

**ADDRESS BY MACHARIA KAMAU  
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TO THE PLENARY SESSION OF THE CAPE TOWN CONFERENCE  
ON SPORT FOR DEVELOPMENT AND PEACE AT  
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**Preamble**

I would like to thank the organizers, the University of the Western Cape for inviting UNICEF, the United Nations Children's Fund to be here. UNICEF, over the years, has come to recognize the value of sport for children, not just for pleasure and entertainment, but also for things as diverse as psychological development, peace and development.

As UNICEF Representative in South Africa, I am particularly pleased that the organisers chose South Africa as the venue for this conference. This is appropriate for a number of reasons: (i) South Africa is a great sporting nation; (ii) South Africa faces huge development challenges to bring over eighty per cent of the nation's population into the mainstream of South African development; (iii) South Africa can therefore demonstrate how development and sport can come together; how the synergies of the two can transform society for peace.

In our work around the world, we at UNICEF have come to confirm what many of you already know: first and foremost, sport should be and is a human right as the Special Advisor to the Secretary General, Mr. Adolf Ogi stated earlier this morning in his remarks to this gathering.

Distinguished Delegates, United Nations Colleagues, Members of the Academic and NGO Communities, Members of International Sports Federations, Conference organizers, Ladies and Gentlemen:

We are here because of our belief in the immense power of sport to inspire individuals, bring communities together – and help young people develop and grow in dignity, health and peace.

For young people, the full participation that sport and recreation require is a tonic for improving their sense of belonging and connectedness. The joy of sports is especially rewarding for children who have been marginalized and excluded, such as orphans, street children, demobilized child soldiers, and children who are disabled.

These outcomes are the building blocks of partnerships for sustainable development and peace – and that is why the United Nations is convinced that sport and recreation offer a practical and cost-effective way to advance the Millennium Development Goals, the child-centered agenda agreed to by world leaders at the UN Millennium Summit.

The miraculous effects of sport and play on human development are already well established. Now we must spread that message to the whole world.

As UNICEF staffers know first-hand, sports involves a language that every child understands – and that normalcy in turn sparks improved communication and education – and affirms, through their participation, the vital role of young people as agents of change.

The framers of the 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child recognised all that, and more; and that is why, in Article 31, States Parties commit themselves to promote and protect the fundamental right of the child to engage in age-appropriate play and recreational activities.

Education is crucial if we are to fulfill the international commitment to achieving the Millennium Development Goals – and physical education is part and parcel of any programme of quality basic education. Competition on the playing field is where children learn the practical applications of such values as fair play, honesty, sharing, mutual trust, exercising leadership, problem-solving – and coping with the demands of how to lose – as well as how to win.

UNICEF and many of our sister agencies throughout the UN system work in partnership with many of the global sports federations, with the aim to mobilize national-level partnerships focused on programmes for child and youth development. In particular, UNICEF has been working with the International Olympic Committee (IOC) to build national level partnerships focused on education, child protection and youth participation. We hope to expand upon country-level collaboration, further supporting programmes for children particularly in the area of girls' education, HIV/AIDS, child protection, and peace-building. Some positive examples nearby of such collaboration with the Olympic family include an Olympic Youth Ambassador Programme in Lesotho, currently building young leaders through a variety of sports-related initiatives.

UNICEF's partnership with FIFA, the world football organisation, began in 1999 when we worked to focus the convening power of football on issues that are important for the well being of children. We began with the dedication of the FIFA 2002 World Cup to Say Yes for Children – and the FIFA 2003 Women's World Cup was dedicated to UNICEF's global campaign for girls' education. We are delighted that the 2006 FIFA World Cup will be dedicated to "Unite for Children, Unite for Peace" with messages about the impact that football can have in addressing violence and calling attention to the devastating impact of conflict on children. UNICEF, FIFA and the NGO Family Violence Prevention Fund are producing a football coaches' manual, "Coaching Boys into Men" aimed at addressing the issue of violence through the powerful medium of coaches and their unique influence in the lives of children and young people.

