

United Nations Office on  
Sport for Development and Peace



# GAMES OF THE XXIX OLYMPIAD & THE XIII PARALYMPIC GAMES IN BEIJING

The UN System in Action



UNITED NATIONS

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## INTRODUCTION

The Games of the XXIX Olympiad and the XIII Paralympic Games were held for the first time in the People's Republic of China, and for the first time in a newly industrialised country. The Games provided the opportunity for China to showcase the country's achievements and to place China prominently on the international scene. By bringing together athletes and people from around the world, the Games helped promote mutual understanding, harmony, reconciliation and friendship on the basis of fair competition.

Traditionally, the United Nations (UN) Secretary-General has not attended the Olympic and Paralympic Games. In recent history, the former UN Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, attended the Salt Lake City Winter Olympics 2002 accompanied by the former Special Adviser on Sport for Development and Peace, Mr. Adolf Ogi. Mr. Ogi then represented the Secretary-General at the Athens Summer Olympics and Paralympics 2004 and the Torino Winter Olympics and Paralympics 2006.

Due to increased recognition by the United Nations of the power of sport as a platform for raising the awareness of global issues and as a tool for attaining specific development and peace objectives, including the Millennium Development Goals, a larger contingent of UN representatives were present at the Beijing Olympic Games 2008. Mr. Wilfried Lemke, the successor to Mr. Ogi as Special Adviser on Sport for Development and Peace, was appointed as the Special Envoy mandated to represent the United Nations Secretary-General and to head the UN delegation at the Olympic and Paralympic Games. The Special Adviser was accompanied at the Olympics by representatives of the UN system in China (including the UN Resident Coordinator Mr. Khalid Malik), UNESCO (including Director-General Mr. Koïchiro Matsuura), UNICEF, UNEP (including Executive Director Achim Steiner), WHO (including Director General Dr Margaret Chan), UNAIDS, UNV, ILO, UNWTO, FAO and UN-HABITAT (including Executive Director Anna Tibaijuka). Attendance at the Paralympic Games by UN officials as well as governmental and sports leaders was on a more modest scale. The UN delegation was composed of the Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs, Mr. Sha Zukang, and the Chief of the Secretariat for the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Ms. Akiko Ito, the Director of the Division of Social Science, Research and Policy of UNESCO, Mr. Wataru Iwamoto, as well as members of the UN system in China.

The objectives of the Special Adviser's mission to Beijing for the Olympics (6-18 August 2008) and the Paralympics (5-9 September 2008) were manifold, including observation of the realization of the Olympic and Paralympic Games, in particular, those projects undertaken in partnership with the United Nations; meeting with global partners from the world of sports, private sector and government officials; encouraging and facilitating dialogue and partnerships towards enhancing the role of sport for development and peace in China as a forum to discuss social, environmental, and economic issues; encouraging continued discussion concerning the International Convention against Doping in Sport as well as the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities; and chairing the Executive Committee meeting of the Sport for Development and Peace International Working Group (SDP IWG).

While not exhaustive, the following report provides an overview of projects undertaken by the UN system in China in relation to the Beijing Games.

## UN INITIATIVES

Upon the election of Beijing as the host city on 13 July 2001, the UN system recognized the importance of the Olympic and Paralympic Games as a means to attract further engagement in the discourse on global improvement. Using the leverage power of the Games, a number of UN funds, programmes and specialized agencies used the Games as a platform for dialogue and collaboration. The unique opportunity provided by the Games was used to communicate the positive role of sport and to encourage collaboration and partnerships in various fields in China which are intended to last beyond the Games. Prior to the mission of the Special Adviser, the UN Department of Public Information (UNDPI) coordinated an inter-agency consultative process that focused on UN system preparations and intended activities in support of the Games. The process was crucial to the diplomatic mission of the Special Adviser in Beijing. The UN China Resident Coordinator Mr. Khalid Malik and the UN system in China had a particularly important role to play in ensuring common messaging by the UN system during the Games, media outreach, inter-agency coordination with close work undertaken with the China Disabled Persons' Federation to promote rights protection for people with disabilities.

