

Special Rapporteur on the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health

QUESTIONNAIRE

“Sport and healthy lifestyles as contributing factors to the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health”

Member States

1. To what extent, in your view, should United Nations Member States encourage individuals to participate in sport and adopt healthy lifestyles, to fulfil State obligations to respect, protect and fulfil the right to health? What is the minimum that must be done for this obligation to be met?
2. Has your State introduced legislation or policy in relation to sport and/or healthy lifestyles? If so, please provide a brief description of the laws or policies adopted.
3. What are the major challenges and opportunities that arise in adopting a right-to-health approach to participation in sport and adoption of healthy lifestyles?
4. What are the best ways that Member States can promote individuals’ participation in sport and adoption of healthy lifestyles? Please provide and briefly describe any examples of “good practices” adopted by Member States in this respect.
5. Are there any targeted interventions that can be implemented to promote participation in sport and adoption of healthy lifestyles amongst populations who could face vulnerable situations, including women, children, and people with disabilities?
6. Other than Member States, which other actors should be taking steps to encourage individuals to participate in sport and adopt healthy lifestyles? What can Member States do to ensure this occurs?

Other respondents (non-Member States, including civil society)

1. In your view, what should United Nations Member States be doing to encourage individuals to participate in sport and adopt healthy lifestyles? What is the extent of their responsibilities to their population in this area?

Health and Sport is one of the thematic areas on which UNOSDP has been working along with partners concerned, such as WHO, UNESCO and the International Olympic Committee, supporting the perspective of health as a fundamental right for development (SDP IWG Secretariat, 2008; Constitution of the World Health Organisation, 1946). Acting as a gateway for Member States to the UN system, the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Sport for Development and Peace and its Office advocate, guide, facilitate and coordinate action among Member States and other actors using the power of sport to address development related issues such as the right to health. From UNOSDP’s perspective, Member States are encouraged to harness the potential of sport for the promotion and realization of such right among its population.

From this perspective, UNOSDP aligns with UNESCO’s revised International Charter of Physical Education, Physical Activity and Sport, which recognises that:

“Every human being has a fundamental right to physical education, physical activity and sport without discrimination on the basis of ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property or any other basis.” (Art 1.1)

“Equal opportunity to participate and be involved at all supervision and decision-making levels in physical education, physical activity and sport, whether for the purpose of recreation, health promotion or high performance, is the right of every girl and every woman that must be actively enforced.” (Art 1.4)

With regard to Member States responsibilities, the Charter also recognises:

“To support, develop and maintain an active and healthy lifestyle for citizens, public authorities should integrate opportunities for physical activity and sport into all urban, rural and transportation planning.”

Based on recommendations to governments by the Sport for Development and Peace International Working Group (SDP IWG Secretariat, 2008), actions to be taken by UN Member States for encouraging individuals to participate in sport and adopt healthy lifestyles would be¹:

- Policy recommendations:
 - o Implement comprehensive strategies to increase physical activity levels in populations
 - o Develop evidence-based strategies and take a holistic approach to understanding and promoting physical activity
 - o Incorporate clear goals and targets in all strategies
 - o Collaborate with key stakeholders to assess current physical activity and sport participation levels, trends and determinants when developing strategies
 - o Incorporate lessons learned from successful experiences elsewhere
 - o Make coordinated use of the full range of instruments available to promote physical activity
 - o Give priority to strengthening national policies for physical education, physical activity and sport for all in schools
 - o Target physical activity policies and initiatives to specific populations and tailor initiatives to respond to population needs
 - o Develop strategies that address physical, social and environmental barriers to greater physical activity

- Program recommendations:
 - o Raise awareness and of the potential contribution of sport and healthy lifestyles to health.
 - o Develop guidelines on optimal physical activity levels and communicate them publicly
 - o Facilitate and invest in the development of culturally relevant, community-level, physical activity and sport programs as an important means of encouraging more active healthy living
 - o Create, and invest in, affordable, safe, inclusive, barrier-free and accessible sport infrastructures, facilities and related services thus contributing to healthy communities at large
 - o
 - o Ensure that initiatives are sensitive to relevant local beliefs, in particular those on diet, physical activity, and body shape
 - o To design and implements Monitoring and Evaluation systems
 - o Maximize the effectiveness of programmes by observing lessons learnt from successful programmes
 - o Make use of sport’s potential as a communication and public education platform to influence health-related behaviour (to promote the right to health, sport practice, etc.)

Besides and prior to such recommendations, Member States explicit recognition of the right to health and the contribution of sport to it would help to advance their interventions in this field.

¹ For further details on the listed recommendations, see: [*Harnessing the power of sport for development and peace: recommendations to governments. Sport and Health.*](#) (SDP IWG Secretariat, 2008)

The adoption of a context-sensitive approach, where recommendations above are tailored to specific needs and challenges is also key in Member States action aiming at encouraging their population to participate in sport and adopt healthy lifestyles.

The extent of UN Member States' responsibilities in this area could be considered to encompass any responsibility entitled in the recognised "right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health" (International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, 1966).

