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UN teams up with Olympic governing body to promote healthy lifestyles



Children running in a race

21 July 2010 – The United Nations and the International Olympic Committee (IOC) are teaming up to promote physical activity and better lifestyle choices that will help people ward off disease and live healthier and longer lives.

Under an agreement signed in Switzerland today between the World Health Organization ([WHO](#)) and the Olympic governing body, the two will work with countries and at the global level to help reduce the risk of non-communicable diseases such as cardiovascular disease, cancers and diabetes.

“This agreement with the International Olympic Committee will help increase our ability and reach in addressing the diseases which are the leading causes of death around the world,” said WHO Director-General Margaret Chan.

Non-communicable diseases kill nearly 35 million people each year, including almost 9 million under the age of 60, according to WHO.

Nearly 90 per cent of the fatalities under the age of 60 occur in developing countries and can be largely prevented by reducing tobacco use, improving diets and boosting physical activity.

WHO noted that deaths from non-communicable diseases are increasing worldwide and will rise to over 41 million by 2015 if current trends continue unabated.

Meanwhile, physical inactivity is ranked as the fourth leading risk factor for all deaths globally, contributing to 1.9 million deaths each year.

The two organizations will also boost cooperation in promoting physical activity and sports, as well as tobacco-free Olympic Games and preventing childhood obesity.

“The IOC and the WHO are both eager to promote healthy lifestyles and grassroots sports activities worldwide, and today’s agreement is an important step to better form synergies between our various initiatives in this field,” said IOC President Jacques Rogge.

“It is about acting in concert to get everybody moving and thus reduce the risk of non-communicable diseases across all age groups,” he stated.

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