



**Address by
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Under-Secretary-General

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at the

**International Conference on
Governance in Sport
“Play the Game”**

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It is a privilege and an honour for me to address the participants to this International Conference on the critical questions of sport entitled "Play the Game". As we are commemorating the International Year of Sport and Physical Education (IYSPE 2005), it is of the highest importance that we review the state of both, the shining side as well as the dark side of sport. My work, which consists in convincing the world that sport has to be an active part of human development, greatly depends on the good image of sport.

Even if we know that sport is a reflection of society and that we should not expect sport to be any better than the society in which it evolves, it is in the interest of all of us that sport remains attractive and beneficial to all. It is our common role, yours as journalists, researchers and athletes and ours as representatives of international organisations, to ensure that sport remains aware of moral and ethical standards and rules. We must continue to expect these standards to be upheld and fulfilled.

I am particularly thankful to the Danish authorities and to the Danish Minister of Culture, Mr. Brian Mikkelsen, for his commitment and support in the realisation of this event.

For me, this Conference represents an ideal forum, set in the last part of the IYSPE 2005, for highlighting the many faces of sport and to look at how we can improve them. We must use this opportunity to strengthen the position of sport in society. The sport we are contemplating is a clean and mobilising sport, healthy for young and old, able to generate enthusiasm and jobs. The positive value of this sport for the promotion of health, education, development and peace must be demonstrated and the responsibilities of all those who deal with the governance of sport must be clarified.

The sport I am talking about is the sport, which provides lessons for life: "Sport is the best school of life". For me, every boy and girl must have the opportunity to go through the school of sport. Only so will we be able to have a generation fit for the future, a generation able to cope with the many challenges of our lives.

Allow me now to present to you my role and activities as Special Adviser of the United Nations Secretary-General on Sport for Development and Peace.

Alike the United Nations, the sports world is far from perfect. However, sport is also about developing a sense of community and common purpose. Sport is about humanity, and together, with sport and through sport, we can create a better world. We, the system of organisations of the United Nations, together with a variety of "stakeholders" of sport such as the youth organisations and clubs, we can build a winning team and ensure that the positive lessons of sport are being taught and learned.

The United Nations system is showing a growing interest in sport and in its positive values. The United Nations system needs your support to convince governments and sports organisations that sport has a critical role to play in the promotion of education, health, sustainable human development and lasting peace.

After the launch of the Global Compact proposal of Kofi Annan in 1999 at the World Economic Forum in Davos, sport began to be included into the activities of the United Nations.

In the year 2000, at the Millennium Summit in New York, the leaders of 189 countries of the world agreed to implement the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by 2015. Here they are:

1. Halve extreme poverty and hunger
2. Achieve universal primary education
3. Empower women and promote gender equality

4. Reduce child mortality
5. Improve maternal health
6. Combat HIV/Aids and other diseases such as malaria
7. Ensure environmental sustainability
8. Develop a global partnership for development

Together with then UNICEF Executive Director, Ms. Carol Bellamy, we handed the Secretary-General of the United Nations a report exploring the value of Sport for Development and Peace entitled "Towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals". In a UN inter-agency effort, we have explored the possibilities for the UN system to help governments and civil society achieve the MDGs by implementing sports-related development and peace promotion projects.

Our report comes to the conclusion that well-designed sport-based initiatives are practical and cost-effective tools to achieve objectives in development and peace. Hence, the report recommends that:

1. Sport must be integrated into the development agenda of governments.
2. Sport must contribute to achieving the MDGs
3. Sport should be integrated into UN programmes whenever possible and relevant
4. Partnerships must be created between the United Nations and the world of sport
5. Governments need to dedicate more resources to "sport for all" initiatives at home and abroad
6. The media should work together with the United Nations to promote sport as a means for development and peace.

Another tool we have developed to promote sport as a means for human development is UN General Assembly resolution 58/5. The text was adopted without vote in the General Assembly plenary session in New York on 3 November 2003.

The resolution 58/5 is entitled: "Sport as a means to promote education, health, development and peace". The adoption of this resolution represents a strong political statement recognizing the social, development and peace promoting value of sport. The speed at which the resolution went from project to adoption by the General Assembly is a further signal of the momentum created. We must now make the best use of the tools at hand and ensure that sport is given its deserved place in society.

In UNGA resolution 58/5 the governments have underlined the following points:

- The necessity to support the promotion of physical education
- The protection of young athletes
- The development of partnership initiatives together with sport

The Member States have also shown support for UNESCO's efforts in drafting a new International instrument against doping in sport (Convention) and finally, have proclaimed the year 2005 as the "**International Year for Sport and Physical Education**" (IYSPE 2005).

