



INTERNATIONAL  
OLYMPIC  
COMMITTEE

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Mr Director General of the United Nations Office in Geneva,

Distinguished panellists,

Dear delegates,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am very pleased to join you today for this important panel. Allow me to thank UNCTAD and the United Nations more generally for giving us the opportunity to put sport on the agenda of the World Investment Forum.

Investing in Sustainable Development is the overarching theme of all the discussions throughout this week, a theme of particular significance as countries around the world look for innovative ways to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Today I am here with a simple message: investing in sport IS investing in the Sustainable Development Goals.

The enormous potential of **sport**, its global reach, its universal language, its impact on communities in general, and young people in particular, is a fact and is increasingly recognised around the world.

From the Convention on the Rights of the Child or the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, and the 2030 Development Agenda adopted three years ago, sport is present as an enabler of development and peace with its promotion of tolerance and respect and the contributions it makes to the empowerment of women and of young people, individuals and communities as well as to health, education and social inclusion objectives.

In other words, sport is a natural partner for everyone working towards these Goals.



Today, I am reaffirming our commitment to the realisation of the Sustainable Development agenda. The overarching mission of the International Olympic Committee and the entire Olympic Movement is to put sport at the service of the peaceful development of humanity. This is why we extend our hand to all of you in the spirit of partnership and cooperation on this journey to make the world a better place.

Sport can help to advance efforts to achieve social change in very concrete ways. Its global reach and universality makes sport a low-cost, high-impact tool to support *all* countries – big or small, high or low income, and the cross-cutting nature of sport allows it to address several of the goals at the same time.

Let me highlight some of these goals which are key for the IOC, some of which will also be discussed in more details by the next speakers.

With Goal 3, which calls for the attainment of healthy lifestyle, sport has an essential role to play.

With one in four adults and three in four adolescents who are not physically active enough, as, we are facing a great burden and cost for communities and society at large in terms of non-communicable diseases which kill 60% of the population around the world. It is estimated that the cumulative output loss from NCDs and mental health will reach US\$47 trillion over the next two decades. At the same time, noncommunicable diseases get a mere 2% of all health investments. This is clearly a trend that worries us.

Regular exercise is one of the best ways to prevent illness and disease, thereby helping to significantly reduce health-care costs and increase productivity. The Global Action Plan on physical activity which was adopted earlier this year by governments provides many avenues to change policies and develop effective programmes that will have a positive impact on these points.

Sport is also a powerful platform to foster gender equality and empower women and girls, as called for in Goal 5. This is a key mission of the IOC and many sports organizations have been following the same objective.



At the Youth Olympic Games Buenos Aires 2018 which just came to an end last week, we had the first-ever Olympic sports programme with complete gender equality, with the same number of girls and boys competing in the same number of sports and events. At the Olympic Games Tokyo 2020, gender balance with the highest-ever female athlete representation at close to 49 per cent will be achieved.

Off the field of play too, sport-based programmes create safe spaces and provide them tools and knowledge to girls and women to break social barriers and challenge gender stereotypes. These programmes are nourished by long-standing partnerships with the UN system and other expert organizations who have embraced sport as a tool to achieve their own objectives.

Another example of building human capital through sport can be seen with the work in **humanitarian settings**.

The IOC and UNHCR, joined by many sports federations and NGOs, have cooperated for the last 20 years to provide relief to refugees and internally displaced people by using the power of sport to promote development, education, social integration and health. And the launch of the Olympic Refugee Foundation in 2017 has even deepened the partnership, inviting other partners from government and the business sector to support our work in protecting and empowering vulnerable displaced people through sport.

Likewise, the Refugee Olympic Team at the Rio 2016 Olympic Games and the team which will be formed for the Tokyo 2020 Games show the world that we are all part of the same humanity. Refugee's participation sends a clear signal that they are our fellow human beings – it pays tribute to their courage, perseverance, and their dignity. They are an enrichment to our Olympic and sport family.

Let me now consider the **wider economic agenda and Goal 8**. Here too, and while its potential impact on extreme poverty reduction may be limited, sport can contribute to more general economic growth and employment. The scale of the sports industry, the impact of hosting sporting events, ongoing economic activity generated through sport and employment opportunities created make it relevant to economic growth strategies. Sport-based programmes are useful to support employment outcomes for young people and vulnerable groups, including promoting sport-based entrepreneurship and social enterprise.



At the Olympic Games level more specifically, we have focused on sustainability and legacy to maximise all the tangible and intangible long-term benefits initiated or accelerated by the hosting of the Games for people, cities, and territories. This objective is at the core of our strategic roadmap, our 2020 Olympic Agenda.

Our economic model of the Games, under the New Norm approach, helps reduce costs and increase flexibility for the long-term benefit of each host city. The introduction of these measures have already meant cost-savings in the billions for Pyeongchang and Tokyo, and have totally changed the perspective for Paris and Los Angeles Games.

Finally, sport is also an important tool for **peace-building**, thereby supporting **Goal 16**. Sport can promote social inclusion, build trust and foster a culture of peace between groups in conflict.

Perhaps the best example of how we promote a more peaceful world in partnership with the United Nations is the tradition of the Olympic Truce. This is an example of how our shared values and ideals align.

The Olympic Truce is a symbol of hope, which UN resolutions have recognized repeatedly since 1993. But to see just what an important role the Olympic Truce can play in our world today, you have to look no further than the Olympic Winter Games PyeongChang 2018 earlier this year. North and South Korea marching together as one team at the Opening Ceremony, behind one flag, the Korean Unification Flag, and the formation of a unified women's ice hockey team, were a historic moment. Speaking at the UN General Assembly last month, President Moon Jae-in of South Korea, highlighted the important role these Games played to open the door for the current rapprochement at a difficult time in the history of the Korean peninsula.

In our fragile world that is drifting apart, we need this unifying power of sport and the Olympic Values of peace, respect and solidarity more than ever.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

These are some of the dimensions where we can see a convergence of elements that show how sport can meaningfully support a common development agenda.



The sport sector is a **powerful and active member of civil society**. It gathers millions of people through organisations, clubs, associations, business companies and events which are part of the economic and social development of communities around the world. And it uses its convening power to rally communities, engage youth, reach out to the most difficult and vulnerable groups, and create shared interests.

For the potential of sport's contribution to be maximised and sustained, we need to ensure that public-private and civil society partnerships continue to be reinforced. Likewise, to ensure that sport for development and peace programmes can be scaled up and can better support national development agendas, we need to invest in well planned interventions and in a more comprehensive evaluation and monitoring system.

I can reaffirm today the commitment of the IOC and the Olympic Movement to be a partner on your side to achieve a common sustainable development agenda through sport.

Together, we can and will continue to make a difference.