



General Assembly High-level Debate on “Crime Prevention and Sustainable Development through Sports”

10:00 a.m., on Wednesday, 5 June 2024
United Nations Headquarters, New York

CONCEPT NOTE

Mandate

The President of the General Assembly will hold a high-level debate on the theme “Crime Prevention and Sustainable Development through Sports” in cooperation with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and with the involvement of relevant stakeholders, pursuant to General Assembly resolution 78/229 of 19 December 2023, entitled “Strengthening the United Nations crime prevention and criminal justice programme, in particular its technical cooperation capacity”. According to the mandate, summary of the discussion will be transmitted to the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice and to all Member States.

Background

The role of sport as an enabler of sustainable development was recognized by Member States in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Member States also recognized the growing contribution of sport to the realization of development and peace in its promotion of tolerance and respect and the contributions it makes to the empowerment of women and young people, individuals and communities as well as to health, education and social inclusion objectives.

Sport is increasingly recognized as a tool to promote peace and development. The General Assembly acknowledged the contribution of sports to the achievement of peaceful and just societies by adopting resolutions 74/170 and 76/183, which encouraged Member States to integrate sports-based interventions into crime prevention and criminal justice strategies. In particular, the General Assembly invited Member States to consider the development of clear policy frameworks within which sports-based initiatives can be integrated into crime prevention and criminal justice strategies and programmes, and to operate to effect positive change in the field of crime prevention and criminal justice, to prevent recidivism through sports and to promote and facilitate effective research, monitoring and evaluation of relevant initiatives, including gang-related initiatives, to assess their impact.

The General Assembly further decided in its resolution 67/296 to proclaim 6 April as the International Day of Sport for Development and Peace. The Day presents an opportunity to recognize the positive role sport and physical activity play in communities and in people’s lives across the globe.

Similarly, in the Kyoto Declaration on “Advancing crime prevention, criminal justice and the rule of law: towards the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”, adopted in 2021 by the 14th UN Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice and endorsed by the General Assembly in its

resolution 76/181, Member States stressed the importance of “empowering youth to become active agents of positive change in their communities to support crime prevention efforts, including by organizing sports-related youth programmes”.

In his report, the UN Secretary-General also highlighted that “sport is an effective tool for building shared identities, preventing conflict, crime and violence and providing psychological support to people recovering from conflict and disaster”. He further noted that “sport can also be an effective tool to help reintegrate people who have served time in prison (...) and leveraged to encourage collaboration with communities and educate the public on the need to reintegrate children in conflict with the law”¹.

Besides the benefits on both physical and mental health, sport offers an important opportunity for social inclusion, promoting tolerance and respect. It also represents a crucial opportunity to engage marginalised and at-risk youth and help them to develop life skills, empowering youth to become active agents of positive change in their communities to support crime prevention efforts. Trainers and athletes can also serve as positive role models inspiring young people, advocating for peace and sharing the values instilled through sports. They can inspire young people to dream big and to act as agents of change in their communities to promote peace, just, safe and inclusive societies free from violence and crime.

The importance of preventing and fighting corruption in sport was also recognized by Member States in resolutions 77/27 on “Sport for Development and Peace” and resolution 78/229 on “Strengthening the United Nations crime prevention and criminal justice programme, in particular its technical cooperation capacity”.

In General Assembly resolution 78/228 on “Improving the coordination of efforts against trafficking in persons”, Member States also expressed concern about increasing reports of trafficking in persons in sport, which often involves transnational organized crime groups exploiting people in vulnerable situations, especially children, and in this regard recognized the need to address the knowledge gap around this issue through support for and engagement in data-gathering on trafficking in persons in sport in order to ensure that responses are evidence-based.

Objectives

The high-level debate will be an opportunity to discuss the role of sport in promoting development and crime prevention strategies and programmes, including for youth, and to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals for all people everywhere.

