

# Introduction

The United Nations recently declared 2005 as the ***International Year of Sport and Physical Education***. UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan gave his stamp of approval by saying: "Sport is a universal language. At its best it can bring people together, no matter what their origin, background, religious beliefs or economic status. When young people participate in sports or have access to physical education, they can experience real exhilaration even as they learn the ideals of teamwork and tolerance." ... "Sport can bridge difficulties. Sport can bridge cultures. Sport can bridge conflicts. **Sport is the best school of life.**"

The United Nations is not the first international organization to realize and express the benefit of sport in the development of the individual, in its potential to contribute to the improvement of the world, and in its powerful capacity to provide an education.

Pierre de Coubertin, the founder of the modern Olympic Games, and his colleagues tied the staging of the Olympic Games and the work of the International Olympic Committee to an educational philosophy that became known as "Olympism" As stated in the *Olympic Charter*, "Olympism is a philosophy of life, exalting and combining in a balanced whole the qualities of body, will and mind" The *Charter* continues to say, "Blending sport with culture and education, Olympism seeks to create a way of life based on the joy found in effort, the educational value of good example and respect for universal fundamental ethical principals."

"The goal of the Olympic Movement is to contribute to building a peaceful and better world by educating youth through sport practiced without discrimination of any kind and in the Olympic spirit, which requires mutual understanding with a spirit of friendship, solidarity and fair play."

The National Olympic Academy of Seychelles (NOAS) strives to promote the goals of the Olympic Movement and is encouraged by the commitment of Mr. Annan and the United Nations to promote Sport and Physical Education in the year 2005. The NOAS aims to play its part in this great initiative by launching the Olympic Club program in the Seychelles in 2005.

The NOAS Olympic Club program aims to:

- provide support to the education system, by reinforcing the lessons, values and goals already taught in the classroom, in accordance with the Olympic Movement

- spread the spirit of the Olympic Movement and the positive impact of sport on the development of the whole person to children, families, communities and the entire nation
- address some of the world's major development issues including: protecting the environment, the role of women and girls, global conflict and conflict resolution, reducing racism and intolerance, HIV/AIDS education, promoting fair play and ethics, re-emphasizing the unity of the mind, body and spirit
- provide a safe and positive environment for the youth of Seychelles to play and have fun!

Through *The Olympic Club Handbook for Facilitators*, the collaborative partnership of Seychellois teachers and sports administrators aims to successfully integrate the Olympic Club program into the education and club system currently operating in the Seychelles. With support and enthusiasm it can work and be a significant initiative to help the children and youth of the Seychelles in this, the United Nations *Year of Sports and Physical Education*, and beyond!