

Sport empowers women, UN Special Adviser Adolf Ogi tells Summit on Women's Leadership in Sport

For immediate release -- Atlanta, Georgia, 20 October 2005: Sport can help "overcome ignorance and discrimination and sow the seeds of integration and equality," Mr. Adolf Ogi, UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan's Special Adviser on Sport for Development and Peace, told the International Summit: Effecting Social Change Through Women's Leadership in Sport in Atlanta, GA in his keynote address today.

Mr. Ogi, former President of Switzerland, pointed out that sport also helps countries accelerate progress towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) that all UN Member States have pledged to meet by 2015, particularly Goal 3 on empowerment of women and gender equality.

The Summit is part of a series of international conferences, sports events and other activities to commemorate the International Year of Sport and Physical Education (IYSPE 2005), and is the only conference in the series that is in the United States.

Mr. Ogi thanked Dr. Betty Siegel, President of Kennesaw State University, a chief organizer of the Summit, for providing an important opportunity "to raise the general awareness of the unique ability of women to effect social change by assuming leadership positions."

Forty-five international sport leaders, including two-time Olympic Champion Donna de Varona and soccer star Mary Harvey, are participating in the three-day Summit, to reflect on how women's participation in sport can become a means to bolster development in communities across the globe, combat the challenges of HIV/AIDS and extreme poverty, and help redress gender inequity.

After his speech, Mr. Ogi, presented the Adolf Ogi Sport for Development and Peace Award to Kennesaw State University student athletes Keri McKee and Tommy Thompson, who have demonstrated a commitment to community service and a willingness to serve society through the medium of sport.

The conference is also being conducted in association with the United States Olympic Committee and the International Labour Organization.

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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Visit the website for the International Summit: Effecting Social Change Through Women's Leadership in Sport at:

<http://www.kennesaw.edu/sport2005/index.shtml>

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: <http://www.un.org/sport2005>