

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

WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY 5 JUNE 2005

Message from Adolf Ogi Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Sport for Development and Peace

We are delighted to join hands with our colleagues from the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and millions around the world to celebrate this year's World Environment Day, hosted this year in the city of San Francisco, the very place where the United Nations was born 60 years ago.

The theme of World Environment Day this year is "Green Cities: Plan for the Planet," and it is a timely reminder of the ever-increasing trend of humankind to live in towns and cities, and the implications of this for the environment and development.

As much as we enjoy living and working in our towns and cities, we should be mindful of the pressure that we put on the natural environment. The environment provides us with vital resources and services to maintain our daily lives, including sports activities, and we should do whatever is possible to make the Earth a safe and hospitable place. A cleaner environment encourages people to be more connected to the natural environment and to be more physically active.

Adequate space and facilities for recreation and sport, especially outdoor activities, are essential for ensuring sustainable urban environments. We are happy to support UNEP's efforts, in collaboration with sports organizations and the private sector, to minimize any negative environmental impacts arising from sport activities and facilities, and help ensure that sports events and sporting goods are "green".

As millions around the world celebrate this important day by raising awareness and encouraging others to take action on global environmental challenges, I invite all the members of the sporting family, who are also active participants in the International Year of Sport and Physical Education 2005 (IYSPE 2005), to take action in every town and city, from local to community to national levels, and do whatever they can to promote sustainable urban living and improve the quality of life for urban dwellers.

As part of IYSPE 2005, at the end of next month, representatives from the world of sport will meet in Japan for Sport Summit for the Environment, where they are expected to sign a declaration to protect the environment.

As we live, work, and play in our towns and cities, let us protect them and keep them "green".