### **Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO)**

FAO worked with the World Health Organisation (WHO) in the area of food safety. Prior to the Games, FAO was the Chairperson for the avian influenza group, and WHO was the Deputy Chair.

### **International Labour Organisation (ILO)**

Leading up to the Olympics, ILO supported activities to promote the improved status of women and persons living with a disability, and equal opportunity and treatment in all areas of life including in sport. On International Women's Day, with the UN Theme Group on Gender Equality, ILO highlighted the role of women and sport from various perspectives and engaged continued support, recognition and equal treatment for women engaging in the sporting professions. Following the Olympics, ILO intends to follow up on this work and expand it to address wider issues in the sport profession within the context of human resource development and development of skills through sport. ILO also plans to further explore the contribution of sport to economic and social development in the country.

In the lead-up to the Paralympics, ILO was instrumental in helping China to develop its legislation regarding equal opportunity for people with disabilities in the workplace. It also supported training people living with disabilities to find employment. Under ILO's entrepreneurship development programme, the UN is helping people with disabilities to start their own businesses.

### **Joint UN Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS)**

In collaboration with the IOC and the Department of Medical Services of BOCOG, UNAIDS executed an overall HIV prevention and anti-stigma campaign. HIV positive people were engaged throughout the development and execution of the various initiatives including HIV awareness among construction workers at Olympic venues; prevention, anti-stigma and anti-discrimination training of 7,500 Olympic volunteers by HIV positive trainers. UNAIDS mobilized the UN Joint Team on AIDS who, in

collaboration with people living with HIV and other partners, implemented a highly successful training in around 15 universities. With the support of WHO, availability was ensured of documents on Universal Precaution and other clinical prevention for BOCOG health and dental staff and 100,000 volunteers received an HIV/AIDS information package. UNAIDS promoted HIV awareness during and after the Games, targeting national Olympic delegations with a fact sheet, two video PSAs on flash sticks; posters in English, Chinese, French; and an HIV prevention anti-stigma package with two condoms. Chinese basketball player Yao Ming endorsed the campaign. Within the Olympic Village, 50,000 packages with 100,000 condoms were made available free of charge. Specific events were held endorsing the campaign, including in Tanzania, which ensured that an HIV positive person was an Olympic torch bearer; in Beijing, a tree planting was organized with UNAIDS Special Representative Princess Mathilde of Belgium, other high profile VIPs and HIV positive people next to the Olympic Park in 2007.

### **UN Children's Fund (UNICEF)**

The Beijing Games was the second time in the modern Olympics era that the competition was held in a country currently implementing a UNICEF Country Programme for children. The UNICEF China programme uses sport as a key strategy in its basic education, HIV and AIDS prevention, girls' equality and child protection programmes. As early as 2006, the UNICEF China office began to explore ways to link its sports based activities and projects with the 2008 Olympics. The ideals of the IOC and the UN are closely aligned, and since the Olympic Games captures the attention of the entire world, the occasion was considered an excellent opportunity to help realize the rights of vulnerable children to participate in sports and recreation, without discrimination.

UNICEF worked with the Beijing Olympics opening and closing ceremonies production team, headed by renowned Chinese film director Zhang Yimou, to highlight images of children of the world smiling for the grand multi-media displays that featured prominently in these signal events. Through UNICEF offices in both developing and industrialized countries, UNICEF contributed to and coordinated provision of photographic images of young children from scores of countries on every continent.

UNICEF and the China National Committee on Care for Children (CNCCC) launched the Fifth Summer Camp for Children Affected by HIV and AIDS – "Opportunities and Dreams" on 9 August in the Great Hall of the People. UNICEF supported 100 children affected by HIV and AIDS from 10 provinces to attend the Summer Camp. On the same evening UNICEF organized a gala event called "Champions for Children" to advocate for the rights of vulnerable children in China and express appreciation for UNICEF's major supporters. UNICEF Ambassadors Jackie Chan, Lang Lang and tennis star Jelena Jankovic headlined an event attended by senior government officials, heads of major corporations, national media and children from the earthquake zone. The event also included a preview of UNICEF's advocacy campaign for the rights of vulnerable girls.