2. Do you know of any State that has introduced legislation or policy in relation to sport and/or healthy lifestyles? If so, please provide a brief description and evaluation of the laws or policies adopted.

- Spain's "Plan Integral para la Actividad Física y el Deporte. Plan A + D", aiming at providing universal access to quality sport practice to its population. <http://www.csd.gob.es/csd/sociedad/plan-integral-para-la-actividad-fisica-y-el-deporte-plan-a-d/plan-integral-para-la-actividad-fisica-y-el-deporte/> "Programa d'Activitat F isica, Esport i Salut" (regional level, Catalonia), aiming at providing physical activity prescriptions by health or sport professionals. <http://pafes.cat/es/>
- China's Sunshine Sport Program, promoting sport at schools <http://www.china.org.cn/english/education/194091.htm>
- Finland's "Muuvit" programme, promoting healthy lifestyles for Finnish children <http://www.muuvit.com/global/about/29>, and "Schools on the Move" initiative <http://www.liikkuvakoulu.fi/in-english>
- UK's "Change 4 Life programme", aiming at promoting active lifestyle of children in the UK. National Health Service (NHS) <http://www.nhs.uk/change4life/Pages/change-for-life.aspx>
- USA's Let's move programme, aiming at promoting healthy lifestyles among children to prevent obesity: <http://www.letsmove.gov/>

3. What are the major challenges and opportunities that arise in adopting a right-to-health approach to participation in sport and adoption of healthy lifestyles?

Challenges

- Lack of awareness about the contribution of sport and healthy life styles to health benefits.
- Lack of (infra)structure, systems, and networks in health and sport.
- Deviation from the right to health approach/dimension towards others focus such as elite sport or high-level competition, which might put intended health outcomes at risk.
- Limitations of sport in achieving health outcomes: "Behaviours such as exclusion, tolerance of violent rivalry among opposing teams and their supporters, and emphasizing winning at any cost, can discourage sport participation. These behaviours can also undermine the positive values of sport, offer negative role models to young people, rob sport of its power to connect and strengthen individuals and communities, and undermine attempts to use sport to communicate important health messages."²
- Potential risks in sport: "injury from overexertion, unsafe playing conditions, lack of appropriate training and safety equipment, sport violence on the field, and violence at mass

² Sport for Development and Peace International Working Group (2008). *Harnessing the power of sport for development and peace: recommendations to governments*. Right to Play: Toronto

sport events. In high-performance sport, the use of illegal performance-enhancing substances (doping) poses additional health risks.¹

Opportunities

- Close to the right-to-health approach in sport participation and healthy lifestyles, sport has been recognised as a fundamental right for all by UNESCO (International Charter on Physical Education and Sport, 1978), as the right to play has been recognised in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child
 - Raising awareness towards the possibilities of sport to promote human rights and the right to health in particular.
 - Sport as a platform for the dissemination of health-related information. Sport is an attractive and popular activity where the delivery of health-related messages can be more effective than other contexts. As recognised in the OHCHR Right to Health Fact sheet, based on the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, health-related education and information is one of the key determinants of health. Sport, its attractiveness and popularity, has proven to be a unique platform for such education.³
 - “Positive values, physical activity, social connection and communication dimensions of sport, and their careful application in well-designed programs, hold enormous potential to help achieve health goals.”⁴
 - The available evidence on the contribution of sport and physical activity to health benefits as part of a healthy lifestyle provides good arguments for further developments on this field which integrate a right-to-health approach⁵
 - The recent recognition of the growing contribution of sport to health in the Declaration of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda offers an opportunity for further advocating for a right-to-health perspective in the promotion of sport practice and healthy lifestyles.
4. What are the best ways that individuals can be encouraged to participate in sport and adopt healthy lifestyles by Member States? Please, provide and briefly describe any examples of “best practices” adopted in this respect.

At UNOSDP, the Youth Leadership Programme, aiming at the development of young leaders in Sport for Development and Peace, promotes active lifestyles and sport and health related initiatives through its participants. After taking part in UNOSDP Youth Leadership Camps, their improved leadership skills allow them to go back to their communities and act as role models in the promotion of cross-cutting areas through sport such as health-related projects. For more information on the Youth Leadership Programme, please visit <http://www.un.org/wcm/content/site/sport/YLC>

A remarkable initiative by Member States in the promotion of participation in sport and healthy lifestyles was the event hosted by the Group of Friends of Sport for Development and Peace on the importance of physical activity in promoting healthy lifestyles (Geneva, May 2013). More information on [UNOSDP website](#)

The role of Member States endorsing initiatives above have been crucial for their success. The partnership between them as host countries of Youth Leadership Programme Camps have proven to be a successful alliance and model where the combination of their national resources and structures

³ Reference

⁴ Sport for Development and Peace International Working Group (2008). *Harnessing the power of sport for development and peace: recommendations to governments*. Right to Play: Toronto

⁵http://www.sportanddev.org/en/learnmore/sport_and_health/the_health_benefits_of_sport_and_physical_activity/

with the expertise and network of UNOSDP and the Special Adviser on Sport for Development and Peace has enabled the promotion of sport participation with a development and rights perspective.

