



**UNITED NATIONS SPORT BULLETIN**  
**Updates on UN sport-related activities supporting efforts to  
achieve the Millennium Development Goals and promote peace**



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**Secretary-General highlights sport's vital role at World Economic Forum** – For the first time, the prestigious gathering of world leaders in Davos, Switzerland, brought together leaders from the world of sport to discuss sport's role in improving the state of the world and plan new initiatives. UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan highlighted sport's contributions to development and peace at a media lunch on 25 January on the impact of sports in the world. Sport is “a global language, capable of bridging social, cultural and religious divides, he said, and “a powerful tool for fostering understanding, tolerance and peace.” That is why the UN is increasingly drawing on sport's potential, the Secretary-General said, and why the General Assembly declared 2005 the International Year of Sport and Physical Education (IYSPE 2005), and has requested an action plan to strengthen UN partnerships with Governments, sports organizations and the private sector.

The UN is using sport as a tool in its work to reach the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), Mr. Annan noted, “from education, to the advancement of women and girls, combating HIV/AIDS and other diseases, and the fight against poverty, with a target date of 2015.”

The General Assembly has also supported the revival of the ancient concept of the Olympic Truce, most recently urging all countries to observe the Truce during the upcoming Winter Games in Turin, Italy, he pointed out. The period of the Olympic Truce offers warring parties the opportunity to look around them and see what damage they are doing, he said, “And hopefully some of them will not pick up their weapons again and realize there is another way.”

Mr. Annan saluted International Olympic Committee (IOC) President Jacques Rogge and Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA) President Joseph Blatter for their close collaboration with the UN and said that he looked forward to further strengthening cooperation. He also thanked former Swiss President Adolf Ogi for his dynamic leadership as his Special Adviser on Sport for Development and Peace. Mr. Ogi later joined the Secretary-General in meetings with President Olusegun Obasanjo of Nigeria and President Pervez Musharraf of Pakistan, and both leaders invited the Special Adviser to visit their countries to assess ways that sport can be used as a tool to enhance development at the community level.

**Progress during IYSPE 2005** -- Activities for IYSPE 2005 created momentum, Mr. Ogi told the media, and after focusing on raising awareness, “we are entering a new phase of more action, more cooperation and more implementation.” Activities for the Year were held in 120 countries, including thousands of ‘sport for all’ events around the world, and the UN General Assembly adopted two strong resolutions supporting sport for development and peace. More than 20 conferences drew thousands of participants, and there were more than 100 new projects launched during the year that use sport to promote development, health, education, the environment, ethics, gender and peace.

He called the upcoming Olympic Games in Torino, Beijing, Vancouver and London a great opportunity and a great responsibility, saying that “the IOC and the UN should use these platforms to create a better world.” The FIFA World Cups this year in Germany and in 2010 in South Africa hold the same potential, he said. Mr. Ogi said that he had seen first hand enthusiasm generated among children involved in sports in a refugee camp in Uganda, an example of how it changes lives.

**Sport leaders pledge new initiatives** – Among more than two dozen sports leaders and athletes convening at Davos, in addition to Dr. Rogge and Mr. Blatter, were Charles Denison, co-President of Nike; Lamine Diack, President of the International Association of Athletics Federations; David Stern, Commissioner of the U.S. National Basketball Association; and legendary football star and former Brazilian sports minister Edson Arantes “Pelé” do Nascimento; and Mel Young,

founder of the Homeless World Cup. At a plenary on “Can a Ball Change the World? The Role of Sports in Development,” panelists agreed that sport can have a positive impact, particularly in building social cohesion and improving health. Mr. Blatter appealed for support in spreading the benefits of the 2010 World Cup in South Africa to the whole continent, and Pelé told how warring sides in Nigeria’s civil war in the 1960s called a truce for a game against Brazil. “The biggest family in the world is the football family,” he said. Other sessions discussed sport, cultural and religious leaders as role models for the next generation, and sports and branding in emerging markets.

At an assessment session, sports leaders reaffirmed their commitment to improving the state of the world through sport and agreed on several initiatives that they pledged to report on at Davos next year, including creation of a communications platform to present sport for development and peace success stories and compilation and distribution of scientific evidence on the benefits of participation in sports, studies of best practices, and statistics and hard facts about the sports industry. They also discussed the possibility of focusing efforts on the linkage between sport and the MDGs, with specific reference to the role of youth.

**Reinforcing UN ties with IOC and FIFA** – Before heading to Davos, the Secretary-General and Mr. Ogi met with the leaders of the IOC and FIFA on 24 January to discuss ways to strengthen cooperation. At IOC headquarters in Lausanne, they met with Dr. Rogge and discussed ways that sport can be used to reduce tensions in conflict areas by encouraging communities in conflict to meet on the sports field. “We talked about bringing sports to conflict areas where there are peacekeeping operations under the UN, where troops are available, working with the communities,” said Mr. Annan told journalists after the meeting.

They also discussed UN-IOC collaboration on education, health, and development. “Wherever UN agencies have offices, we can work with National Olympic Committees to ensure that sport is incorporated more and more in the educational curriculum,” he noted. Dr. Rogge noted that the IOC is helping the Republic of Korea (South Korea) and the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (North Korea) form a joint team for the 2008 Summer Olympics in Beijing.

The IOC is collaborating with several UN agencies, including UNAIDS on HIV/AIDS awareness and prevention activities, UNEP on a “Green Games” project for environmentally sustainable Olympics, UNHCR on sports equipment and activities for refugee camps and a clothing collection drive at the 2004 Athens Olympics, and with the ILO on youth sport programs in Albania, El Salvador and Mozambique.

Following their meeting with Mr. Blatter at FIFA headquarters in Zurich, the Secretary-General told reporters that football has “an incredible capacity as a catalyst for the kind of work we do, whether it is fighting poverty, fighting HIV/AIDS, pushing reconciliation, or bringing people together.” He called the 2010 World Cup in South Africa “a great opportunity to develop sport on that continent” by building up sports infrastructure to give good players an incentive to stay on the continent and encouraging governments and other partners to use sport for development and peace.

UN-FIFA cooperation began in 1997, and for the 2006 World Cup UNICEF and FIFA are mounting a global communications campaign with the theme “Unite for Children – Unite for Peace” to raise awareness about how conflict and violence affect children’s lives and their communities. Mr. Blatter said that for the South Africa World Cup, FIFA is setting up the “Win in Africa...With Africa” project that will be “an opportunity to give back to Africa.” In conclusion, he said: “Make the game better and take it to the world. Let’s make the world a better place, starting with the 2006 World Cup.”

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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, 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](mailto:djibril.diallo@undp.org)); Richard Leonard, Bulletin Editor ([richard.leonard@undp.org](mailto:richard.leonard@undp.org)); David Winiger, Special Assistant to the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Sport for Development and Peace ([dwiniger@unog.ch](mailto:dwiniger@unog.ch)). Visit [www.un.org/sport2005](http://www.un.org/sport2005)