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UN and 2015 Universiade organizers aim to promote dialogue through sport



UN Special Adviser on Sport for Development and Peace, Wilfried Lemke, and Gwangju Mayor and GUOC Co-Chairman, Kang Un-Tae at the signing of the agreement. Photo: UNOSDP

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The United Nations and the organisers of the 2015 Universiade – an international sporting and cultural event for university students, which will be held in the Republic of Korea – have signed a partnership agreement which aims to support the attainment and awareness of the Millennium Development Goals ([MDGs](#)), as well as to promote dialogue and mutual understanding through sport.

“Large sporting events have a great potential when it comes to fostering positive social change and leaving a lasting legacy benefiting the local communities, the host nations and communities abroad,” the Secretary-General’s Special Adviser on Sport for Development and Peace, Wilfried Lemke, said in a [news release](#).

“It is very positive that the Gwangju Universiade 2015 Organizing Committee (GUOC) has taken such a clear and strong stand in that respect, and I look forward to working with them in order to realize the joint vision that we have developed, for the benefit of the youth in particular,” he added.

The partnership was signed on Tuesday in the southern city of Gwangju, in the Republic of Korea, by Mr. Lemke and Gwangju’s Mayor and GUOC Co-Chairman, Kang Un-Tae.

According to the 2015 Gwangju Summer Universiade website, the event will be the 28th such event staged since 1959. The event originated from the World Student Games held in France in 1923.

Held every two years in a different city in summer and winter and often just prior to the Olympic Games, the Universiade – which combines the words ‘university’ and ‘Olympiad’ – is an multi-sports event organized for worldwide university athletes by the International University Sports Federation, with the aim of promoting sporting values, such as fraternity and fair-play, and encourage sporting practice in harmony with, and complementary to, the university spirit.

According to Mr. Lemke’s office, the partnership presents two main objectives: to foster inter-Korean exchanges through sport and to promote the eight MDGs through the Games’ legacy and outreach programme.

One key component of the partnership will be to explore the possibilities of a first-ever United Korean Team to compete jointly in more than two sports disciplines at the 2015 event.

The eight MDGs, agreed on by world leaders at a UN summit in 2000, set specific targets on poverty alleviation, education, gender equality, child and maternal health, environmental stability, HIV/AIDS reduction, and a “Global Partnership for Development.”

A study published last week – the 2012 Millennium Development Goals Report – highlights the progress made, with three important targets on poverty, slums and water met three years ahead of 2015. It added that meeting the remaining targets, while challenging, is possible – but only if Governments do not waiver from their commitments made over a decade ago.

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