On 14 August, UNICEF provided an orientation session on the theme of gender equality to some 500 members of the Olympic Youth Camp. UNICEF provided resource persons, learning materials and presentations on youth active citizenship, child rights, emergency disaster preparedness, life skills and Millennium

Development Goals during the camp. UNICEF also participated in the one day "Youth Forum" which focused on the themes of volunteerism, environmental protection and technology innovation.

Sports and recreational play equipment have proved to be effective tools for helping children in need of special protection to regain a sense of normalcy. UNICEF has established 34 Child Friendly Spaces to help children affected by the Sichuan earthquake to recover from the psychological stress through sports and games as an essential part of activities to reduce stress and promote peer interaction, team spirit and life skills. The UNICEF Summer Camp for Children Affected by HIV and AIDS advocated for all children's right to participate in recreation and sports activities along with other children and helped to decrease stigma and discrimination. UNICEF's campaign for girls' equality pays special attention to the participation of girls in sports in school and in the community, to help girls develop greater self-esteem and assertiveness while learning important lessons on teamwork and cooperation.

In the run-up to the Beijing 2008 Paralympic Games, UNICEF also provided technical assistance in revision of the Chinese 'Law on the Protection of Persons with Disabilities'. UNICEF conducted extensive analysis of existing Chinese legislation to support reform of the legal code to come into compliance with the UN Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD). The new amendment to the law entered into force on 1 July 2008 with a special provision on disabled children. Although not formally part of the Olympic Movement it is worth mentioning that the Summer Special Olympics were held in Shanghai in September 2007 and implementation of the UNCRPD was discussed in various fora during that event.

## **UN Development Programme (UNDP)**

UNDP China, with the support of the Global Environment Facility, contributed to BOCOG's carbon neutral Olympic Village goal through the provision of four clean energy Olympic buses to serve as official transport for all athletes between the Village and Olympic venues. Outreach efforts, such as the distribution of T-shirts, hats and sweatbands, were made in partnership with UNEP and the UN Industrial Development Organisation (UNIDO). The buses have been integrated into the Beijing public transport system following the Games as part of the Olympic legacy activity.

UNDP China developed, with BOCOG and the Ministry of Environment, eight short films featuring Chinese athletes on issues such as climate change, biodiversity, water, waste and behavioural change through everyday solutions. Films were played within the Olympic venue on all Beijing buses and selected subway lines during August 2008, on five Chinese TV channels from June 2008 onwards, as previews in movie theatres, and on Chinese websites and mobile channels.

UNDP China supported BOCOG and the Ministry of Environment in designing green technology models for the Olympic Village and Olympic Forest Park including energy efficient systems, solar power applications and water reuse. They also supported BOCOG's Green Olympic display panels for use in the Green Exhibition Centre in the Olympic venue. UNDP China cooperated with top Olympic sponsor Coca Cola and BOCOG to identify Environmental Champion Torch Bearers to run during the official Torch Relay, including leading Chinese figures in water, biodiversity and energy. Cooperation between Coca Cola, UNDP and the Ministry of Water saw the use of cost-sharing parts received from sale of Coca Cola Olympic Pins during 2008 going

towards rural water safety activities in project locations in Xinjiang and Sichuan provinces. Awareness raising activities were also conducted with athletes in the Coca Cola Exhibition in the Olympic Village.

### **UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP) and the Asian and Pacific Center for Agricultural Engineering and Machinery (APCAEM)**

APCAEM, under UNESCAP and in collaboration with BOCOG, supported the implementation of a Four Dimensional Environmental Arts Museum Project. To implement this project, Messages of Peace were collected from dignitaries worldwide followed by the construction of the Museum in a dedicated site of the Olympics Green, adjacent to the Olympics main stadium.

### **UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO)**

As the lead agency for the International Convention against Doping in Sport, UNESCO advocated during the Olympics and Paralympics to highlight anti-doping messages and to call for ratification of the Convention. The Convention supplies governments with a legal framework for an international harmonization of efforts in the fight against doping. A number of key sporting countries, including Cuba and the United States of America, ratified the Convention in the period leading up to the opening of the Games, sending a strong signal to the international community. UNESCO also provided BOCOG with anti-doping education materials to increase understanding of the harm caused by doping in sport.

