.
Sportswashing	Using major sporting events to improve a country's international image and distract from criticism.
Legacy	The long-term social, economic and environmental effects of a tournament on the host.
Joint bid	A bid by two or more member associations to co-host a tournament.

X. Committee Procedure

- This committee follows the **ASIS MUN 2026 Rules of Procedure (ROP)**. Where this guide and the ROP differ, the ROP applies.
- **Position papers** are compulsory and must be submitted to the Executive Board during the **first committee session**. Maximum two pages, excluding the bibliography, in the format given in **Appendix A of the ROP**. Wikipedia must not be cited.
- **Working papers** may have up to 5 authors and are voted on by simple majority. Only a passed working paper can be developed into a draft resolution.
- **Draft resolutions** may have a maximum of **3 authors per bloc** and must follow the format in **Appendix C of the ROP**. The committee opening line is *The FIFA Council,*
- **Voting on draft resolutions:** a draft resolution passes with a **two-thirds majority of Yes over No votes** (abstentions are not counted), unless the Chair announces a different threshold before voting procedure. Draft resolutions are voted on by roll call.
- **Mandate:** the FIFA Council sets FIFA's strategy and proposes the rules for hosting its tournaments, but under the FIFA Statutes the final appointment of World Cup hosts is made by the FIFA Congress. Resolutions should therefore set out criteria, procedures and safeguards that the Council recommends for adoption, rather than award specific tournaments.
- **Use of AI** by delegates is allowed but results in a deduction of marks, with a greater deduction for paperwork.

XI. Conclusion

Host selection must move from geopolitical bargaining to rules-based stewardship. For developed countries, criteria should emphasise binding human rights due diligence, enforceable labour standards and low-carbon delivery, with independent monitoring and clear sanctions. For developing countries, strict ethical baselines should be paired with capacity building, concessional finance and technology transfer, so that protections are achievable without blocking development. For least developed countries, joint or regional hosting, smaller tournament footprints and guaranteed legacy funds can make hosting possible while keeping infrastructure focused on long-term needs. Across all categories, bids should be rejected where forced labour, systemic repression or serious environmental harm cannot be credibly prevented, whatever the commercial or political pressure. This approach would align FIFA with the UNGPs, ILO standards and climate commitments while recognising unequal starting points, and turn World Cup hosting into a driver of rights-respecting, low-carbon development.

XII. References

1. FIFA Statutes. https://inside.fifa.com
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5. UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (2011). https://www.ohchr.org/en/publications/reference-publications/guiding-principles-business-and-human-rights
6. UNFCCC, Sports for Climate Action Framework. https://unfccc.int/climate-action/sectoral-engagement/sports-for-climate-action
7. FIFA, World Cup 2030 and 2034 bid evaluation reports. https://inside.fifa.com
8. Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International reporting on Qatar 2022 and Saudi Arabia 2034. https://www.hrw.org and https://www.amnesty.org
9. International Labour Organization, core labour standards. https://www.ilo.org

Note on the preparation of this guide

Artificial intelligence (AI) tools were used in the preparation of this study guide. The content has been reviewed by the ASIS MUN Policy Department, but delegates should verify key facts and figures against the original sources before using them in debate or in their position papers.

If you find any errors, please email **asis.mun@student.bhavansalain.com**.