



UNITED NATIONS  
**UNOSDP**  
Office on Sport for  
Development and Peace

## Statement by the United Nations Office on Sport for Development and Peace (UNOSDP) to the UNDP-UNFPA Annual Executive Board Meeting

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Palais des Nations*

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On behalf of the Special Adviser to the United Nations Secretary-General on Sport for Development and Peace, Mr. Wilfried Lemke, I am pleased to address this session of United Nations Volunteers (UNV) at the 2010 Annual Session of the Executive Board of UNDP and UNFPA.

The Special Adviser and UNOSDP operate under the auspice of a three part mandate: Firstly, one of facilitation, as we aim to bring together various actors in the field of sport for development and peace, such as UN Agencies, governments, civil society organizations, sporting organizations, the private sector and the media. Secondly, as an advocate for the usage of sport as a cost effective and efficient tool within development and peace programmes and subsequently, as an efficient method of making progress toward achieving the UN Millennium Development Goals. Thirdly, the Special Adviser represents the UN Secretary-General, and the entire UN system, at a variety of sporting events around the world.

Regarding volunteerism, I would like to use this occasion to stress the importance of this issue in communities all over the world to contribute to common efforts towards the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. Nowhere more so, than in the world of sport.

Volunteers are crucial for the world of sports on all levels. Mega-sporting events such as the current FIFA World Cup in South Africa, the Olympic and Paralympic Games, and the upcoming Youth Olympic Games in Singapore rely heavily on volunteer efforts and thrive under the spirit of volunteerism.

However, it is also crucial to recognize that such mega events are not the only occasions, at which volunteerism in sport happens on a daily basis. We should think beyond the competitive character of sport to maximize its contribution to development. Grassroots and community sport and development projects and similar initiatives all over the world are run daily on the efforts of volunteers; and the scope of such programmes would be incredibly limited without the force of volunteering. The Sport for all movement is one of the biggest volunteer movements in the world.

While the work of volunteers world wide is invaluable, a greater effort must be made to ensure that community sport for development programs are sustainable, given that most volunteers are not remunerated. One manner in which this is possible is through promoting job creation within programs, so that unpaid volunteers can have a chance to work towards making a living.

An additional factor is to ensure the recognition of volunteers for their efforts locally and globally. The latter will be emphasized by the advocacy efforts of UNV and its partners during the International Year of Volunteering plus 10 in 2011. UNOSDP will be working to capitalize on this moment by collaborating on joint initiatives with UNV and further partners.

While UNOSDP's mandate is to facilitate and to advocate for sport for development and peace worldwide, we generally do not fund or implement projects directly and subsequently, do not recruit UNV Volunteers. However, it is in our interest, to strengthen the collaboration and facilitation of contacts between UNV and various other interested partners, including volunteer organizations, UN entities, sporting organizations and federations like the International Olympic Committee, National Olympic and Paralympic Committees, civil society organizations, local authorities, governments, and the private sector.

One such example of the benefits of this type of collaborative effort was during the Olympic Games in Beijing where UNV, together with UNDP, the Volunteer Department of the Beijing Organizing Committee of the Olympic Games (BOCOG) and Beijing Youth League, developed a program entitled "Strengthening Volunteerism for Development in China", which aimed at building the capacity of volunteer managers and trainers. This example highlights one of many very successful, multi-stakeholder, collaborative efforts during mega sporting events.

Another initiative that I should like to mention in this context is the recent support provided by the UN Special Adviser on Sport for Development and Peace to the "Volunteer Initiative for Peace through Sport" (VIPS), launched by The Association for International Sport for All (TAFISA), which includes, among other things, an African Sport for All Academy for volunteers.

In light of such initiatives, it is perhaps most important to remember that sport is a universal language, and can be one of the most effective ways of mobilizing and addressing youth worldwide. Sport for Development programs can thus be used both to advocate for volunteerism among youth, and at the same time to contribute to the achievement the Millennium Development Goals.

I take this opportunity to thank the stakeholders present here today, for their cooperation. I encourage you to further the use of volunteerism and sport in your daily work. Finally, I would like to convey my appreciation to all the volunteers that are currently working in the communities and that, through their ambitions and dedication, strive towards development and peace objectives. It is through their efforts and determination that change can be achieved.

Thank you.

**UNITED NATIONS OFFICE ON  
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