



UNITED NATIONS SPORT BULLETIN



Updates on UN sport-related initiatives supporting the MDGs and activities for the International Year of Sport and Physical Education 2005 (IYSPE 2005)

Published by the UN New York Office of Sport for Development and Peace on behalf of the United Nations Communications Group (UNCG) Working Group on Sport for Development and Peace

Number 7 Special Edition, 24 August 2005/ www.un.org/sport2005

Pan-African Youth Leadership Summit in Morocco endorses sport for development and peace

Young men and women leaders from more than 40 African countries, unanimously endorsed the International Year of Sport and Physical Education 2005 (IYSPE 2005) at the second Pan-African Youth Leadership Summit in Ifrane, Morocco, 18-23 August. Many are working projects that use sport to help reverse the deadly HIV/AIDS epidemic, help at-risk youth and to promote peace and tolerance in areas torn by conflict. With theme "From Awareness to Action," the Summit promoted sport as an entry point for mobilizing African youth to carry out practical initiatives in support of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

The event is part of a series of regional youth leadership summits leading to a Global Youth Leadership Summit at the UN in New York in August 2006. Partners organizing the Morocco summit include the UN New York Office of Sport for Development and Peace on behalf of the UN system, the Government of Morocco, UNDP, and the Global Peace Initiative of Women. Also participating in Ifrane were representatives from previous youth leadership summits for Latin America and the Caribbean in Belo Horizonte, Brazil, in May, Asia and the Pacific in Hiroshima, Japan, in September 2004, and the first Pan-African summit held in Dakar, Senegal, in June 2004.

Leaders of Morocco and Senegal welcome participants – H.M. King Mohammed VI of Morocco hosted the event, held at Al-Akawayn University, and Prince Moulay Rashid presided at the opening ceremony. "The Summit "offers Morocco a chance to reaffirm its commitment to its African roots, its support for the development of Africa, and its firm belief in South-South cooperation," said the King in his message to the Summit. President Abdoulaye Wade of Senegal, who hosted the first Pan-African summit, told the delegates: "Tell me what kind of young people you have, and I will tell you the future of your country." Senegal is allocating 40% of its budget to education to promote progress towards the MDGs, and sport is integrated into the curriculum. Mr. Adolf Ogi, Special Adviser to the UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan on Sport for Development and Peace, conveyed a message from Mr. Annan, telling the young leaders that IYSPE 2005 is an ideal time to raise awareness about using sport to help attain the MDGs.

The power of sport for the MDGs – In his keynote speech, Mr. Ogi emphasized the positive role of sport in promoting health, education, development and peace. "Sport, as a universal language offers powerful ways to promote peace, tolerance and understanding, bring people together across boundaries, ethnic groups and religions," he said. He saluted initiatives by sports stars such as UNDP Goodwill Ambassador Dikembe Mutombo, who is building a hospital in Kinshasa, and tennis star Roger Federer, spokesperson for IYSPE 2005, who helps South African children attend school. "I am convinced that if the value of development and peace promotion through sport is better recognized, with your support and help, we will achieve a more equal and peaceful world." During the plenary discussion, Leila Barakat of UNDP Morocco introduced their sports initiative to help at-risk youth in Casablanca. Several delegates described sports initiatives. Lansana Mousarraf of Liberia, for example, works with a project that holds soccer tournaments among teams from Liberia, Senegal and Sierra Leone to promote peace, with prize money donated by businesses going for social projects.

Youth projects win awards for excellence – With the emphasis on practical action, delegates submitted descriptions of projects, both underway and planned, to advance progress towards the MDGs. Ten were selected as award winners, ranging from activities to improve water supplies in areas of Morocco to HIV/AIDS awareness and prevention. Several winners are

sport-related, including the Rwenzori Sports for Peace Project in western Uganda submitted by Lydia Muchodo that is helping youth turn away from conflicts that threaten the area with assistance from the German Development Service (DED).

