



INTERNATIONAL DAY OF SPORT FOR DEVELOPMENT AND PEACE

2025 International Day of Sport for Development and Peace

Leveling the Playing Field: Sport for Social Inclusion

UNHQ Special Event: Advancing Social Inclusion through Sport: Towards the Second World Summit for Social Development

**Monday 7 April, 11:30am – 1pm,
Conference Room 5, UNHQ**

Background

Every year on April 6, we celebrate the International Day of Sport for Development and Peace (IDSDP), highlighting the transformative power of sport in fostering positive change, enhancing social cohesion, and advancing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This day serves as a reminder of how sport can unite communities and promote values that contribute to societal development.

In anticipation of the Second World Social Summit for Social Development (WSSD2) in November 2025 in Doha, IDSDP 2025 will focus on the theme of 'Leveling the Playing Field: Sport for Social Inclusion.' This theme aligns closely with the WSSD2's three pillars: poverty eradication, full and productive employment and decent work for all, and social inclusion. It also builds on the foundations established by the First World Social Summit in Copenhagen in 1995, particularly emphasizing the Copenhagen Declaration's Commitment 4, which calls on Member States to promote social inclusion by creating stable and equitable societies that uphold human rights and ensure equality, especially for marginalized and disadvantaged groups.

Social inclusion is a critical enabler of both poverty reduction and employment. It ensures that marginalized and disadvantaged groups can participate fully in society and contribute to economic and social development. Sport, with its universal appeal and capacity to unite, plays a vital role in advancing social inclusion and fostering equitable opportunities. As the SWSSD seeks to drive transformational change, IDSDP 2025 will demonstrate how sport can contribute

to reducing poverty, enhancing access to decent work, and building cohesive, inclusive societies while exploring the transformative role of technology in amplifying these efforts.

Sport holds a unique position in bridging divides, promoting equity, and empowering individuals and communities. By addressing barriers to participation, sport serves as a platform for creating opportunities, reducing inequalities, and strengthening solidarity. When coupled with technology, sport's potential to drive progress on the WSSD2's three focus areas—poverty eradication, employment, and inclusion—is exponentially increased:

- **Poverty Eradication:** Sport-based initiatives provide skills development, employment opportunities, and pathways out of poverty, particularly for women and girls, youth and marginalized groups. Programs that combine sport with education, vocational training, or entrepreneurial activities can break the cycle of poverty while building resilience in vulnerable communities.
- **Employment and Decent Work:** Sport fosters skill-building, teamwork, and leadership qualities, which are transferable to the workplace. The sports industry itself offers significant employment opportunities, ranging from coaching to media and event management. Ensuring equitable access to such opportunities can promote decent work and economic empowerment.
- **Social Inclusion:** Sport creates inclusive spaces where individuals from all walks of life can come together. It challenges stereotypes, promotes tolerance, and fosters mutual understanding, thereby contributing to social cohesion and reducing systemic inequalities.

Objectives

IDSDP 2025 will explore how sport can address systemic barriers, foster inclusion, and empower individuals—advancing the objectives of the SWSSD while reinforcing the role of sport in achieving the SDGs. Moreover, it will:

- Highlight successful initiatives, projects, and programs that use sport to address poverty, promote employment, and advance social inclusion in alignment with the WSSD2.
- Strengthen the connection between IDSDP 2025 and the WSSD2 by showcasing sport's contributions to the three Copenhagen pillars—poverty eradication, employment, and inclusion.
- Engage United Nations agencies, Member States, and stakeholders in exploring how sport and technology can be leveraged to address systemic barriers and foster solidarity.
- Promote women's and girls' empowerment through sport and technology by challenging stereotypes, increasing participation, and fostering leadership opportunities for women and girls, advancing SDG 5.
- Advocate for accessible and inclusive sports environments that empower persons with disabilities and marginalized groups, ensuring equity and participation for all.
- Advance knowledge-sharing and collaboration among stakeholders to ensure that sport and technology serve as transformative tools for achieving the goals of the WSSD2 and the 2030 Agenda.

Run of show

Opening by the Moderator

- **Mr. Andrew Luria**, Sports Journalist, FOX5 San Diego

Welcome Remarks

- **H.E. Alya Ahmed bin Saif Al-Thani**, Permanent Representative of the State of Qatar to the UN
- **H.E. Isabelle Picco**, Permanent Representative of the Principality of Monaco to the UN

Opening Remarks

- **H.E. Mr. Li Junhua**, Under Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs, UNDESA
- **H.E. Ms. Sima Sami Bahous**, Executive Director of UN Women

Panel Discussion

- **Ms. Asma Al-Thani**, Qatari mountaineer, UNHCR partner
- **Mr. Jamal Hill**, American swimmer, Paralympic bronze medalist
- **Mr. Justin Morrow**, American soccer player, social justice activist, Head of Sports Partnerships & Programs at the USC Race & Equity Center
- **Ms. Veronica Sheffey**, American basketballer, San Diego State University

Interactive Q&A

Closing Remarks

- **Mr. Luis Moreno**, Member, International Olympic Committee and IOC's Permanent Observer to the UN

UN Stamps for Peace unveiling

- **Mr. Charles Katoanga**, Director, Division for Inclusive Social Development, UNDESA