

FIG
Avenue de la Gare 12A
1003 Lausanne
Switzerland

KNGU
Lage Bergweg 10
7361 GT Beekbergen
Postbus 142
7360 AC Beekbergen

+31 (0)55 5058700
www.kngu.nl



Re	: MvdP/17.07.2020	Contact	: Marieke van der Plas
Date	: 17.07.2020	Telephone no	: +31 (0)55 5058700
Subject	: Kind request for a dialogue about a safe sports environment	E-mail	: secretariaat@kngu.nl

Dear President of the FIG,
Dear Mr. N. Buompane,

The documentary Athlete A was recently broadcasted on Netflix. This documentary gives an insight into structural abuses within American gymnastics and has a large impact worldwide, because of the nature and scope of the abuses. Athlete A reveals which cultural elements contributed to this catastrophe. These elements still exist in gymnastics, also in the Netherlands.

In our view, these cultural elements are not isolated but constitute a risk for the entire world of gymnastics around the globe. Consider the young age when athletes start, the technical nature of the sport, the dependency in the relationship with the trainers, the physical and mental strain of the sport at a young age and the strenuous road to the (world-wide) top. In addition, the closed system of the sport where both parents and other individuals involved are still systematically excluded, is also part of the cause. We know from research that a large number of athletes quit due to unpleasant assistance (both at a recreational and elite level).

These factors go hand-in-hand with organizational challenges – such as the shortage of good trainers and volunteers, limited resources for talent development and a lack of (pedagogic) vision on talent and elite programs. In grassroots sport as well, improvements can be made as regards to competition concepts, exercise material and educational programs for trainers.

In the Netherlands, the Royal Dutch Gymnastics Federation launched a multi-annual pedagogic program in 2019, where all our disciplines and range of activities are examined. We would like to share this experience and approach of our pedagogic program with other

countries. We want to use the global discussion that has arisen to enter into a dialogue with the FIG and other federations, and we welcome the experiences from other federations as well. A dialogue or discussion about the needs to address this challenge at an international level, systematically and culturally. We believe that it is a shared duty to our gymnasts to act on this matter, both at present and in the future.

With this letter, we kindly propose that the FIG organizes an international dialogue through a symposium with the international federations given the urgency of this matter about a safe sports environment worldwide at this moment.

We are readily available to prepare this dialogue with a number of federations. The FIG could possibly organize this as soon as possible to maintain the momentum.

We hope that the FIG will embrace our proposal. Please, do not hesitate to contact us for any questions about our proposal.

Kind regards,

ROYAL DUTCH GYMNASTICS FEDERATION

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. van der Plas', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the left.

Marieke van der Plas
Secretary general

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Monique Kempff', with a long vertical flourish extending downwards.

Monique Kempff
President