UNICEF's work with FIFA is not just on the global stage of the 2006 FIFA World Cup, but is also focused at the country level. UNICEF has programmes in nearly 160 countries, while our National Committees are raising funds and awareness in an additional 36 industrialized countries. FIFA's reach is equally wide, and as of this year, UNICEF is working on programmes and events the national level with nearly 100 of the 207 National Football Associations.

UNICEF is working with a wide range of partners to maximize the beneficial effects of sport and play. There are so many NGOs and youth organizations that recognize sports' powerful influence, but here are some programme examples:

In Somalia, UNICEF is using a combination of football programmes and non-formal education to help young people devise tools and techniques for conflict resolution and peace-building. In Albania, UNICEF's sponsorship of sports tournaments in six refugee camps has made it possible to help newly arrived families, organise fund-raising efforts for poorest refugees – and help promote awareness of the dangers of landmines.

In Brazil, UNICEF is helping to discourage homeless children from resuming life on the street by offering football games along with classes in judo and gymnastics. The Ministry of Sport in Brazil organizes nationally an exemplary programme called Segundo Tempo (“second half”) which aims to keep kids involved in healthy activities after their school day. This programme provides them with safe spaces and ensures also that they are taught basic life skills critical for their development. .

In Malaysia, UNICEF and FIFA have joined to enroll disabled children in special football programmes in collaboration with the country’s ParaOlympic Council and the State Department of Education.

Sport is a vehicle for better health in Zambia, where UNICEF is working with the NGO Right to Play to use sports festivals as a tool to mobilise communities to participate in a nationwide measles immunisation drive. In Georgia, meanwhile, UNICEF is collaborating with local NGOs, the Georgia football federation and the Government to engage more and more children in healthy sport activities in lieu of substance abuse.

And in Honduras, sport is being enlisted in the struggle against HIV/AIDS through an UNICEF-developed programme called Sports for Life, which uses an organised football league to promote awareness of the risks of HIV. Young people also learn about the downside of leaving school, the dangers of gang membership, and techniques.

The movement to use the power of sport and recreation to accelerate development and international cooperation has only just begun – but its immense promise is already apparent. Our collaborative efforts began in earnest in 2002 with the United Nations Inter-agency Task Force report on the role of sport in advancing the Millennium Development Goals. It became more focused with the 2003 and 2005 Magglingen Declarations led by Mr Adolf Ogi and the Swiss Development Cooperation, the “Next Step” Global conference in the Netherlands, and the various international conferences in 2005 that convened the world community on issues ranging from health to environment to peace. These efforts in large part were underway in honor of the 2005 International Year of Sport and Physical Education, which was celebrated last week at the United Nations in New York. UN Special Envoy on Sport, Mr Adolf Ogi, was joined there by UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan to congratulate countries for their commitment to sport, and to encourage further work in this area, moving from policy to practice.

As we move on, however, we must remain mindful of the many challenges we face in promoting “sport for all” in developing countries. I will briefly discuss them here and ask that you consider these challenges in your research and policies in this area.

The first is the preservation of children’s time for sport and play. In many countries, children must contribute to the survival of their families. It can be difficult to find time to play, yet this must be carefully encouraged as it is not only important for their healthy development, it is their basic right.

Second, programmes must be inclusive and truly emphasize sport for all. Special focus needs to be placed on gender equality, the participation of disabled children and youth, the inclusion of orphans and vulnerable children and providing access to sport within marginalized and hard-to-reach communities.

Third, physical education programmes should always be seen as a fundamental part of quality education. We must ensure that all schools offer sport and physical education programmes for their children – of all ages and for both boys and girls.

Fourth, many countries around the world are devastated by conflict and other social divisions. At the same time, sport programmes can be a powerful means of bridging these divides.

A fifth challenge is that infrastructure and equipment costs can be very high, which is of particular concern as our aim is to reach the poorest communities.

Sixth, there is a danger that sport and play will be viewed as luxuries, making it difficult to mobilize resources. Sport and play are not luxuries. They are the basic human right of every child.