The UNESCO Office in Beijing supported the organisation of a five-day training course on ethics and sports with a specific focus on anti-doping in November 2007. The purpose of the workshop was to improve the quality of sports reporting during the Games. National and international sports experts, anti-doping experts, journalists, photographers and producers were invited to give lectures on various themes of ethics and sports.

### **UN Environment Programme (UNEP)**

The issue of the environment was very seriously taken into account by China and BOCOG, and commendable efforts were made by BOCOG and local authorities. The Beijing National Stadium ("Bird's Nest") was equipped with China's first rainwater recycling system. In October 2007, the 7th Sport and Environment Conference held in Beijing passed the Beijing Communiqué on Sport and the Environment that acknowledged the environmental effort made by BOCOG including the cutting of greenhouse gas emissions by emphasizing energy efficiency, encouraging the use of renewable energy, adopting environmentally friendly commuting policies and practices, and the widespread afforestation and greening of the city. The Games have acted as a catalyst for greening other sectors in China and will leave a legacy to inspire other developing countries hosting similar mass-participation events.

In November 2005, an agreement was signed between UNEP and BOCOG to make the Games environmentally friendly. The key activities of the MoU included the following: 1) Assist BOCOG in the promotion and implementation of its environmental plans and projects; 2) Provide expert advice and support to BOCOG on the development of relevant environmental reports; 3) Work with BOCOG on the development and implementation of various communication and educational projects;

4) Facilitate communications and consultations between BOCOG and international NGOs on environmental issues. Many concrete measures were undertaken by BOCOG and local authorities including ozone-friendly Games; reduced road traffic during the competitions; and diminished domestic and industrial use of coal. As part of this MoU, UNEP published 'Beijing 2008 Olympic Games – An Environmental Review' in October 2007, an independent review of Beijing's environmental achievements and challenges on the road to greening the Olympics. UNEP jointly published with BOCOG brochures, posters, with green cards on the Games and the environment being made available at visitors' information desks. Furthermore, in partnership with BOCOG, the Ministry of Environmental Protection of China and UNDP, UNEP also contributed to the design and production of eight Public Service Advertisements (PSA) featuring athletes with the aim of improving public awareness about the importance of environmental protection. With the support of the Beijing Municipal Government and BOCOG, UNEP launched a post-game environmental assessment report in February 2009 at the UNEP Governing Council. The report finds that the Beijing Olympics met if not exceeded many of its pledges on the environment. During UNEP's Governing Council in February 2009, an exhibition on the Greening of the Beijing Olympics was held in Nairobi, Kenya.

#### **UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)**

Under the "Giving is Winning" campaign, UNHCR and IOC collected more than 30,000 items of sports clothing in Beijing for distribution to refugees in Asia. Significant contributions came from the Olympic Committees of Australia, Japan, New Zealand and China. This is in addition to 52,000 items collected in the year-long run-up to the Beijing Olympics, exceeding the original goal of 50,000 items. National Olympic Committees from many countries made large-scale donations. During the Games, biodegradable plastic bags and information leaflets were placed in the room of every athlete in the Olympic Village so that athletes could make individual donations. The items collected before the Olympics opened were distributed to refugees in Rwanda, Tanzania, Chad, Moldova, Georgia and Panama.

The "Giving is Winning" initiative was first established at the Athens Olympics in 2004 when more than 30,000 items were collected to support sports among young refugees in Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Eritrea, Kosovo and Tanzania.

#### **United Nations Industrial Development Organisation (UNIDO)**

The Games included a strong environmental component putting environmental issues and sustainable development in the forefront nationally and globally. Part of the promotion of green technologies included environmentally degradable plastics (EDP) which were used for the production of common plastic items used during the event. The project addressed the issue by using EDP for the production of short term consumable plastic items, the treatment of EDP waste and a public awareness/training campaign. The implementation of EDP was carried out as a collaborative project between BOCOG and ICS-UNIDO.

#### **UN Population Fund (UNFPA)**

UNFPA China conveyed the messages: "Play it Safe: Protection Saves Lives" and "Empower Young People Through Sports" throughout the Games. The activities were designed to increase HIV/STI prevention and awareness among the general public,

especially youth, through the delivery of public education messages on sexual and reproductive health.

