

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



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

UN NEW YORK OFFICE OF SPORT PARTNERS WITH NEW YORK KNICKS FOR GLOBAL LAUNCH OF “DUNK MALARIA” INITIATIVE

United Nations, New York, 7 March 2006 – The United Nations New York Office of Sport for Development and Peace is announcing today its partnership with the New York Knicks basketball team and Hedge Funds vs Malaria for the launch of the “Dunk Malaria” initiative at the New York Knicks vs. Atlanta Hawks game at Madison Square Garden in New York on Wednesday, 15 March.

John Starks, former Knicks star now working on community relations and fan development with the team, endorsed the initiative at a press conference at UN Headquarters in New York today. “This is just the beginning, and I think other teams will want to get involved,” he said. “We have a responsibility for youth everywhere, and it is important to raise awareness about this issue.”

Fans at the game on 15 March will be invited to show their support for the global campaign against the deadly disease by dunking a ball into mini-basketball hoops that will be passed around the arena. There will also be literature on the initiative, a sign-up table, and more than 500 supporters of the cause at the game.

“At the United Nations we are very excited by this partnership with the New York Knicks and the Hedge Funds vs. Malaria “Dunk Malaria” initiative,” said Dr. Djibril Diallo, Director of the UN New York Office of Sport for Development and Peace. “This demonstrates the power of sport to bring people together for the campaign to stem malaria and will help efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals.”

Hedge Funds vs. Malaria, a partnership of the Hedge Fund community seeking to raise awareness and funds to eliminate the epidemic. The Knicks event is the kickoff of its Global “Dunk Malaria” grass roots initiative encouraging people all over the world to shoot a basket for the eradication of malaria in countries around the world on Sunday, March 19

Between one and three million people, 90% of whom are children under the age of five die from malaria each year even though it is preventable and can be eradicated, noted Lance Laifer, founder of Hedge Funds vs. Malaria. “Many people do not realize that malaria is still a devastating disease in some parts of the world such as Africa. Since bed nets are the first line of defense against Malaria and basketballs are shot through nets, we developed the Dunk Malaria concept as a vehicle to raise awareness of this emergency,” he said

Karin Buchholz, Knicks’ vice president of community relations and fan development, said: “As a professional sports team playing in ‘The World’s Most Famous Arena’ we have an obligation to assist charities and raise

awareness for just causes. We are proud to partner with Hedge Funds vs. Malaria and the United Nations to raise the awareness of this deadly disease which has been virtually eradicated in North America but remains a killer in developing countries.”

On 19 March, Mr. Laifer will conduct a “Malaria-thon,” walking throughout New York City for a 24-hour period, beginning at midnight on Saturday March 18th. Carrying a mini-basketball and hoop, he’ll be asking people to “dunk a shot” against malaria. Laifer is encouraging people to conduct their own similar events, by setting up mini-hoops in designated host locations within their businesses or communities. The goal is to record each shot and register the results on the Dunk Malaria website www.dunkmalaria.org

Under the leadership of Adolf Ogi, Special Adviser to UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan and former President of Switzerland, the United Nations and its partners are increasingly drawing on the power of sport to help improve health, education, and development and promote tolerance and peace. The UN General Assembly designated 2005 the International Year of Sport and Physical Education, which was commemorated by activities worldwide, and the UN is now entering a new phase of more action, more cooperation and more implementation of Sport for Development and Peace initiatives.

Hedge Funds vs. Malaria aims to raise funds for malaria charities so that more malaria-free zones can be created to help eradicate the dreadful disease. Many of these charities are conducting various events around the world, including Atlanta, Chicago, Ghana, Israel, Kenya, London and Los Angeles. Among the charities are: The Malaria Foundation International, The Free Africa Foundation, Africa Fights Malaria, Be The Cause, The Global Alliance For Africa and the World Swim for Malaria. A complete list of charities can found at dunkmalaria.org

Mr. Laifer is expected to conduct other Malaria-thons in Washington, D.C. on Sunday April 24th ending at 12:01 AM on April, 25 Africa Malaria Day -- and Boston on a date to be determined.

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For further information contact Karima Zerrou, UN New York Office of Sport for Development and Peace: karima.zerrou@undp.org; tel: 212 457 1075.

To order tickets for “Dunk Malaria” night at the Knicks game on 15 March call 212 465 6080 or e-mail vs.malaria@gmail.com

Hedge Funds vs. Malaria seeks to encourage communities and schools, charities, media and caring citizens to urgently address this dangerous disease through events, communication, education and fundraising. For more information visit: www.dunkmalaria.org

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