



**Remarks by the Secretary-General, Mr. Ban Ki-Moon,
Third International Forum on Sport for Peace and Development
New York, 5 June 2013**

Your Royal Highnesses,
Excellencies,
Dr. Jacques Rogge, President of the International Olympic Committee,
Distinguished guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Welcome to the third International Forum on Sport for Peace and Development. It gives me great pleasure to host this important gathering.

The link between sport, peace and development grows stronger by the year. It can be traced back in history to the original Olympic truce, which guaranteed safe passage to athletes and other travellers attending the ancient Games. It is found in the bidding requirements for modern Olympic host cities, which are asked to provide a durable social and environmental legacy. And it is evident throughout the United Nations system, which has embraced sport as a valuable vehicle for reaching our peace and development objectives.

The International Olympic Committee is a key partner. The UN Environment Programme works closely with the IOC on greening the Games. And UNAIDS works with the IOC to raise awareness about AIDS and how to avoid HIV infection. The UN Office on Drugs and Crime uses sport for raising awareness about the importance of a healthy, drug-free lifestyle.

Sports and education programmes provided by the UN refugee agency are giving hope to refugee children and youth and promoting tolerance and understanding. And UN peacekeeping operations use sport as a tool for peacebuilding and reconciliation.

The UN Population Fund is working with sports personalities to ensure that every pregnancy is wanted, every birth is safe, and every girl and woman is treated with dignity and respect. The UN Development Programme has engaged a wide range of sports stars to raise awareness about the Millennium Development Goals. And the UN Children's Fund, UNICEF, has a longstanding partnership with Barcelona football club.

Are there any Barcelona fans here? Well I hope you will forgive me, because I have a small confession. Last month I took part in a Real Madrid game! I assure you it was in a good cause.

I was in Madrid for the annual meeting of the UN Chief Executives Board. The date coincided with the 1,000 day countdown for the Millennium Development Goals. I took part in the ceremonial kick-off to help us score the goals for the world.

It is essential that we focus all our efforts in the remaining three-and-a-half years so all countries can meet all their targets on poverty, hunger, education and disease. That means scaling up success. Empowering women and girls. And mobilizing people from governments to the grassroots.

Sport has an important role to play. That is why I engage in big ways with big stars like the basketball player Shaquille O’Neill. He has thrown his weight behind the “nothing but nets” campaign to end deaths from malaria by ensuring that every vulnerable family can sleep under a bed net treated with powerful insecticide.

And it is why I have developed such a close working relationship with Dr. Rogge.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Dr. Rogge is coming to the end of his Presidency, and I want to commend him on his commitment to the Olympic ideals and the principles of the UN Charter. Peace. Dignity. Equality. Justice. Fairness. A better world for all. This is what our two organizations stand for. It is what we work for.

Two years ago I addressed this same Forum in Geneva. I invited Dr. Rogge to travel with me in Africa. I have just returned from another visit to Africa – this time with World Bank President Dr. Jim Yong Kim. We wanted to highlight the links between peace and development and build stronger links between our two organizations.

Last year’s joint visit to Zambia with Dr. Rogge had a similar purpose – to highlight the link between sport, peace and development and to further strengthen the very close ties between the IOC and the United Nations.

We visited the impressive Olympic Youth Development Centre in Lusaka. We met some of the young athletes using the facility and saw how the centre is benefiting the community. It is the first in a series of multi-sport facilities scheduled to be built in developing countries as part of the IOC’s Sport for Hope programme.

In Zambia, Dr. Rogge and I also visited a UNICEF project offering education and health services to street children and youth that is supported by International Inspiration, the official international sports legacy programme of the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games. It is yet another example of the partnership and synergy between the IOC and the UN, and of the power of sport for peace and development.

These two projects in Zambia go far beyond promoting excellence in sport. They provide a community resource for educating young people about healthy, positive lifestyles – literacy, life skills, gender empowerment.

I commend the Olympic Movement for the work it is doing around the world on behalf of young people. Empowering young people is a top priority for me... and for the United Nations. That is why I appointed the UN's first-ever Envoy on Youth, Mr. Ahmad Alhindawi of Jordan.

It is also why my Special Adviser, Mr. Lemke, and the Office on Sport for Development and Peace, created the Youth Leadership Programme with the support of the IOC and numerous national sports federations.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Another area where sport can and must play a significant role is gender empowerment.

At this year's Commission on the Status of Women, UN Women and UNESCO both highlighted sport as an important tool to address gender-based violence. This is a global pandemic that must be stopped. We can only stop it by changing attitudes – especially among men and boys.

That is why I launched my UNiTE to End Violence Against Women campaign in 2008, and it is why I have created a network of men leaders. Sports personalities are role models. The young listen to them. They have a responsibility to set an example. That means standing against violence against women and girls.

It means rejecting racism – which is why this year the United Nations is commemorating the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination by highlighting the issue of racism in sport.

And it means speaking out when lesbians, gays, bisexuals and transgender people are discriminated against. Nobody should be intimidated or harmed because of how they look or who they love.

Some sports and sportsmen and women have embraced these values – others have not. Let us work to make our sports heroes the leaders we need them to be. Let us work to make our sports events advertisements for the principles of peace, dignity, equality, justice and fairness.

I commend the Olympic Movement especially for its work on behalf of people with disabilities. The London Paralympic Games inspired millions around the world. The International Paralympic Committee has done excellent work over years to break down negative stereotypes and build positive attitudes. It is important that we work to build societies where all people, no matter their disability, can enjoy the right to play sports – and live their lives -- in safe, inclusive environments.

Finally, let me also thank the IOC for supporting the UN's own Interagency Games.

Ladies and gentlemen,

I am happy to see more governments using sport and physical activity as a tool for social and economic development. The United Nations stands ready to partner with organizations such as the IOC to promote sport for all regardless of health or wealth, colour or creed. Let us use this Forum to share experiences and best practices. By working as a team we can use the power of sport to build the peaceful, prosperous future we want.

Thank you.