



Depending on the organisation, the world has many nations. Some can play football in international tournaments, others can not.

HOW IT WAS REPORTED:

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WHEN IS A NATION A NATION?

FIFA policy is inconsistent, says reporter

By Stephen Ouma

"It was an enriching and valuable contribution to the development of a productive dialogue culture in the field of sport and society."

Vladimir Borkovic, global network and research director, streetfootballworld, Serbia-Montenegro

FIFA has been accused of being inconsistent on matters of affiliation, as was the case when it rejected Zanzibar's application but admitted New Caledonia.

Steve Menary, an English journalist, told Play the Game that the world soccer governing body's inconsistencies and discrimination had frustrated the third world.

"How could FIFA reject Zanzibar, which is part of Tanzania, but accept an application from New Caledonia, which is a French overseas territory?" he wondered.

Menary said Zanzibar and New Caledonia were both members of continental confederations – CAF and Oceania – adding both had permission, from France and Tanzania respectively, to join FIFA. He said FIFA's reasons that New Caledonia had some autonomy and an independence referendum planned for 2012 and Zanzibar's clubs not playing in Tanzania League system did not make any sense.

"FIFA's other reason that the African island is only 30 to 40 minutes by boat from the Tanzanian Mainland, which isn't mentioned in FIFA's entry criteria, leaves a lot to be desired."

"That sort of crazy reasoning is why FIFA has more members than the United Nations, he said. The English journalist said FIFA "no longer follows criteria for affiliation application that stipulates new members have to be recognised by the inter-

national community politically, economically and in matters of sport."

Article 10 of the FIFA statutes states that "any association which is responsible for organising and supervising football in its country may become a member of FIFA, with the expression of "country" referring to an independent state recognised by the international community."

The same article adds that only one association shall be recognised in each country, but an association that has not yet gained independence may, with the authorisation of the association in the country on which it is dependent, also apply for admission to FIFA.

However, Menary wondered why each of the four British associations – England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland – were recognised as separate members of FIFA yet Zanzibar, which had a president with a government, could not be accorded membership.

"FIFA President Sepp Blatter and his administration must come out clear and explain what they mean by international community," he said. Statistics show that out of 207 members affiliated to FIFA, 23 are not countries, accounting for 10 per cent of all countries playing international football.

There are 191 members that make up the United Nations, and 29 national teams from these places are not countries at all.