

United Nations Nations Unies

New York Office of Sport for Development and Peace
Bureau de New York pour le Sport au service du Développement et de la Paix
Two United Nations Plaza, 44th Street, 26th Floor • New York, NY 10017
Tel: (212) 906-6210 • Fax: (212) 906-5141
www.un.org/sport2005

For immediate release

Brazilian soccer star ‘Ronaldinho’ to score for the Millennium Development Goals as new UN Spokesperson

United Nations, New York, 11 August 2006: Ronaldo Assis de Moreira, the Brazilian soccer star popularly known as “Ronaldinho,” renown player for the FC Barcelona team, was appointed United Nations Spokesperson for Sport for Development and Peace today at the UN in New York, after being welcomed by Secretary-General Kofi Annan. Ronaldinho will help promote efforts to eliminate extreme poverty and reach the other Millennium Development Goals.

"I am extremely honored and excited to lend my support to United Nations Sport for Development and Peace initiatives," said Ronaldinho, who was accompanied by teammates from FC Barcelona. "Sport is a universal language that has no barriers. Football has obviously provided me with a wonderful life, and I believe it is now my mission to give something back and to help youth understand that the power of sport can help them achieve their dreams."

One of Ronaldinho's first activities as UN Spokesperson will be helping mobilize youth worldwide to tackle poverty in connection with the United Nations Global Youth Leadership Summit in New York on 29-31 October, organized by the UN New York Office of Sport for Development and Peace.

His appointment was made on behalf of Adolf Ogi, Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Sport for Development and Peace, by Dr. Djibril Diallo, Director of the UN New York Office of Sport for Development and Peace 2005. "We thank Ronaldinho for helping win the match against poverty," said Dr. Diallo.

Mr. Ogi, former President of Switzerland, said in a message that: "Ronaldinho's appointment builds on the momentum of the International Year of Sport and Physical Education 2005 by helping mobilize the world of soccer and its fans in support of social and economic development, health, education and peace."

Ambassador Heraldo Muñoz , Permanent Representative of Chile to the United Nations, said: "The United Nations has recognized the tremendous potential of sport to bring people around the world together and improve health and education, and I warmly welcome the appointment of Ronaldinho as Spokesperson for Sport for Development and

Peace.” The Ambassador spoke on behalf of the Group of Friends of Sport for Development and Peace, an open-ended group of more than 25 ambassadors at the UN.

Ronaldinho has twice been awarded the FIFA World Player of the Year award, in 2004 and 2005, as well as the European Footballer of the Year and the FIFPro World Player of the Year awards in 2005. He also serves as a UN World Food Programme Ambassador Against Hunger.

The New York and Geneva offices of the Special Adviser encourage mainstreaming of sport as tool for development and peace throughout the UN system and among partners, including the world of sport, Governments, civil society, the media, academia, and other sectors. They work closely with the sport community, including the Fédération Internationale de Football Associations (FIFA), to use sport’s popularity and power to help people build better lives, create opportunities for development, and build a more peaceful world.

Don Elias Figueroa and his FutbolMasters organization and Anna Ursillo, President of EuroSID, have assisted with Ronaldinho’s connection with the UN New York Office of Sport for Development and Peace. Cristobal Aldunate Jory, Consultant for Latin America and the Caribbean with the UN New York Office of Sport for Development and Peace, will facilitate Ronaldinho’s activities in cooperation with the United Nations in the region.

Member States of the United Nations last year unanimously requested the Secretary-General to create an Action Plan on Sport for Development and Peace, and this will be presented to the General Assembly at its next session this fall.

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For further information please contact:

In New York: Nadia Samadani: telephone 212 906 5746, email:
nadia.samadani@undp.org

In Santiago, Chile: Cristobal Aldunate Jory: telephone (56-2) 654-1018, email
cristobal.aldunate@undp.org