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Press Release

Developing Opportunities for African Youth through Sport

The United Nations Office on Sport for Development and Peace (UNOSDP) and the Jacobs Foundation would like to draw your attention to the Forum on Productive Youth Development through Sport in Africa, to be held from June 16-18, 2009 at the United Nations Office in Nairobi, Kenya.

To what extent can sport promote the social inclusion of disadvantaged youth? How can actors interested in sport's development potential better share resources and ideas? Which interventions and practises have proved their effectiveness in the field and are sustainable for the future? These are some of the questions this Forum will address.

Government agencies, sports organisations, the UN, sports business, NGOs and others are interested in the potential of **sport to be used as a tool** to reach human and social development objectives as well as to address challenges that arise from humanitarian crises.

Mr. Wilfried Lemke, Special Adviser to the UN Secretary-General on Sport for Development and Peace, stresses that the thematic focus of the Forum converges with the UN Millennium Development Goals (MDGs):

"Youth are our future. Youth education, health and employment, especially for girls and young women, is a major focus of the United Nations MDGs. This forum will discuss how sport can contribute to achieving these Goals and can help develop core skills for productive youth development, including employability."

50 experienced practitioners and experts will discuss the potentials and limits of sport as a tool for productive youth development in Africa during this Forum. These discussions will produce the **official recommendations** of the Forum on how sport should be integrated in the activities of the different actors involved in development or humanitarian work.

The event is a joint initiative of UNOSDP and the Jacobs Foundation in collaboration with the Swiss Academy for Development (SAD) and the Mathare Youth Sports Association (MYSA). According to **Dr. Christian Jacobs**, Chairman of the Jacobs Foundation, sport has the potential to provide youth with key assets:

"Our experience has shown that sport can decisively contribute to productive youth development, enabling children and youth to become mentally and physically healthy adults, as well as productive and socially responsible members of society."

Both Mr. Lemke and Dr. Jacobs anticipate the Forum as an opportunity to:

"learn about the many initiatives in the field and how we can share and build on the experiences already gained in order that even more young people in Africa and other parts of the developing world can benefit from and further advance through sports based development initiatives".

A special programme for the media

A specific programme has been organised for the media, combining the Forum with **guided field visits** to sport for development initiatives in Nairobi. Media representatives will have the possibility to visit operational programmes taking place in Nairobi and talk to their beneficiaries. Four field visits have been organised and will be conducted by MYSA, a renowned Kenyan organisation active in the field of sport for development.



For further information

Visit the official website of the Forum: <http://www.sportanddev.org/forum09>.

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About the organisers of the Forum

Initiated and endorsed by

The Special Adviser to the UN Secretary-General on Sport for Development and Peace and his office, the **United Nations Office on Sport for Development and Peace (UNOSDP)** promotes the use of sport as a powerful tool to achieve development and peace objectives, in particular the eight Millennium Development Goals. UNOSDP provides the entry point to the entire UN system in this area and hosts the Secretariat of the 'Sport for Development and Peace International Working Group' (SDP IWG), an intergovernmental platform whose objective is to promote the integration of sport for development and peace into national and international development policies and programs. For more information see:

www.un.org/sport.

The Jacobs Foundation Switzerland supports programs for Productive Youth Development worldwide and funds projects that contribute to the welfare, social productivity and social inclusion of current and future generations of young people by understanding and promoting their personal development and employability. For more information see:

www.jacobsfoundation.org.

Organised by

The Swiss Academy for Development (SAD) promotes development opportunities and allows for the participation of young people who face rapid social change abroad and in Switzerland. Our focus areas are Intercultural Dialogue, Youth and Anomie, and Sport & Development. SAD operates the International Platform on Sport & Development www.sportanddev.org. SAD conducts Sport & Development research, is specialised in Monitoring & Evaluation and runs operational projects in the field. For more information see:

www.sad.ch or www.sportanddev.org.

The Mathare Youth Sports Association (MYSA) is a pioneering community development organisation that uses sports to engender broad socio-economic development, while also effecting positive social change. Founded in 1987 in the Mathare area of Nairobi, home to some of Africa's biggest and poorest slums, MYSA runs a variety of youth and children centered programmes focusing on sports, environment, health, education and the arts. To date, MYSA has directly impacted well over 200,000 children and youth in Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Sudan and Botswana. For more information see: www.mysakenya.org.