The Fund supported the Red Cross Society of China (RCSC) in distributing HIV prevention messages to 50,000 fans at information booths in the major Olympic cities throughout the period of the Olympics and Paralympics to increase correct knowledge on HIV transmission and on condom use among the Chinese spectators.

UNFPA China also worked with China Family Planning Association (CFPA), China Youth Network (CYN) and the local Family Planning Association in Chaoyang district in Beijing to conduct a series of activities before and during the 2008 Olympics, including: training of peer educators from universities in Beijing; fostering communication volunteers on HIV/STI prevention in entertainment establishments; provision of free condoms in entertainment establishments; and public dissemination of information and education materials on the subject.

On 21 June 2008, UNFPA staff, as part of the UN Joint Team on AIDS, assisted in the provision of training entitled: "AIDS from a Global Perspective" given to 400 Olympic volunteers from universities.

### **UN Human Settlements Programme (UN-HABITAT)**

On World Water Day, 22 March 2008, UN-HABITAT supported the launching of "Water Saving for the Green Olympics" campaign which was jointly organized by the Environment Department of the Beijing Olympic Games Organising Committee, National Water Saving Office, PR of China and the Beijing Water Authority.

### **UN Volunteers (UNV)**

UNV launched a programme entitled "Strengthening Volunteerism for Development in China through the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games" in partnership with UNDP, the Beijing Organizing Committee of the Olympic Games (BOCOG) Volunteer Department and the Beijing Youth League. The US\$ 1.4 million project has been influential in helping to promote volunteerism for peace and development as a legacy of the Games.

In the run-up to the Olympics, UNV connected the Beijing Olympic Volunteer Department with international experts, including the director of the Sydney Olympic Games and Korean and German World Cup volunteer experts, in order to build the capacity of Beijing volunteer managers and trainers in areas such as risk management and volunteer motivation. UNV also helped document best practices and lessons learned in volunteer training and shared these with Olympic managers.

At the same time, UNV launched a volunteer environmental campaign which spread the message across the capital of how individuals can live more environmentally sustainable lives. In support of the Green Olympics, the campaign reached hundreds of thousand of Beijing citizens in 2008 and helped establish Olympic volunteerism as a public good transcending sport.

The project included high-level events to help create a legacy of Olympic volunteerism in Beijing and throughout China. The "Beijing Olympic Volunteer Celebration: Recognizing Volunteer Contributions for the Games and Development,"

held on the eve of the Opening Ceremony brought together a UN Under-Secretary-General together with City leaders, the Mayor of London and the Olympics, former Olympic champions and celebrities to mark the contributions of Olympics volunteers and consider how the Games could inspire the growth of volunteerism in China and contribute to human development. UNV and UNDP each received official awards from BOCOG recognizing the outstanding contributions made to the Beijing Olympics. This project will continue throughout 2009 and 2010 to help create the infrastructure, networks and demonstration projects that will lead to a stronger, more effective volunteer movement in Beijing and China.

### **UN World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO)**

UNWTO and the IOC signed a Cooperation Agreement in 1999 to strengthen the links between tourism and sport. Since that time, the UNWTO Sustainable Tourism-Eliminating Poverty (ST-EP) Foundation has played a major role in UNWTO's activities to promote tourism and development through sport, especially in conjunction with the Olympic Movement. At the Games, UNWTO ST-EP Foundation hosted the 2008 Beijing Sport, Tourism & Development Forum. The Forum was a follow up to those held at the Olympic Games in Torino in 2006 and Monte Carlo in 2005 (the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Poverty Alleviation through Tourism & Sports: Conference of Global Leaders). The purpose of the Forum was to bring together leaders in sport, tourism and development to create strategic partnerships among these organisations in support of common goals and efforts. The Foundation also contributed to the IOC and UNHCR's "Giving is Winning" programme, donating 30,000 bags for the 2004 Athens and 2008 Beijing Games and making a donation of over \$50,000 worth of soccer balls and gym bags to the Association of National Olympic Committees of Africa (ANOCA) in September 2007. These goods were shipped to 33 National Olympic Committees in Africa.

