

## **United Nations strengthens action on Sport for Development and Peace**

***For immediate release:*** *United Nations, New York, 3 November 2005:* The United Nations General Assembly adopted a resolution today to strengthen activities that use sport as a tool to promote development and peace.

“This is an important step in maintaining the momentum generated by the International Year of Sport and Physical Education (IYSPE 2005),” said Adolf Ogi, the UN Secretary-General’s Special Adviser on Sport for Development and Peace.

UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan has called for further UN initiatives on sport, saying in his report on IYSPE 2005 to the General Assembly: “It is imperative that the programme and institutional and advocacy initiatives that advance sport for development and peace during the International Year of Sport and Physical Education lead to sustained long-term effects within the United Nations and among Government, private sector and civil society partners.”

The resolution, introduced by Ambassador Ali Hachani of Tunisia, requests the Secretary-General of the United Nations to elaborate an action plan that will expand and strengthen partnerships with Governments, sport-related organizations and the private sector. It also requests that he boost advocacy and social mobilization through well-targeted communication activities.

Mr. Ogi, former president of Switzerland, underscored the resolution’s invitation to countries to provide voluntary contributions to support these broader activities.

The resolution notes that a Business Plan prepared by an UN inter-agency Working Group, offers a common framework to foster coordination and cooperation for a more systematic and coherent use of sport as a means to promote education, health, development and peace. The Working Group convenes every two weeks to discuss coordination and cooperation so as to maximize the impact of sports activities and programmes throughout the UN system.

The Secretary-General’s report describes activities, initiatives and networking at the international, national and local levels to commemorate the International Year and provides examples of sport-related projects and programmes. It also outlines partnership initiatives among governmental organizations and with vibrant civil society organizations with a focus on sport.

The International Year of Sport and Physical Education has highlighted the contribution of sport and physical education towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by helping promote education, health, development and peace.

The World Summit in September, the largest ever gathering of heads of state and government, cited the key role of sport its outcome document, which states: “We underline that sport 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.”

United Nations work on sport has been facilitated in New York by the Group of Friends of Sport for Development and Peace among the ambassadors to the United Nations, which is co-chaired by the Permanent Representatives of Switzerland and Tunisia. Its open-ended membership includes Permanent Representatives from Austria, Chile, Greece, Italy, Mali, Norway, the Russian Federation, Thailand, Tunisia and the United Kingdom. The aim of the group is to encourage the 191 UN member states to incorporate sport into their development and peace policies to help accelerate attainment of the MDGs.

Other provisions of the resolution invite Member States, the United Nations system, international sports bodies and sport-related organizations to promote further sport and physical education, including assistance for the building and restoration of sports infrastructures, the implementation of partnership initiatives and development projects, as a contribution towards achieving the internationally agreed development goals, including those contained in the United Nations Millennium Declaration, and the broader aims of development and peace.

The resolution invites Governments and international sports bodies to assist developing countries, in particular the least developed countries and small island developing States, in their capacity-building efforts in sport and physical education, by providing financial, technical and logistic resources for the development of sport programmes.

It also welcomes the adoption of the International Convention against Doping in Sport by the General Conference of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization at its thirty-third session, and invites Member States to consider adhering to this Convention as early as possible.

The General Assembly is also unanimously adopted a resolution urging all countries to observe the Olympic Truce during the Olympic Winter Games in Turin, Italy, from 10-26 February 2006 and the following Paralympic Winter Games also in Turin on 10-19 March.

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