# WRITTEN STATEMENT

# BY

# THE WELSH GOVERNMENT

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| **TITLE** | **Wales Senior Men’s Football Team reaching the finals of the 2022 World Cup at Qatar** |
| **DATE** | **08 June 2022** |
| **BY** | **Dawn Bowden MS, Deputy Minister for Arts and Sport, and Chief Whip** |

I was delighted to be able to congratulate the staff and players at the Football Association of Wales for the success of the senior men’s team on reaching the finals of the FIFA World Cup 2022 in Qatar.

After a gap of 64 years our nation will once again be represented at the competition which is the pinnacle of world football. This truly is a fantastic achievement and one which is thoroughly deserved after the team’s successes at the Euros in 2016 and 2021. The passion, commitment and sportsmanship shown by the team, both on and off the pitch, has won plaudits across the sporting world and inspired the nation. I have no doubt this success will inspire many people to participate in sport and it will leave a very positive legacy.

My commiserations too to the Ukrainian national team that played a heroic role in a highly competitive match and in extremely challenging circumstances. Our thoughts are clearly with Ukraine while the war continues. I would also like to praise the conduct of the fans and players towards the Ukrainian team and their supporters. Sport has a great power to unite people, and we saw that clearly in the way our guests from Ukraine were treated by fans and players alike with warmth, respect and kindness. They represent the very best of us, and who we are as a nation.

As a nation we must consider how to maximise the opportunities that will come with Wales' participation on this international stage. These opportunities also come with a responsibility to engage with countries that do not always share our values, whether that is on human rights, LGBTQ+ rights, workers’ rights or political and religious freedom. Engaging with countries is an opportunity to develop a platform for further discussion, to raise awareness and to potentially influence a change in approach. I look forward to working alongside the FAW and others to achieve this, and I wish the team every success in the finals later this year.