

Sport is a vital tool for peacebuilding and development, Ban says



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[Secretary-General](#) Ban Ki-moon today called for the inclusion of sport in development, peacebuilding and peacekeeping initiatives, emphasizing the tremendous capacity for games to educate, create positive role models and reach out to the poorest and most troubled areas in the world.

“Sport has become a world language, a common denominator that breaks down all the walls, all the barriers,” Mr. Ban [told](#) the 2nd International Forum on Sport, Peace and Development in Geneva.

“It is a worldwide industry whose practices can have widespread impact. Most of all, it is a powerful tool for progress and for development,” he said, urging governments to integrate sport in development assistance programmes and in national development projects.

A resolution at the end of the Forum recommended that the UN include access to sport and physical education as an indicator in its human development indexes, and called for common evaluation tools to monitor the impact of sport on social and economic development.

Other recommendations include a request that governments increase their support for the development of quality physical educations and sports for all, and an encouragement to international sports federations to organise sports events in developing and emerging economies to contribute to the building of a legacy of sustainable development.

“The recommendations agreed upon today are the latest in a series of steps we have taken with the UN to promote peace and development through sport in proactive, concrete ways,” said IOC President Jacques Rogge. “It is not a question of whether sport contributes to the betterment of society; we are all in agreement that it does. The real question is how to make it contribute in more impactful, tangible ways,” he added.

The Secretary-General said “mega” sporting events, such as the Olympics, the cricket and soccer World Cup or the football Super Bowl in the United States, can help spread information about major issues of global concern, including protecting the environment and putting into consideration the needs of people with disabilities.

“Let us make London the greenest games yet, as the United Kingdom has pledged to do. Let us make Sochi accessible to all people with disabilities, as the Russian Federation intends to do,” said Mr. Ban, referring to the 2012 Summer Olympics and the 2014 Winter Olympics respectively.

He urged the sporting community to explore how it can support the transformations that are under way in North Africa and the Middle East, noting that the UN has used sport in many troubled societies – from the Balkans to Cyprus to Africa – to promote reconciliation and help children learn positive social values.

“We all know that children and youth are often those who suffer most from conflicts. Sports programmes can help give them a second chance – a chance to learn skills and regain confidence,” he added.

Mr. Ban cautioned that sport can also bring out the worst in human emotions and behaviour – intolerance, corruption and a mindset that seeks to win at any cost.

“I am counting on you to guard against such behaviours – and to join together so that sport can do its part to reach out to our shared goal of a healthier, more peaceful and more prosperous world,” he said.

He urged governments, the sporting world, and other partners to support the work of Wilfried Lemke, his Special Adviser on Sport for Development and Peace, saying Mr. Lemke’s office can be a catalyst for deepening partnerships.

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