

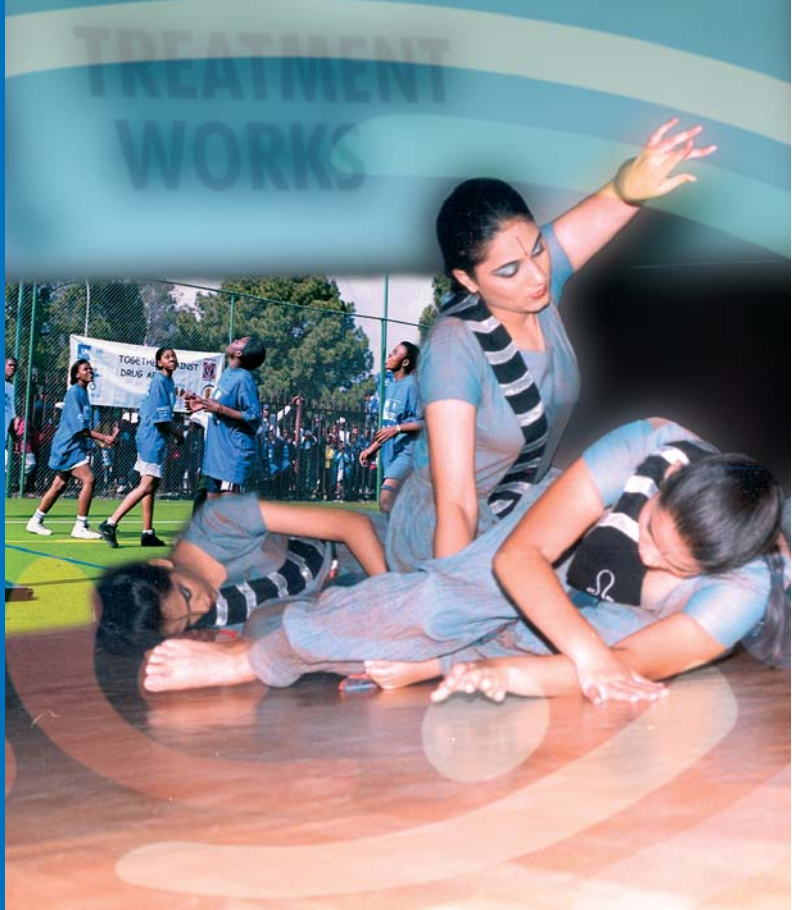


International Year
of Sport and
Physical Education

www.un.org/sport2005

Sport

*to promote
education,
health,
development
and peace*



*“Sport is a universal language.
At its best it can bring people together,
no matter what their origin, background,
religious beliefs or economic status.”*

United Nations Secretary-General
Kofi Annan

Why a year of sport? The United Nations has been collaborating with non-governmental organizations, the private sector, universities, parliaments and a range of religious and spiritual communities for a long time. What was missing, however, was a systematic approach to an important sector in civil society: Sport. Consequently, the year 2005 has been declared by the United Nations General Assembly as the **International Year of Sport and Physical Education**.

The universal language of sport plays a very important role in our world. It teaches tolerance, fair play, and tackles drug abuse. Last but not least, it brings people together.

That is why the United Nations is turning to the world of sport for help in the work for peace and the efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. The International Year of Sport and Physical Education 2005 seeks to encourage the use of sport to promote education, health, development and peace.

Sport brings people together Sport is not only about performance, competition, World Cups and star athletes. It is also about developing a sense of community and common purpose.
Sport is about humanity!



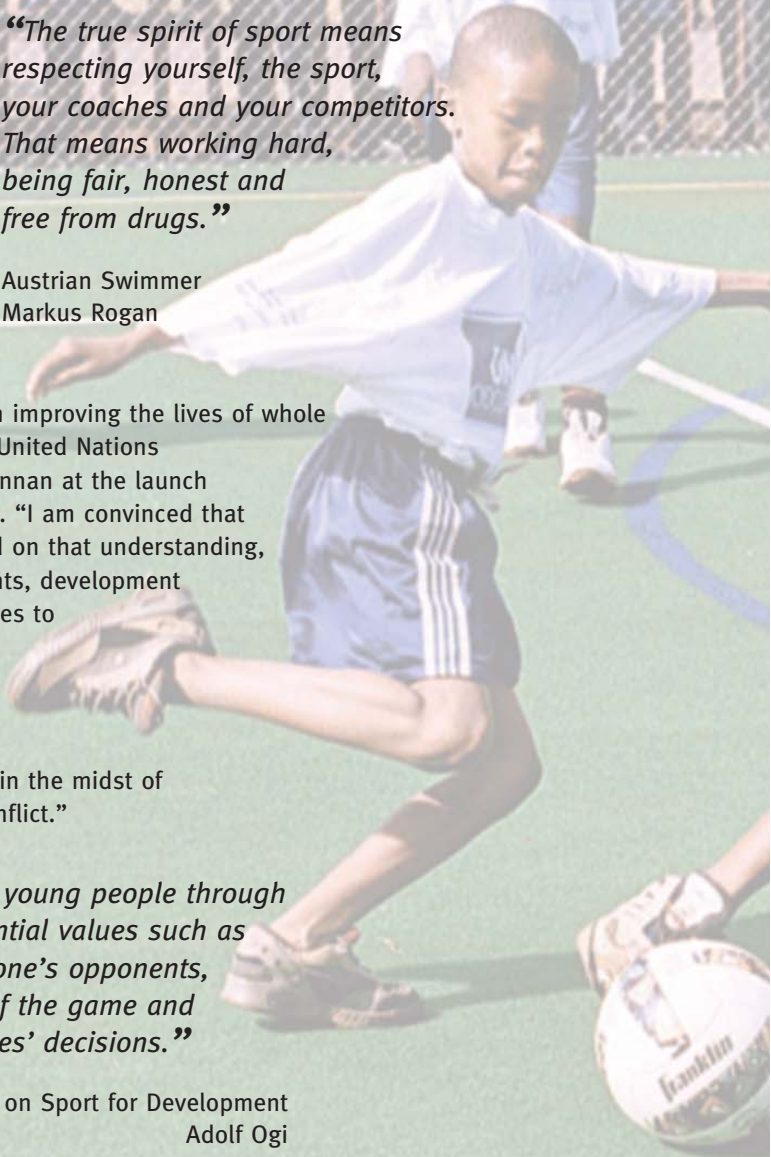
“The true spirit of sport means respecting yourself, the sport, your coaches and your competitors. That means working hard, being fair, honest and free from drugs.”