### **World Health Organisation (WHO)**

In recent years, the Medical Commission of the International Olympic Committee has expanded activities from a focus on anti-doping issues to wider public health concerns. Hence, in the planning for the Beijing Olympic Games, there was substantial emphasis given to the health and well-being of not only all the athletes and visitors, but also to health conditions in the host cities. Consequently, WHO's contribution to the planning and organisation of the Beijing Olympics was focused on supporting activities that contributed to the "Health Legacy" of the Games. The concept of the Health Legacy is defined as "the sustainable, positive health impacts on the host city or country, associated with the hosting of the Olympic Games".

In the run-up to the Games, the WHO Director General, Dr Margaret Chan, agreed with IOC and Beijing City on the specific modalities for WHO support for the Games. The collaboration focused particularly on providing technical support and ensuring information exchange in relation to global communicable disease control and food safety, assisting in the implementation of measures to ensure a 'smoke free' Olympics and support for the evaluation of the long term Health Legacy following the Olympic Games. WHO also worked with other UN agencies in matters related to HIV prevention and environmental health.

Substantial work was undertaken by WHO on the promotion of Smoke Free Olympic Games. Efforts involved primarily advocacy, health education and assisting local government in the development of legislation on smoke free public places.

Support for infectious disease control focused on enhancing outbreak diagnostic capacity. Throughout the Games, WHO worked closely with counterparts to expand the range of diagnostic tests available in-country. WHO consulted daily with Chinese counterparts in a two-way flow of information on disease monitoring. WHO was instrumental in establishing systems for daily China-WHO information exchanges on outbreaks during the Games including notification procedures; strengthening syndromic surveillance looking at primarily gastro-intestinal and respiratory diseases; strengthening active daily surveillance for infectious diseases and early warnings; providing technical support to strengthening laboratory capacity in China to test, diagnose and confirm imported pathogens causing infectious diseases.

A communications campaign on Food Safety for food handlers and the general public was undertaken as well as capacity strengthening. WHO, together with the Beijing Administration for Industry and Commerce and the Ministry of Health, launched a set of information/education materials on food safety and diet and physical activity. The materials were endorsed by BOCOG and were made available at Olympic venues and other public places. The Ministry of Health also adapted a WHO Guide on Safe Food for Travellers for dissemination in the Olympic cities and on a wider national scale.

Currently, WHO is collaborating with the national authorities to formally document the health legacy of the Beijing Olympic Games and to publish a peer review monograph on the health legacy of the Games. This evaluation will provide lessons for cities and countries in the future who intend to host large mass events and gatherings such as the Winter and Summer Olympics, World Football Cup and other such tournaments and events. It is envisaged that the outcomes of this project will be particularly relevant to those less developed countries in the fast developing regions and countries of the world who can then plan to use such mega events to improve the health and wellbeing of their citizens.

### **World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO)**

Innovation and creativity drive sporting excellence and enable athletes to realize their sporting dreams. WIPO recognizes that intellectual property has a key role to play in safeguarding the image and economic interests of major sporting events such as the Games with the intellectual property of the Olympic movement generating the funds necessary to organize the Games. WIPO monitors this process, ensuring that the many inventors who work behind the scenes to develop the technologies that support sporting excellence are recognized and rewarded.

### **World Meteorological Organisation (WMO)**

With weather predictions and characterization of associated risk critical to the Opening and Closing Ceremonies as well as the Games themselves, for the third consecutive Games, WMO coordinated efforts by the host country and other members of the Organisation to provide timely and accurate weather information. A Fengyun-3A satellite, which is the first of its new generation of polar-orbiting meteorological satellites, was in operation during the Beijing Olympics. These

observations were used in a WMO-coordinated effort to deploy numerical forecast models specifically designed to improve prediction of high-impact weather in the vicinity of the Olympic venues on time-scales of minutes to days. This coordinated forecast effort was a project under the WMO's World Weather Research Programme called Beijing 08. Another component of Beijing 08 was to assess the performance of these models in terms of societal benefits realized during the Olympic Games with the goal of improving these models for subsequent forecast challenges and transitioning research results into operations.

