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World's top tennis player tapped by UN to promote child rights in native Serbia



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Tennis ace Novak Djokovic, currently ranked number one in the world, will serve as a National Ambassador for the United Nations Children's Fund ([UNICEF](#)) in his native Serbia, where he will promote children's rights and access to early childhood education.

The announcement by UNICEF comes as Mr. Djokovic, 24, competes at the US Open in New York, where he is trying to capture his third Grand Slam title of the year.

“Novak Djokovic is a natural fit for UNICEF,” [said](#) Rima Salah, acting Deputy Executive Director. “He cares deeply about the welfare of Serbian children, bringing the same passion and enthusiasm for his career on the court to addressing issues affecting children.”

Accepting his appointment, Mr. Djokovic said he was honoured to partner with UNICEF to help increase awareness for the importance of early childhood education.

“I look forward to working with UNICEF to help make a difference in the lives of young children throughout Serbia, particularly those who have fewer opportunities to learn and develop to their full potential,” he stated.

According to UNICEF, less than half of all children under-five in Serbia attend early education programmes. This number drops to less than one-in-ten for those from vulnerable groups.

“Through my work with UNICEF, I want to help Serbian children realize their dreams,” said Mr. Djokovic, who began playing tennis at the age of four and made his professional debut at 16.

“I want to help them understand that they have rights and that those rights should be protected. I want them to believe that anything is possible.”

Earlier this year, Mr. Djokovic won the 2011 Wimbledon Championship, becoming the first player representing Serbia to win a Grand Slam singles title and the youngest player in the open era to have reached the semi-finals of all four Grand Slam events, separately and consecutively.

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