



INTERNATIONAL
OLYMPIC
COMMITTEE

Thomas Bach
President

2015 International Day of Sport for Development and Peace

“United Action Towards Sustainable Development for All Through Sport”

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[Acknowledges dignitaries]

First of all I would like to thank Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon for his constant support of the Olympic Movement and his great commitment to using sport as a tool for development and peace.

Let me also thank the UN Group of Friends of Sport, the UN Office on Sport for Development and Peace, and Special Adviser Wilfried Lemke for their untiring efforts to include sport in the global development agenda.

This gathering comes during a year of change for the Olympic Movement and for those working on global sustainable development.

The change within the Olympic Movement is guided by Olympic Agenda 2020, our strategic reform roadmap for the future of the Olympic Movement. The transition for those working on sustainable development will be guided by a new global development agenda to be finalized later this year.

This alignment of change offers a great opportunity to leverage the power of sport as a force for positive change around the world.

As the Secretary-General has said, “Olympic principles are United Nations principles.” The world needs those principles of tolerance, solidarity and peace more than ever.

Because we are living in a world full of crisis — political crisis, financial crisis, health crisis, terrorism, war, ethnic and religious conflict.

Overcoming these obstacles to progress requires a concerted effort by all sectors of society. Olympic Agenda 2020 is our answer to this requirement.

By unanimously approving the 40 recommendations in Olympic Agenda 2020 late last year, the International Olympic Committee sent a strong message that the Olympic Movement is ready to engage with society in new and more meaningful ways.

Our goal is progress. Progress for us means strengthening sport in society by virtue of our values. To do that effectively, we have to show a sceptical world that we are living up to our values and our responsibility.

Olympic Agenda 2020 addresses this need with a series of changes that increase transparency, improve governance and set higher ethical standards. These changes are happening now. Many of those changes have already been implemented.

We are showing in a transparent way that more than 90 per cent of the revenues the IOC generates are distributed to the sporting movement and to athletes worldwide. This means that the IOC distributes USD 3.25 million a day, every day of the year, for the development of sport worldwide.

We have strengthened our commitment to non-discrimination by amending Fundamental Principle 6 of the Olympic Charter to mirror the text of the UN's Universal Declaration of Human Rights by saying: "The enjoyment of the rights and freedoms set forth in this Olympic Charter shall be secured without discrimination of any kind such as race, colour, sex, sexual orientation, language, religions, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status."

Sport has a unique role in society. Sport is the only area of human existence that has achieved its own universal law. The rules of sport are recognised and followed wherever sport is played. They are based on a global ethic of fair play, respect for opponents, tolerance and friendship. In sport all people are equal.

Political interference can threaten this universal law of sport by introducing pressures that undermine the core principles of fair play, tolerance and non-discrimination. Therefore sport

has to be politically neutral, but it is not apolitical. Sport is not an isolated island in the sea of society.

We want to engage with governments, businesses, the academic community and civil society.

The IOC maintains an open dialogue with representatives from the LGBT community, Human Rights Watch, the Committee to Protect Journalists and the International Trade Union Confederation and other NGOs that advocate for social justice.

The climax of our engagement with organisations outside the world of sport is our partnership with the United Nations.

A Memorandum of Understanding between the IOC and the UN last year took our collaboration to another level with sport we contribute to conflict resolution; to bring hope and a sense of purpose to refugee camps; to promote gender equality and healthier lifestyles.

Last year the UN General Assembly adopted by consensus a historic resolution recognizing the autonomy of sport. This document states that the General Assembly “supports the independence and autonomy of sport as well as the mission of the IOC in leading the Olympic Movement.” The resolution acknowledges sport as a means to promote education, health, development and peace, and highlights the important role of the IOC and the Olympic Movement in achieving these goals

Through its partnership with the UN and its status as a UN Observer, the IOC is actively engaged in discussions around the post-2015 development agenda.

This is where the transition guided by Olympic Agenda 2020 aligns with the transition from the Millennium Development Goals to the Sustainable Development Goals.

Sport can advance those goals.

Sport can contribute to the proposed Sustainable Development Goal 3 calling for the attainment of healthy lifestyles. Sport has an essential role in combatting non-communicable diseases. More than 38 million people die every year from NCDs with a direct link to physical

inactivity and poor nutrition. These deaths account for more than two-thirds of all deaths worldwide.

Sport challenges gender norms and defies negative stereotypes. It helps break down barriers and challenges gender norms, not only on the field of play, but also in the workplace, in the home, in schools and in other aspects of society.

Pursuing gender equality and empowering women and girls through sport is one of the key missions of the IOC.

Women Olympians serve as powerful role models for young girls around the world.

To further support these objectives, the IOC and UN Women recently co-hosted an event to encourage the wider use of sport and physical activity for gender equality and empowerment.

Sport can help achieve other proposed Sustainable Development Goals related to inclusive communities, peaceful societies and sustainability. Since sport unites people and promotes a culture of peace, the IOC partners with UN agencies such as UNHCR, UNICEF and the World Food Programme. It brings sport to refugees and vulnerable youth and children through various grassroots sports initiatives around the world. Working with the UNHCR and through our Honorary President Jacques Rogge as Special Envoy for Youth Refugees and Sport, we have been working in Jordan to support Syrian refugees. The IOC has invested in a multi-sport playground at the Azraq camp in Jordan. The IOC is also working together with local partners to implement a full programme for kids to play sports.

Working with the World Food Programme we have been providing sports kits in schools with the joint objective to increase school attendance through sporting activity.

The IOC also supports a number of NGOs to further these goals. For example, we work with Fight for Peace in a project that combines boxing and martial arts with education and personal development in communities affected by crime and violence in Rio de Janeiro's favelas. With WarChild, we support a project based on multi-sport activities to enhance social cohesion and to prevent violence among children and the community in Northern Colombia. And with Terre des Hommes, the IOC has funded a Sport for Development and Peace Project aimed at forging friendship among communities affected by war in Northern Sri Lanka.

To increase sport's effectiveness in achieving the SDGs, it is essential to consider the role of sport in achieving proposed Sustainable Development Goal 4 calling for "inclusive quality education." I urge member states to consider how mandatory "quality physical education in primary and secondary schools" can help achieve this most important goal for the future of our youth.

Sport and physical education programmes provide a strong incentive for school attendance and contribute to a broad spectrum of life skills. Sport teaches respect for rules and respect for others, tolerance, non-discrimination, team-building, communication, decision-making and problem-solving. It promotes self-esteem, personal responsibility and self-discipline. Active children are learning more effectively. Sport is not a distraction from education – it is an important part of education. That is why our strong partnership with UNESCO is so important and why we are focusing on ensuring the implementation of the recently launched Quality Physical Education Guidelines.

This year of transition in sport and in global development provides an opportunity for another significant step forward in the growing acceptance of what sport can do. Sport can help us achieve Sustainable Development Goals targeting health, education, gender equality, peace building, and inclusive and sustainable communities.

The IOC was founded 121 years ago on the belief that sport can contribute to peace and to the harmonious development of humankind. With the approval of Olympic Agenda 2020, we are even more committed and better equipped than ever to fulfil that mission.

Now is the time to reap the benefits of sport's full potential as a tool for development and peace. I am offering you our hand for a partnership to achieve this valuable goal.

Please take this hand and let us work together as a team. The millions of innocent people affected by the multitude of crises in the world need and deserve our action.

Thank you.