## **CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES AND ITS OPTIONAL PROTOCOL**

The Paralympics provided a platform to raise awareness and stimulate action on advancing the rights of and opportunities for persons living with disabilities, providing a unique opportunity to advocate for the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and its Optional Protocol. The Convention received its twentieth ratification on 3 April 2008, triggering its entry into force 30 days later. This marks a major milestone in the effort to promote, protect and ensure the full and equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms of persons with disabilities. The Convention is also the first major human rights treaty this century. Article 30 of the Convention provides that State Parties shall take measures to promote participation of people with disabilities in mainstream sporting activities and disability-specific sporting and recreational activities, and to ensure children with disabilities have equal access to participation in recreation and sports. On 30 August, a Memorial Wall dedicated to the UN Convention, which outlaws all forms of discrimination in the workplace on the basis of disability, was unveiled in the Beijing Paralympics Village with the support of the UN Department for Economic and Social Affairs (DESA).

In China, there are over 82 million people living with disabilities, of whom 20,000 are newly disabled as a result of the Sichuan earthquake in May. The country was one of the first nations to sign the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and ratified it on 1 August 2008.

On 15 September 2008, UNDP led the organization of a joint event for the UN and the China Disabled Persons' Federation (CDPF). This was a high-level celebration to recognize the exemplary deeds of persons with disabilities and people who devoted themselves in promoting the rights of persons with disabilities. A certificate expressing appreciation of their contributions was granted by the UN Resident Coordinator. Over 200 representatives from government agencies, the UN system, Paralympic athletes, celebrity volunteers, as well as disabled groups and their families all gathered at the UN Compound in Beijing. Young artists from the Singing and Dancing Troupe of Persons with Disabilities made performances with the participation and engagement of persons with disabilities shared with vivid personal stories.

## **OLYMPIC TRUCE RESOLUTION**

At the 62<sup>nd</sup> session of the UN General Assembly, China introduced the resolution “Sport for peace and development: building a peaceful and better world through sport and the Olympic ideal” (A/RES/62/4). 180 countries co-sponsored the resolution which perpetuates a UN tradition whereby, since 1993, the Olympic Truce resolution has been adopted by the UNGA every two years to ensure the Games are conducted in peace. The President of the General Assembly made a solemn appeal on 28 July 2008 to all Member States to demonstrate their commitment to the Olympic Truce for the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games, and to undertake concrete actions at the local, national, regional and world levels to promote and strengthen a culture of peace and harmony based on the spirit of the Truce. However, it has to be noted that the Olympic Truce was violated due to the world’s ongoing conflicts.

## **SPORT FOR DEVELOPMENT AND PEACE INTERNATIONAL WORKING GROUP**

The Executive Committee meeting of the Sport for Development and Peace International Working Group (SDP IWG) was held on 7 August in Beijing and brought together ministers of youth and sport, and their representatives, from 38 nations to discuss ways to harness the power of sport to advance national and international development goals and to present the report “Harnessing the Power of Sport for Development and Peace: Recommendations to Governments”. Mr. Liu Peng, Executive President of the Beijing Organizing Committee for the Games of the XXIX Olympiad (BOCOG), Minister of the General Administration of Sports and President of the Chinese Olympic Committee addressed the opening. The SDP IWG report was endorsed at the meeting as was the proposal for a renewed mandate for the SDP IWG which will see it’s incorporation into the United Nations Office on Sport for Development and Peace as of 2009.

## **CONCLUSION**

Despite the challenging political environment immediately prior to the commencement of the Beijing Olympic and Paralympic Games 2008, both the International Olympic Committee and the International Paralympic Committee can be credited for staging Games of resounding success, attesting the full realization of the pledge made by BOCOG to hold “Games of Equal Splendor.” Following the election of Beijing as the host city, BOCOG demonstrated an open willingness to cooperate with a number of United Nations agencies in what will hopefully lead to continued sustainable developments for the Chinese people. The Games have provided a unique platform for showcasing the social progress of the Chinese people. China demonstrated friendship, leadership and harmony which will continue to build bridges amongst China and with the rest of the world.

The United Nations welcomes the willingness of China to strengthen their partnership with the United Nations and looks forward to building on the foundations that have been laid during the Olympic and Paralympic Games.

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