Finally --- and something this Cape Town Conference will address directly in various sessions over the next three days – is that we need to turn a rigorous scientific eye on the development impact of sports initiatives. Intuitively, we know sport works. We now need to back these anecdotes with solid evidence.

Anecdotally, we see that sport is making a difference in the lives of children. It is boosting confidence among girls. It is increasing levels of tolerance within diverse communities of children by bridging divides. And it is increasing the meaningful and active participation of children and young people in fun and enjoyable ways.

And this might be enough. Practicing sport for sport's sake is imperative. It is worth every penny to build sports infrastructure, promote sports programming and develop sports champions and teams. Sport is the right of every individual and it is beneficial for communities in countless ways.

But given the scope of the development agenda, and given limited funds with which to achieve development goals, it is also necessary to address more concretely the impact that sport is making on development.

We know sport works. We know its inherent value in addressing the well-being of children and ensuring their happiness. Sport is every child's right to play and for that perhaps sport for development programming does not need to be measured. Perhaps it is sufficient to ensure this basic child right and happiness alone is a strong enough measure. In short, sport is an end in itself.

But sport is also a *means* to an end. It is working effectively to address issues like HIV prevention, by providing knowledge to young people and changing behaviors. Sport is helping to educate children in the absence of formal schools, as a safe and informal learning space. Sport is working to effectively mobilize communities, by gathering children and families for widespread immunization campaigns. Sport is also protecting children, by providing them with healthy and positive alternatives to otherwise idle time.

Sport is providing children affected by conflict and former child soldiers with a positive outlet and a sense of belonging. With families dispersed by conflict or disaster, children are reintegrating back to their communities and sport is a means to provide them with a safe, family-like, team environment.

Sport coaches are effective in reaching children and young people with critical development messages such as nonviolence and tolerance, or HIV prevention. They play a unique role in children's lives, and can be one of the most powerful ways to impact behavior change. Sports events have tremendous convening power and are effective forums to deliver messages about key development issues.

How can we continue to keep sport on the map and at the forefront of the development agenda if we don't measure more concretely this effectiveness? How can we ensure funds will continue to flow for sport for development programming if we have no direct proof of efficacy and efficiency?

In January 2005, UNICEF convened a diverse group of partners to begin a global discussion focused on answering these questions. The workshop, "The Monitoring and Evaluation of Sports for Development Programmes," included participants ranging from research professionals and national sports federations to NGOs and UNICEF Country Offices grappling with the issue of sport and its direct relevance on development programming. Challenges, opportunities and goals were outlined for each group of partners, and the common goal for all was the need to develop tools to assess impact, and build an evidence base to support the power of sport in development.

It is clear that UNICEF will continue to use sport in its programmes for years to come, regardless of measurement and impact assessment. Its intrinsic value is recognized. Its sheer power and popularity make it a fun way to engage children and young people and encourage their happiness. But if we are to justify a significant investment of resources towards sport for development programming, there needs to be a clear link to the Millennium Declaration and the MDGs. Results-based management, monitoring and evaluation make those links.

To meet all of these challenges, and to build a rigorous framework to more clearly show the impact that sport and play have in helping to achieve the MDGs, we need to work in partnership. We need to help governments to develop comprehensive strategies to ensure that the right of every child to play is realized. This means encouraging Ministries to work together and mobilize resources. It means engaging National Sports Associations, youth organizations, the private sector and civil society to work in partnership and actively support these initiatives.

We are now ready to pool our collective knowledge and expertise to take our efforts to scale. The next step is to take a quantum leap in child and adolescent participation using sport to achieve the international goals for education, protection and the healthy development of children and young people.

As the United Nations Secretary-General put it, the time is right for a major effort to persuade governments, development agencies and communities to find creative ways to integrate sports into all plans to help children survive and develop to the fullest. There is no faster route to a world fit for children. And as one child delegate told the General Assembly during its Special Session, a world fit for children is a world fit for all.

Thank you.