Governments are mobilizing their international, national, regional and local sport and development authorities. The IYSPE 2005 is being commemorated around the world. The IYSPE 2005 is rightly seen as a unique opportunity to make use of sport to reach human, social and economic objectives. The IYSPE 2005 is the ideal showcase for the contribution of sport to the solving of social, economic, environmental, health or educational problems.

Recently, at the 2005 World Summit, which opened the present 60th Session of the United Nations General Assembly, the Outcome Document mentioned in its paragraph 145 that "sports can foster peace and development and can contribute to an atmosphere of tolerance

and understanding". The political leaders gathered in New York also called for the General Assembly to discuss a plan of action about Sport and Development.

In the framework of my mandate as Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Sport for Development and Peace, I am in contact with a large number of the UN system specialized agencies, programmes and funds working together with the world of sport, with athletes, sports organizations and federations, to promote their respective goals in a constructive, mutually beneficial and sustainable way.

For me, sport represents the best school of life. Sport teaches skills and values essential to life in our societies. With sport, young people learn :

- to manage victory
- to overcome defeat
- to become team players and to be reliable and gain the other team members' confidence
- to respect their opponents and the rules, without opponents there can be no game
- that for good results regular training is required
- to know their limits and themselves better

The positive lessons and values of sport are essential for life. We must ensure that these positive values are upheld and that athletes remain role models for the next generations.

I have many times witnessed the value of sport for development and peace around the world. There are many examples of how sport can serve human development and peace. In fact we have already identified over 150 sport-related projects worldwide and we are sure there could be many more.

Everyday, we are looking for new opportunities for sport to bring peace and development to countries where there is war and poverty. This is presently being done in places such as Palestine and Israel, in Kosovo or in Uganda.

Let me give you some examples of how sport can assist development and peace:

At the beginning of this year I have visited Brazil and Colombia. Both countries are very active in the field of "Sport for Development and Peace".

In Brazil, sport is already used as a means to combat poverty and criminality among the younger generations. With the sport-based special programme "Segundo Tempo", the Brazilian Government attempts to attract to the sports fields young boys and girls away from the streets, where they fall prey to drug dealers, gangs and prostitution. Apart from sports activities in the afternoon, "Segundo Tempo" also provides the street-children with education in morning and a meal at lunch. So far, some 1 million children are involved in the programme, which started some two years ago. President Lula's wish is to see 2 million children benefit from this programme by the end of 2005.

As in Brazil, in Colombia sport is also being used to attract young boys and girls away from the streets to healthier sports activities. These activities allow for a first step towards a more formal education as well as for a nutritional supervision. The National Sports and Recreation Institute (INDER) hires professional coaches to teach sports skills to the children after their school hours in the poorest neighborhoods of Medellín. The participating children are also regularly met by health care and nutritional specialists and receive additional care when required. In the neighborhoods, where this integrated programme is implemented, the crime rates have dramatically dropped in the last year and economic development is booming.

Within the UN system, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) has realised what sport can do to assist refugees with the healing process of their losses and emotional scars. In Uganda or Kenya for example, sport allows refugees from Somalia, from Rwanda, from Sudan and others to have fun together, to play and to communicate, even if they do not speak the same language. Sport helps refugees, especially young ones, with a particular attention given to young girls, in the often secluded environment of camps, to remain healthy, busy and it allows adult refugees to learn coaching skills and to regain self-esteem. UNHCR works together with the NGO *Right To Play* to bring sport to the refugee camps all over the world. After three years of a programme conducted by external personnel, the refugees will be able to take over the sports training programme and ensure ownership and sustainability.

Right To Play together with the Peres Center for Peace is now also developing monthly common sports classes for Palestinian and Israeli girls and boys. Right To Play has also started coach training projects for young refugees in Ramallah and Jericho together with UNRWA and the UNDP assistance programme for the Palestinian People.

These are just a few examples of how the United Nations, NGOs and Governments are integrating sport into their operations to achieve their goals and I am convinced there could be many more.

In order to offer the appropriate and sustainable development through sport, we need to understand the needs of the people we wish to assist. Sport, thanks to its global and cross-cutting capacities in human development, can add tremendous positive value to international development and cooperation work. In a time when words such as “globalization” and “profit” eclipse the lives of many members of civil society, sport must be seen by all concerned as a way to come closer to those who need development most and to integrate those otherwise excluded.

This will make sport not only more attractive for all, but also more affordable and more accessible. I am convinced that if the value of development and peace promotion through sport is better recognized, **with your support and help**, we will achieve a more equal and more peaceful world.

I thank you for your attention.