

## **Allocution de la Conseillère d'État Florence Nater lors de la cérémonie de remise des diplômes FIFA Master édition 2022-2023**

**Neuchâtel, le 21 juillet 2023**

*Seule la parole prononcée fait foi*

Ladies and Gentleman,

Dear Friends, and of course, dear graduates,

On behalf of the State Council of Neuchâtel, I'm honoured and pleased to congratulate you today: you decided one day to start a training programme in the field of sports management, and you chose the International Centre for Sports Studies because it's one of the best in the world, the result of a partnership between three distinguished universities in England, Italy and here in Neuchâtel in Switzerland. Today you are successfully finishing the programme. I'm proud of you and you can be proud of yourselves.

Most of you had to leave your country to come and study in Neuchâtel. Have you enjoyed your stay here? Our state is well-known for its multicultural integration policy. I sincerely hope you can confirm that these are not just empty words. Food and drinks, lakes and mountains, summer and winter: With luck, you've experienced all the dimensions of life here, besides studying intensively of course. Let's wish that these memories stay with you for the rest of your lives.

Yesterday you presented your individual research projects, where we can see the latest trends from the world of sport, which you have identified, as key elements for further investigation:

- Sustainability
- Climate impact
- Safe support for young athletes
- Gender equality
- Ethical codes
- And so on.

When considering these topics, I am full of hope about the future of sports. Sports in today's society is indeed at the heart of our shared well-being. See what happens when you gather children around a ball, even if they don't speak the same language. Even if they don't understand each other, football is a universal language, in which girls are included, more and more. See the importance of being involved in a sports club for an Afghan or Ukrainian refugee.

During the last FIFA world cup in Qatar, all of us could see that sport is no longer outside of social matters and more and more connected to social issues, whether in terms of the environment or human rights and freedoms. I trust you will take the values you have studied in Neuchâtel to the national and international sports federations you may join.

We are currently preparing a cantonal sports concept. It will be ready shortly and will be presented to Parliament right here in this room. The notion of sport has been broadened to become a public policy tool for addressing a wide range of public issues, from training to health, as well as a way of promoting our territory. To achieve these ambitious goals, we have to bring together the interests of local authorities, sports circles and private partners.

We, as political authorities, are focusing our attention in particular on:

- school sport
- support for both elite and popular sport
- planning and innovative use of sports facilities
- hosting sporting events
- and development of outdoor sports.

At the end, in relation to my department in charge of people with disabilities, I would like to confirm that inclusivity in sports for everybody, regardless of physical or mental health, is a goal that we want to achieve. Inclusivity IN sports, and inclusivity THANKS TO sport.

My colleagues join me in wishing you all the best for your professional and private life. We are counting on you to be the new ambassadors for sports as a tool for social cohesion, as you have learned here through a unique multi-disciplinary approach proposed by your professors. And also, to be ambassadors of our unforgettable state of Neuchâtel 😊

In the meanwhile, I hope you enjoy this important step: to be graduates of the 23<sup>rd</sup> edition of the FIFA Master programme. Celebrate it as it should be celebrated with your families and loved ones!

Thank you for listening and enjoy this evening.