



# UN NEWS CENTRE

## UN goes for gold on development goals during Winter Olympics in Vancouver



12 February 2010 – With the Winter Olympics kicking off today in Vancouver, a senior United Nations official is spotlighting the important role that sport can play in promoting development, as the finish line looms for the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

Sport is not just about winning medals or trophies, Wilfried Lemke, the UN Special Adviser on Sport for Development and Peace, said at an event in the Canadian coastal city, just hours

before the start of the opening ceremony.

Sport also instils values and skills, including respect, discipline, fair play, leadership, self-confidence, tolerance and teamwork, he underscored.

It can specifically help to reach the MDGs – eight anti-poverty targets agreed upon world leaders with a 2015 expiration date – by motivating children to attend school, boost employability, empower women and curb the stigma of HIV and AIDS, the official noted.

Today's event was hosted by the non-governmental organization Right to Play, which is run by Johann Olav Koss, a four-time Olympic gold medal winning speed skater and former Goodwill Ambassador for the UN Children's Fund ([UNICEF](#)).

In total, 15 UN funds, programmes and specialized agencies have set up agreement with the International Olympic Committee (IOC), including the Joint UN Programme on HIV/AIDS ([UNAIDS](#)), which has created a toolkit for athletes taking part in the XXI Winter Olympics.

The agency will distribute HIV education, prevention and awareness packages containing male condoms to volunteers, workers and Olympians, as well as at venues including hotels and bars.

Earlier this week, the world body appealed for the traditional age-old truce during the Games, urging warring parties to lay down their arms as the Games' ancient Greek founders did some 2,700 years ago.

"The Olympic Truce brings hope of at least a temporary respite from violence and armed conflict," Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said in a message on the ancient Greek tradition of born in the eighth century BC.

“It also draws attention to a terrible paradox. At the Olympics and throughout the year, we rightly honour the outstanding achievements of the human body and the positive social values of competitive sport, including team spirit and fairness. Yet all too often, through the carnage of war, we do damage to that same human body, and to our shared values.”

For his part, General Assembly President Ali Treki recalled the 192-member body’s call in a 1993 resolution for all Member States to observe the Olympic Truce from the seventh day before the opening to the seventh day following the closing of each Olympic Games.

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