

15 April 2015

**Statement of H.E. Mr. Sam Kahamba Kutesa,
President of the 69th Session of the General Assembly,
at the Commemoration of the International Day of Sport for
Development and Peace**

**Excellencies,
Mr. Ban Ki-moon, Secretary-General,
Dr. Thomas Bach, President of the International Olympic Committee,
Sir Philip Craven, President of the International Paralympic Committee,
Distinguished guests,
Ladies and gentlemen,**

I am pleased to join you today for this high-level segment to commemorate the International Day of Sport for Development and Peace.

I thank Dr. Thomas Bach, President of the International Olympic Committee and Sir Philip Craven, President of the International Paralympic Committee, for their leadership. I also thank Member States and other relevant stakeholders, including the distinguished athletes with us today, for their continuous efforts and commitment to promoting greater understanding and sustainable peace through sport.

Excellencies,

Through the adoption of Resolution 67/296, the General Assembly recognized the powerful contribution of sport to development, peace, inclusion, tolerance, moral values and equality.

Through sport, people around the world continue to find common ground and mutual inspiration; transcending national, ethnic, racial, political, religious, and gender barriers, among others.

It is heartening to note that over the last 15 years, sport has contributed to the global campaign to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. As the world formulates an inclusive and transformative post-2015 development agenda, we should collectively support efforts to enhance the contribution of sport in achieving our sustainable development objectives.

Sport has an important role to play in nearly every society around the world, including as a key asset for our countries and our communities seeking to engage and unite youth. Sports programmes promote positive morals for youth and enable them to acquire valuable life skills, including goal setting, resilience, teamwork and leadership.

Beyond targeted efforts for youth, sport also fosters opportunities for vulnerable persons; including the disabled. As an international community we must find more ways to make sport inclusive so that each and every member of our societies, particularly the most vulnerable, can enjoy its benefits.

Sports programmes should encourage the integration of disabled and non-disabled participants, alike, focusing on the skills and capabilities of each. Such efforts would help shift public perception about those with disabilities and promote further cohesion between all. In this context, I commend the work of the International Paralympic Committee on behalf of persons with disabilities.

Further, sport can play an invaluable role in uniting people and promoting reconciliation. Sport has proven capable of promoting peaceful coexistence in a unique and powerful way, while also providing a much-needed outlet and opportunity for healthy social interaction.

In the words of Nelson Mandela – quote – [Sport] has the power to unite people in a way that little else does. Sport can create hope where once there was only despair. – end quote

Distinguished delegates,

It is my hope that this International Day will act as a driver to further strengthen our contribution to the achievement of human development and peace through sport.

I encourage Member States to consider all opportunities to use sport as an instrument for development and peace to unite people and communities around the world.

Thank you for your attention.