



**STATEMENT BY**

**THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED NATIONS  
GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
H.E. MR. JAN ELIASSON**

**AT THE**

**OPENING OF THE PLENARY DEBATE ON  
SPORT FOR PEACE AND DEVELOPMENT**

**UNITED NATIONS HEADQUARTERS  
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Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

As a fan of sports and a believer in sport as a unifying force in international relations, I am pleased that today the General Assembly is taking action on Agenda item 48 on Sport for Peace and Development, which includes item 48(a) on Building a peaceful and better world through sport and the Olympic ideal, and item 48(b) on the International Year of Sport and Physical Education.

As an overall guidance for today's debate, I call your attention to the Outcome Document of the World Summit in September, which declares: "We underline that sports can foster peace and development and can contribute to an atmosphere of tolerance and understanding, and we encourage discussions in the General Assembly for proposals leading to a Sport and Development Plan of Action". Our deliberations will also be inspired by the report of the Secretary-General on Sport for peace and development: International Year of Sport and Physical Education.

Turning to the first sub-item, I wish to recall that the General Assembly has supported the revival of the ancient Greek tradition of the Olympic Truce for more than a decade now. As we approach the XX Olympic Winter Games to be held in Torino, Italy in February 2006, we should once again remind ourselves of the purpose of the Olympic Truce: to encourage a peaceful environment during the Games, ensure safe passage for athletes and others at the Games, and to mobilize the youth of the world to the cause of peace.

On this matter, Italy has submitted a draft resolution on "Building a peaceful and better world through sport and the Olympic ideal," and I welcome the universal support it has received.

On the other sub-item, I wish to salute all those around the world that have helped make the International Year of Sport and Physical Education a success, including United Nations offices, agencies, funds and programmes, Governments, the Olympic movement and sports federations, sports teams, sports organizations and other NGOs, sports stars, and the countless athletes and other individuals who have joined in activities marking the Year.

As the report of the Secretary-General indicates, sport can play a significant role in accelerating progress towards the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. The International Year of Sport and Physical Education is highlighting this contribution and adding strong impetus to efforts to better integrate sport into the development agenda.

Sport is essential for the well-being of young people in, for example, refugee camps, not only for promoting health and education, but also as vehicle for alerting them to the risks of HIV/AIDS, instilling self-respect and teamwork, and encouraging tolerance and peace. Sport is further recognized as a key for promoting equality and advancement for women and girls, especially when combined with education initiatives, giving them the opportunity to build self-confidence and encouraging them to stay in school.

On this sub-item, Tunisia has submitted a draft resolution on “Sport as a means to promote education, health, development and peace”, to follow up on the recommendation of the Secretary-General.