



STATEMENT BY MR. MUFTI MOHAMMED SAYEED, MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT  
AND MEMBER OF THE INDIAN DELEGATION, ON AGENDA ITEM 49: SPORT FOR  
PEACE AND DEVELOPMENT AT 61<sup>ST</sup> SESSION OF THE UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
ON NOVEMBER 03, 2006

Madam President,

We thank the Secretary-General for his report on 'Sport for Development and Peace: The way forward'. We note that the report reviews the achievements of the International Year of Sport and Physical Education 2005, including the broad range of activities, and initiatives carried out worldwide by Member States, the UN system and other stakeholders for continuing the momentum generated by the International Year.

Madam President,

Activities relating to Sports and Physical education are necessary components of human resource development. They have a positive impact on the overall personality of youth through the promotion of good health, comradeship and a spirit of friendly competition. Apart from providing beneficial recreation, Sports also improve productivity and foster social harmony and discipline.

India believes in the key role of sports in national life. Given the importance of sports and games, the Government of India has taken several initiatives to improve the standard of sports in the country. In the modern world, the complexion of sports has undergone a transformation due to the use of modern equipment and introduction of modern infrastructure and highly sophisticated equipment. The high degree of competitiveness in international sports has led to nurturing of talent from a tender age, and to greater emphasis on hard and physical training along scientific lines.

Madam President,

Despite resource constraints, India has been making efforts for broad-basing sports and provision of modern sports infrastructure. The Government has focussed its attention on the need for upgrading the skills of the coaching fraternity and provision of adequate sports-science backup. The Government has

encouraged the National Sports Federations to function more efficiently and is also encouraging the active involvement of business and industry in the promotion of sports. The Government of India formulated a New National Sports Policy in 2001, keeping in mind these objectives.

India has a long tradition of sports and physical fitness. In keeping with this tradition, the Government of India has instituted several sports awards to encourage achievements by sportspersons. The Government is also encouraging international cooperation in the field of sports and physical education and has been providing financial assistance to recognised National Sports Federations.

The Sports Authority of India was established by the Government in 1984 to achieve the twin objectives of broad-basing of sport and nurturing talent in children of different age groups by providing them with the necessary infrastructure, equipment, coaching and other facilities. The Sports Authority is implementing a number of Sports Promotion Schemes. Under one of its schemes it established a Sports Medicine Centre, which is operational full-time. The Sports Authority also maintains a Dope Control Centre.

Government of India has been promoting sports through several schemes that provide incentives for encouragement of sports activities. The Sports Fund for Pension to Meritorious Sportspersons was launched in 1994 and is providing pension to about 375 sportspersons. A scheme for Promotion of Sports and Games in Schools was introduced in 1986 to raise the standard of sports at the school level and to encourage participation in inter-school competitions. To broad-base games and sports in rural areas, the Government launched the Rural Sports Programme in 1970-71. Under this scheme, tournaments are also organized for indigenous sports popular in different parts of the country. The Sports Scholarship Scheme was launched in 1970-71 to assist talented boys and girls to receive a nutritious diet, sports equipment support and to pursue sports as a career option. A National Welfare Fund for Sportspersons was set up in 1982 to assist retired outstanding sportspersons. Under this scheme, pension and grants are provided to eminent sportspersons as well as their families. A National Sports Development Fund has been instituted to mobilise resources for Government and non-governmental sources, including the private and corporate sector.

Madam President,

We have taken note of the various activities organised by the UN system to help build on the momentum of the International Year. We encourage the UN system to undertake activities for Sport for Development and Peace and to develop indicators and benchmarks for evaluating and monitoring these activities. We agree with the Secretary-General that it is the national

governments that are responsible for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. We have taken note of the Secretary-General's suggestion to Member States for maximizing the positive impact of sports and realizing the full potential of this powerful tool. India recognizes the positive value of sport as an instrument that can bring people together in a neutral and apolitical setting. In our neighbourhood, the game of cricket has sometimes served as an instrument of diplomacy, adding a new phrase to our lexicon, namely "cricket diplomacy".

Madam President,

India believes that sports activity is integral to the all round development of the human personality. We have, therefore, remained engaged with the efforts of the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Sport for Development and Peace, including his efforts to organise the United Nations Global Youth Leadership Summit. We are convinced that the engagement of Youth will help energise the efforts of countries to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. We support efforts by the UN system to generate awareness among the Youth through such initiatives.

Thank you, Madam President.

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