Sun Microsystems: using IT to connect and mobilize youth – Sun is a new technology partner for the youth summits, and Sun Chief Researcher John Gage virtually “flew” the delegates around the world with free software during his keynote, demonstrating the power of IT to connect people. But many African countries face obstacles with Internet access, and about half the delegates depend on Internet cafes at sometimes exorbitant prices – about 19 euros per hour in Niger, for example. It is a challenge to persuade governments and IT providers to cut access prices, he pointed out, since their costs have dropped dramatically. Sun is setting up a web site for the youth summit series (www.unyouthsummit.org) and will provide mentors to help delegates connect -- including assistance with web access, chat rooms and blogs -- to advance their projects and offer online forums on MDG issues for youth.

Workshops highlight MDG and peace initiatives – Delegates participated in workshops to discuss projects to help achieve the MDGs, including those using the contribution of sport and culture. In Bamako, Mali, an annual soccer tournament among schools spreads HIV/AIDS awareness messages, reported Mouhammed Yahya Diallo, and winning teams become ambassadors to schools around the country and also to local imams, asking that they spread warnings about HIV/AIDS. Clement Bwawya from the Youth Associations Organization in Zambia noted that sport is widely used to spread awareness about stemming HIV/AIDS and malaria, as well as the other MDGs. His organization conducts summer soccer camps in rural areas, working with local leaders and also coaches on conveying MDG-related messages. In Madagascar, sport is an important vehicle for reaching out to young people on reproductive health, including HIV/AIDS, said Tina, who works with the Scout Movement on a programme, which is supported by PSI of Washington, DC. PSI is similarly active in Togo, reported Tettah A.K. Crédo, where the national football team supports their efforts. Delegates involved in sport-related initiatives agreed to form a group to compile information on sport projects and exchange information and ideas.

The Ifrane Declaration – As the “embodiment of the African Union’s young leaders,” the delegates unanimously adopted the Ifrane Declaration at the conclusion of the summit, re-committing to the first Pan-African Summit’s Dakar Declaration and affirming their commitment to work towards the achievement of the MDGs. The delegates committed to sport as an entry point towards achievement of the MDGs within the framework of the International Year of Sport and Physical Education (IYSPE 2005), and pledged to work towards a future where “Africa controls its resources” and can offer these to aid in building “a more peaceful, equitable and sustainable world.” The declaration points to several tools to help realize the summit’s vision, including sport, improved access to information and communications technology, and partnerships with young leaders from other regions of the world.

The delegates called on governments to create a greater voice for young people in the decisions and actions that affect their daily lives and futures. They asked governments, the UN system, NGOs, and civil society groups integrate sport into their development agenda and dedicate more resources to “sport for all” initiatives at home and abroad. The delegates committed to working with their regional chairs, those from other regions and the organizers toward the Global Youth Leadership Summit at the UN in New York in August 2006, and pledged to turn back hunger, poverty, disease, and war and injustice, knowing that “patience and steady work” will be need to achieve their vision for the continent.

The United Nations Communications Group (UNCG) Working Group on Sport for Development and Peace includes participants from: FAO, ILO, UNAIDS, UN/DESA, UNDP, UN/DPI, UNESCO, UNEP, UNFIP, UNFPA, UN-Habitat, UNHCR, UNICEF, UNIFEM, UN Millennium Development Goals Campaign, UN Millennium Project, UNODC, UN Office for IYSPE 2005, UNOHR-LLS, UNOPS, UN Volunteers, WFP, WHO, and the World Bank. Contacts: Djibril Diallo, Director, UN New York Office of Sport for Development and Peace (djibril.diallo@undp.org); Richard Leonard, Bulletin Editor (richard.leonard@undp.org); Michael Kleiner, Head of the Office for the International Year of Sport and Physical Education 2005 (mkleiner@unog.ch). Visit IYSPE 2005 at www.un.org/sport2005