Austrian Swimmer
Markus Rogan

“Sport can play a role in improving the lives of whole communities”, said the United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan at the launch of the International Year. “I am convinced that the time is right to build on that understanding, to encourage governments, development agencies and communities to think how sport can be included more systematically in the plans to help children, particularly those living in the midst of poverty, disease and conflict.”

“Sport teaches young people through play and fun essential values such as respect for one’s opponents, for the rules of the game and the referees’ decisions.”

Special Adviser on Sport for Development
Adolf Ogi





Israeli and Palestinian children met to play a friendly soccer game. They want to live in peace.

Photo: Klein

Sport promotes integration Teamwork and tolerance are very important aspects of sport and send out a clear message: **Discrimination and prejudices shall have no chance!**

Sport brings individuals and communities together, highlighting commonalities and bridging cultural or ethnic divides.

People from different backgrounds come together regularly on the sporting field. Such day-to-day contact can be especially useful in demystifying the “other.” Not only professional sport teams and athletes around the world learn these ideals of team spirit, but also children and hobby sportspersons.

Sport and drugs do not go together

The idea of sport is not only contradictory to doping, but also to drug abuse in general. Sport strengthens the body and prevents disease.

Regular physical activity builds and helps to maintain healthy bones and muscles. Furthermore, it helps to control the body weight and to reduce fat and blood pressure.

The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) has funded small youth projects using

sport for drug abuse prevention and continues to encourage its national counterparts to do the same. Good practices for such projects, developed by UNODC, are covered in the publication “Using Sport for Drug Abuse Prevention.”

What is the United Nations doing? Several UN organizations are already utilizing the mobilizing values of sport to raise awareness about issues, and as a tool to help accomplish their missions in a variety of fields, from improving health and education, to promoting tolerance and respect for human rights.



General Assembly Resolution During its 58th session in 2003, the United Nations General Assembly adopted resolution 58/5: “Sport as a means to promote education, health, development and peace.” The resolution calls on governments to make full use of the potential of sport for national development and international cooperation.

The United Nations Inter-Agency Task Force

In a recent report, the UN inter-agency task force on sport for development and peace recommends that sport should be better integrated into governmental development policies and United Nations development programmes. Through fundamental elements like discipline, confidence, leadership, tolerance, cooperation and respect, sport becomes a powerful vehicle that can assist the United Nations in its efforts towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals.

Football without Borders The Vienna-based UNODC initiated a “Football without Borders” camp, held in Doha, Qatar, in 2003. The idea of this camp was expanded on earlier “Basketball without Borders” camps. While increasing skills in sport, these camps used the medium of sport toward two other ends: to build bonds between youth living in regions with a recent history of conflict and to build knowledge and competencies that support healthy lifestyle choices. The “Sport without Borders” concept has evolved to also include “socially excluded” young people on the borders or margins of societies. One of the aims of the football camp in Qatar was to strengthen the health promotion component of the “Sport without Borders” concept.

Sport world helps tsunami victims

Special Adviser Adolf Ogi called on the world of sport to help in the tsunami disaster of December 2004. The tsunami aid initiative is placed within the context of the International Year and will strengthen efforts already under way by some sport organizations by linking them to the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA).

The Swiss tennis player Roger Federer, currently number one tennis player in the world, and Margaret Okayo, a former New York City marathon winner from Kenya, symbolize the strength, perseverance and values that the International Year seeks to promote. Both joined forces with the United Nations for a year long campaign highlighting the power of sport to bridge cultural and ethnic divides and improve the quality of people's lives.



*Roger Federer and Margaret Okayo
are effective spokespersons
for the International Year
of Sport and Physical Education.*

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