Members States and Observers of the General Assembly, UN entities and stakeholders participating in the high-level debate will have an opportunity to contribute to the discussion by sharing successful practices from across regions to highlight how sport can play a critical role in empowering youth and community members to become active agents of positive change and support crime prevention efforts.

Participants are invited to share their experiences and reflect on best practices and persisting challenges by addressing the following guiding questions:

- What are the biggest challenges to integrate sport-based interventions into crime prevention and criminal justice strategies and programmes for at risk youth, with a view to strengthening known protective factors and addressing risks factors of crime?

¹ A/77/161, entitled “Sport: catalyst for a better, stronger recovery for all”

- What measures and approaches have been effective in the development and implementation of sport-based initiatives co-designed with local communities or in consultation with the targeted population?
- What are national experiences using sport and sport-based learning to strengthen youth resilience, including the prevention of recidivism and social reintegration of young offenders, as well as neighborhoods affected by crime and violence, including gang violence?
- How can the role and the contribution of the sport sector be leveraged to crime prevention efforts in order to enhance access to sport for at-risk youth and communities and to sustain and scale up evidence-based prevention strategies and programmes, utilizing sport as a tool for prevention and to build just, peaceful and safe societies?
- How can Member States enhance cooperation among all relevant stakeholders, including law enforcement officials, local authorities, communities and schools, and sports organizations?
- How can Member States improve data collection and analysis to measure the impact of sport in crime prevention and crime reduction interventions involving sports activities, including for youth?
- What are the different manifestations of corruption and other forms of crime in sport and what effective measures have been used by Member States to safeguard sport from them?

Format and Outcome

The high-level debate will be held in person and consist of an opening, a high-level segment for interventions from Member States and Observers of the General Assembly, followed by an interactive panel discussion.

Participation in the high-level panel will be open for Member States and Observers of the General Assembly, the United Nations system, as well as representatives of nongovernmental organizations in consultative status with ECOSOC.

The outcome will be a President's summary of the discussion, to be transmitted to the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice and to all Member States, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 78/229.

Provisional Programme

Morning meeting - General Assembly Hall

10:00 a.m. - 10:30 a.m. Opening segment
10:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. High-level segment

Afternoon meeting - CR-4

3:00 pm - 4.30 p.m. Interactive Panel Discussion: "*Youth Crime Prevention through Sport Initiatives*"
4:30 p.m. - 6:00 p.m. Continuation of the high-level segment

A detailed programme will be available in due course.

Participation

Member States and Observers of the General Assembly are invited to participate in person at the highest possible level (Ministers) and make interventions during the high-level segment and the interactive panel discussion.

The list of speakers for the high-level segment will be made available to delegations prior to the meeting. It will open on the e-deleGATE portal on Friday, 17 May 2024 at 10 a.m., and close on Thursday, 30 May 2024 at 5.00 p.m. The time limit for individual delegations will be three minutes and five minutes for statements made on behalf of a group of States.

In view of the limited time available for the high-level segment, the texts of statements submitted by speakers inscribed on the list that are not delivered by the end of the meeting will be posted on “eStatements” in the Journal of the United Nations. In this regard, delegations are encouraged to send their statements to estatements@un.org so as to facilitate interpretation and for posting on “eStatements”.

Representatives of the UN system, regional and sub-regional organizations and other relevant stakeholders will also be invited to attend and may intervene during the interactive panel discussion.

There will be no pre-established list of speakers for the interactive panel discussion. Participants are invited to indicate their interest to intervene in the panel discussion by pressing the microphone button during the interactive segment.

Accessibility arrangements

Delegations are requested to inform the Secretariat of the accessibility requirements of their delegates in order to facilitate participation in meetings. Upon request, adjustments can be made to seating arrangements with a view to enabling the participation of persons with disabilities. For individual requests, please contact the Meetings Support Section of the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management (e-mail: accessibilitycentre@un.org; phone: 212 963 7348/9) no later than three working days prior to the meeting.