Similar initiatives could be replicated by Member States, finding common areas of collaboration with expert organisations at the international level and on the ground.

5. Are there any targeted interventions that can be implemented to promote participation in sport and adoption of healthy lifestyles amongst populations who could face vulnerable situations, including women, children, and people with disabilities?

- Tailoring programmes to the sport habits and preferences of targeted groups.
 - o E.g. array / variety of sport practice opportunities for women. E.g. the Scottish National Agency's Active Girls and Fit for Girls programmes (<http://www.sportscotland.org.uk/schools/active-girls/>; [http://www.sportscotland.org.uk/schools/active-girls/fit-for-girls-\(1\)/](http://www.sportscotland.org.uk/schools/active-girls/fit-for-girls-(1)/))
- For children, the implementation of both in-school and after school programmes are typically used for the promotion of participation in sport. The integration of sport (physical education) in the school curricula is considered a key element in the promotion of sport practice among this group.
- Incorporating a disability sensitive approach in all sport and health initiatives, with the use of adapted sports or elements that allow access to sport activities for persons with disabilities. E.g. ITTF project

Based on recommendations to governments by the Sport for Development and Peace International Working Group (SDP IWG Secretariat, 2008), actions to be taken by UN Member States for encouraging individuals to participate in sport and adopt healthy lifestyles include⁶:

- Provide persons with disabilities with opportunities and support to participate in sport and physical activities adapted to their physical and mental condition
- Be aware of cultural norms with regard to gender that may, in some cases, prevent women and girls from being more active
- Target public messages aimed at increasing physical activity levels and tailor them for specific audiences

6. Other than Member States, which other actors should be taking steps to encourage individuals to participate in sport and adopt healthy lifestyles? How can this be achieved? Please list any “best practice” examples that apply.

UNESCO's Declaration of Berlin (Art 12) highlights:

“impact-oriented physical education and sport policy must be developed by all concerned stakeholders, including national administrations for sport, education, youth, and health; inter-governmental and non-governmental organizations; sport federations and athletes; as well as the private sector and the media”

In line with this view, all stakeholders involved in the fields of sport, human rights and health could contribute to the engagement of individuals in sport practice and healthy lifestyles, including:

- UN system. A detailed list of UN players in Sport for Development and Peace is available on UNOSDP website <http://www.un.org/wcm/content/site/sport/home/unplayers>

⁶ For further details on the listed recommendations, see: [*Harnessing the power of sport for development and peace: recommendations to governments. Sport and Health.*](#) (SDP IWG Secretariat, 2008)

- Public institutions at regional and local levels, across different sectors (education, health, sport, culture, etc.)
- Sport organisations (international, national, regional, local structures). E.g.: Sport Governing Bodies, International Olympic and Paralympic Committees, Sport Federations,
- Human rights organisations and activists
- Practitioners across sectors (e.g. healthcare, education and sport systems).
- Private sector/businesses, e.g.
- Academia
- Media, including public information services

One of the key elements to achieve the intended engagement of individuals in sport and healthy lifestyles is to work in partnership, involving different sectors. “Sport is a highly effective tool in a broader kit of development practices. Only when it is applied in a holistic and integrated manner can sport achieve development results”⁷ This approach is consistent with the newly adopted 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

UNOSDP has endorsed the following projects, which can be considered best practices in the field of Sport and Health:

- **Football for All in Vietnam (FFAV)**

FFAV tries to establish healthy habits in the community by using participatory approach and providing training of coaches, referees and leaders.

Life skills components such as HIV/AIDS awareness, personal hygiene and sanitation, environment, communication skills, safety issues and traffic safety are integrated in the clubs activities.

- **"Scoring for safer neighbourhood" implemented** by Simama Africa Youth Group Simama Africa Youth Group is based in Kenya.

This project addresses poverty and HIV/AIDS issues by implementing coach training and holding an annual soccer tournament. They also deal with children's rights sensitization. Children and youth get the chance to learn about rights, welfare and protection through discussion, open forums and trainings.

From these and other examples in practice, some of the commonly used ways of promoting physical activity and sport include:

- Policies promoting participation in sport and active lifestyles, by providing opportunities for all to practice.
- To tackle barriers to sport practice (economic, social, etc.), ensuring access to it.
- Provision of open public spaces for physical activity and sport practice.
- Integration of Physical Education in the school curricula
- Provide after school sport-based programmes
- Develop sports systems and physical activity for all
- Awareness raising campaigns
- Elaboration and dissemination of promotion materials

⁷ Sport for Development and Peace International Working Group (2008). *Harnessing the power of sport for development and peace: recommendations to governments*. Right to Play: Toronto

Deadline for submission of responses to the questionnaire:

In order to give the Special Rapporteur the opportunity to take into account the different contributions, all parties are encouraged to submit their responses as soon as possible and at the latest by **15 October 2015**.

Answers can be submitted via email to the following address:

srhealth@ohchr.org

OR by postal mail or fax to:

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