



UNITED NATIONS OFFICE FOR THE INTERNATIONAL YEAR
OF SPORT AND PHYSICAL EDUCATION 2005



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Pakistan and India national cricket teams appointed United Nations Spokespersons for the International Year of Sport and Physical Education (IYSPE 2005)

The national cricket teams of Pakistan and India are appointed Spokespersons for the International Year of Sport and Physical Education (IYSPE 2005) in recognition of the outstanding example both teams have set in overcoming regional tension and encouraging peaceful relations.

United Nations, New York, 27 September 2005 – The national cricket teams of Pakistan and India have accepted the appointments as United Nations Spokespersons for the International Year of Sport and Physical Education (IYSPE 2005), announced Adolf Ogi, Special Adviser to the UN Secretary-General on Sport for Development and Peace.

The cricket teams have been recognized for serving as catalysts of peace in early 2004, when the India team traveled to Pakistan for the first time in over 14 years to compete in a cricket series amidst thawing relations between the two countries. In reciprocal action earlier this year, Pakistan's cricket team traveled to India for competition and Pakistan's President Pervez Musharraf used the opportunity to visit India after several years to engage in peaceful dialogue with India's Prime Minister Manmohan Singh. The two national teams, both passionately supported by their respective countries, have pledged to cooperate with the United Nations to use the power of sport to bridge cultural and ethnic divides and encourage peaceful relations. Marathon champion Margaret Okayo and tennis star Roger Federer were the first to accept the roles of Spokespersons for IYSPE 2005.

The International Year of Sport and Physical Education 2005 provides the United Nations and organizations with the opportunity to highlight the power of sport to contribute to the Millennium Development Goals, as well as promote the use of sport to defuse political tension and facilitate post-conflict reconciliation.

IYSPE 2005 seeks to encourage the use of sport to promote education, health, development and peace. "Sport can play a role in improving the lives of whole communities", said UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan. "I am convinced that the time is right to build on that understanding, to encourage governments, development agencies and communities to think how sport can be included more systematically in the plans to help children, particularly those living in the midst of poverty, disease and conflict."

"Our goal, together with the India and Pakistan national cricket teams, is to ensure that the contribution by sport towards peace is recognized by society and encouraged by

governments, media, and civil society,” said Adolf Ogi. “I believe that both national cricket teams are pioneers in the quest for peace and stability in South Asia and can serve as role models for other countries and regions around the world.”

The United Nations has long acknowledged the importance of sport in society and has established strong ties to the sports world. Its agencies, funds and programmes have undertaken a wide variety of sports-related activities both to help improve the lives of poor or marginalized people and to call attention to pressing challenges, such as environmental degradation.

Initiatives range from projects to ensure that children in refugee camps have access to vital play and recreation activities, to programmes to promote education by linking sports participation to school attendance and academic performance, to activities designed to create jobs at newly-developed recreational zones at sports facilities where the unemployed can receive vocational training.

In November 2003, the United Nations General Assembly adopted Resolution 58/5 recognizing the power of sport as a means to promote education, health, development and peace and proclaiming 2005 as the International Year of Sport and Physical Education.

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For more information on the International Year of Sport and Physical Education (IYSPE 2005) and on the United Nations work in the area of sport for development and peace, please visit:

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