

United Nations



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New York Office of Sport for Development and Peace
Bureau de New York pour le Sport au service du Développement et de la Paix



Sport plays vital role for Development and Peace, says Special Adviser's Report for UN Secretary-General Annan

Sport stars and Government leaders spotlight achievements of the International Year of Sport and Physical Education 2005

WHERE: ECOSOC Chamber, United Nations Headquarters, New York City
Enter on 46th Street and First Avenue

WHEN: Monday, 3 April 2006, 4:00 to 6:00 pm with reception following in the Delegates Lounge

For release Monday, 3 April 2006, United Nations, New York: The United Nations is mobilizing the power of sport to promote education, health and peace and help attain global development goals, according to a report to be presented to Secretary-General Kofi Annan and to General Assembly President Jan Eliasson, Foreign Minister of Sweden, at a special event today at the UN by Adolf Ogi, his Special Adviser on Sport for Development and Peace and former president of Switzerland.

The Report on the International Year of Sport and Physical Education 2005 (IYSPE 2005) highlights the worldwide achievements and the significant role that sport can play in accelerating progress towards the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals by 2015. Thousands of activities commemorating IYSPE 2005 were initiated worldwide, including sports events, conferences and projects using sport to further health, education, development and peace. The International Year provided a strong impetus to efforts to better integrate sport into the development agenda as well as into efforts to achieve lasting peace.

“Sport is a vital tool to make a better world,” said Mr. Ogi. “We want healthy, educated citizens on every continent. We want development. And we want peace. We can achieve these goals through sport. The fundamentals are there, the momentum is there.”

Roger Federer, Spokesperson for the Year and the world's top-ranked tennis star, is to be appointed UNICEF Goodwill Ambassador earlier in the day. “Children are so often deprived of all the things in life we taken for granted, and I think that athletes should feel driven to use what sport has given them in life to help other less fortunate people,” he said.

Elias Figueroa, Latin American soccer legend from Chile, will speak about his experience with sport's positive social impact. Tegla Loroupe of Kenya, New York Marathon winner, will describe the activities of her Peace

foundation in helping disadvantaged communities in Kenya. Paralympics gold medalist Katrina Webb of Australia will discuss the importance of sport for improving the lives of people with disabilities.

Sport and physical education have been proven to offer a number of innovative approaches, in combination with existing efforts, to accomplish specific targets such as those concerning poverty reduction, education, gender equality, and HIV/AIDS. The Year illustrated the contribution of sport and physical education to a quality education, with physical education recognized in a number of countries as a pillar to foster education, health and personal development. Sport and physical education have been recognized for the important role they play in improving public health, and sport can bridge social, religious, racial and gender divides, hence contributing to lasting peace.

UN Ambassadors Heraldo Munoz of Chile and Guangya Wang of China will welcome the more than 500 guests to the event and will describe sport's positive impact in their regions on behalf of the Group of Friends of Sport for Development and Peace. The group of Permanent Representatives to the UN is chaired by Switzerland and Tunisia. The membership includes ambassadors from Australia, Austria, Brazil, Canada, Chile, China, Germany, Greece, India, Italy, Mali, Norway, Pakistan, Russia, Senegal, South Africa, Switzerland, Thailand, Tunisia, and the United Kingdom.

Minister of Youth, Sport and Physical Education Abdullah Kaabi of Tunisia, which introduced General Assembly resolution 58/5 on 3 November 2003 proclaiming the International Year and hosted an International Conference on Sport and Health during the Year, will present his country's experiences in using the power of sport.

Austria currently holds the European Presidency and State Secretary for Sport Karl Schweitzer will discuss his country's steps to encourage EU ministers of sport and heads of state and government to play an active role in using Sport for Development and Peace as a tool in their national policies and international development programs.

Russia's Sports Minister Vyacheslav Fetisov will report on the International Conference on Sport and Peace that his ministry hosted for the International Year, as well as Russia's major initiative to expand sports facilities across the country.

At the World Summit at UN Headquarters in September, the Outcome Document agreed on by this largest-ever gathering of Heads of State and Government, highlighted that role of sport, stating: "We underline that sports can foster peace and development and can contribute to an atmosphere of tolerance and understanding, and we encourage discussions in the General Assembly for proposals leading to a Sport and Development Plan of Action."

The General Assembly followed up by unanimously adopting a landmark resolution on 3 November to build on the momentum generated by IYSPE 2005. It requests the Secretary-General to create an action plan to expand and strengthen partnerships with governments, sport-related organizations and the private sector, and to boost advocacy and communications. The resolution invites Member States to provide voluntary contributions to ensure adequate UN follow-up. It also invites Member States, the UN system and sports organizations to further promote sport and physical education to help achieve the MDGs, and calls for help to developing countries for development of sports programs.

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IYSPE 2005 culminated at the Second Magglingen Conference on Sport for Development in Switzerland, which adopted the Magglingen Call to Action, urging governments, the world of sport, the UN system and all sectors of society to build on the momentum of the Year and implement Sport for Development and Peace activities.

The International Convention against Doping in Sport was unanimously adopted at the 33rd session of the General Conference of UNESCO last October, and marked a significant event of IYSPE 2005. To date, ten Member States (Sweden, Canada, Denmark, New Zealand, Australia, Norway, Monaco, Iceland, the Cook Islands and Nigeria) have so far ratified the convention.

Action at the country level in coordinating and publicizing commemorative activities is testimony to the success of IYSPE 2005 and has ensured that a growing network of Governments, organizations, groups and individuals around the world are aware of sport and physical education's vital role in contributing to education, health, development and peace. A total of 70 countries from all continents set up national committees or national focal points to plan, coordinate and implement national observance of the Year; in addition, 52 other countries reported on commemorative activities without having officially appointed such a national focal point.

In addition to Roger Federer, marathon champion Margaret Okayo of Kenya and the National Cricket Teams of India and Pakistan were appointed as official Spokespersons for IYSPE 2005.

20 international and over 18 regional conferences were organized during the year connecting the role of sport with the issues of development, health, culture, environment, peace, gender and education.

Thousands of initiatives have strengthened the role of sport and physical education as an integral dimension of the development and cooperation strategies of all stakeholders including sports organizations, athletes, multilateral organizations and the United Nations system, bilateral development agencies, Governments across all sectors, the armed forces, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), the private sector and sports industry, research institutions and the media.

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THE REPORT ONLINE (3 April): Visit www.un.org/sport2005

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