

PRESS RELEASE

Rugby superstar, Bryan Habana, is UNICEF's newest Champion for Children

Star to deliver message from UNICEF at Africa Com Awards in Cape Town in November

Johannesburg 24 October 2008... Bryan Habana, Springbok winger and IRB rugby Player of the Year, took time out of his busy schedule recently to meet with UNICEF to talk about the impact that sport has had on his own life and how engagement in sports activities can help mitigate many of the challenges facing young people in his beloved country, South Africa.

The 25 year-old rugby superstar has agreed to contribute to the development of messaging in UNICEF's newly re-branded sport manual and DVD, *Coaching Boys into Men*, in which he stresses the importance of positive role models in making a difference in the lives of children.

He joins sports heavyweights like Pitso Mosimane, Deputy Coach of Bafana Bafana, and well known striker Shaun Bartlett, who have also supported the initiative with recorded messages.

Coaching Boys into Men

The UNICEF coaching guide is part of a global initiative. In South Africa, UNICEF will develop a specially customized, celebrity endorsed version of the guide for coaches and trainers. It aims to assist these sports professionals to extend their influence in the development of young people beyond the pitch. The intent is to support young people and help them become responsible and caring members of society by encouraging respect, teamwork, tolerance and integrity in line with the FIFA Fair Play Code.

"Aggressive behaviour is not the answer when a fellow player or anyone else challenges you either on or off the field of play," says Bryan, in one of the tips on he gives the DVD.

His message to South African youth emphasises that violence does not equal strength and does not prove how much stronger you are when compared to someone else.

In his chat with the UNICEF team, Bryan also spoke extensively about how sport had helped change his own life in a positive way. He encouraged young people to focus on actions that could foster opportunities for them in later life.

"It is important for you to know that anything you dream is possible as long as you are willing to stay focused, work hard and make sacrifices," Bryan said.

And, he further challenged other celebrities and fellow South Africans to use their influence to help make a difference for a child locally, and for children regionally and in the rest of the African continent.

A strong commitment to children

Throughout his career, Bryan Habana has exhibited a well developed commitment to working with children and young people particularly in vulnerable school communities. He has been actively engaged in humanitarian work for the past two years. He regularly visits with school children in underserved communities around the country giving motivational talks and rugby clinics.

Also noteworthy is his involvement with the “Reach for a Dream” project, The De Wildt Cheetah Preservation programme and in a programme at Bramley Children’s Home designed to help change young boys behaviour from being bullies to focusing on becoming good leaders and role models.

“Visits such as these help give hope and meaning to children’s lives,” Bryan commented.

UNICEF looks forward to Bryan’s participation and inspirational message at the upcoming Africa Com Awards scheduled to take place in Cape Town on the 18th of November.

Ends

About UNICEF

UNICEF is on the ground in over 150 countries and territories to help children survive and thrive, from early childhood through adolescence. The world’s largest provider of vaccines for developing countries, UNICEF supports child health and nutrition, good water and sanitation, a quality basic education for all boys and girls, and the protection of children from violence, exploitation, and from HIV and AIDS. UNICEF is funded entirely by the voluntary contributions of individuals, businesses, foundations and governments.

[For further media information please contact:](#)

UNICEF South Africa: Yvonne Duncan, Mobile: +27-82-561-3970, email: yduncan@unicef.org

[To find out more about how to create a partnership with UNICEF please contact:](#)

UNICEF South Africa: Justin Bradfield, Mobile:+27 82 829 0872, email: jbradfield@unicef.org

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