



STATEMENT BY MR. SATPAL RAWAT, MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT ON
AGENDA ITEM NO.11 "SPORT FOR PEACE AND DEVELOPMENT:
BUILDING A PEACEFUL AND BETTER WORLD THROUGH SPORT AND
THE OLYMPIC IDEAL" AT THE 66TH SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS
GENERAL ASSEMBLY ON OCTOBER 17, 2011.

Mr. President, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am privileged to participate in today's discussion on "Sports for Peace and Development" and would like to thank this august house for providing me this opportunity.



Mr. President,

Sport is an important element in building character. It helps motivate young people, teaches them to work in a spirit of partnership with others, develops leadership skills and promotes a sense of team spirit, apart from ensuring fitness and a healthy life style.

Sport also helps foster peace and a feeling of equality and friendship among all people and nations. There can be no more powerful medium to inspire and bring people together for a common purpose.

Mr. President,

The intrinsic linkage between sports and games, and the human quest for excellence, was recognized at the very inception of human civilization. It reached its high point during the ancient Greek civilization, which was the beginning of the modern Olympic movement.

Sports, games and physical fitness have also been an integral part of the Indian heritage, evident even today in the highly evolved system of yoga, as well as the vast range of indigenous games and martial arts practiced in different parts of India since time immemorial.

After Indian independence in 1947, the first five-year plan gave due importance to physical education and sports, and emphasized its integration in the formal education system. As part of our efforts to broad-base sports and encourage creation of modern sports infrastructure, a National Sports Policy was also adopted by India in 2001.

Today in India, all sections of our society, including the media and business sector, are actively involved in the promotion of sports. We have also been encouraging the autonomous functioning of our national sports federations.

Mr. President,

Sport is also an effective tool to help achieve development objectives in the areas of health, education, child protection, and child development. Besides, it helps generate public awareness and inspires broad, inclusive and committed action in support of the developmental agenda. I am glad to note that there is today a good recognition of the value of sports to help achieve the Millennium Development Goals, and that many sports personalities have associated with the UN in creating

public awareness and help in the understanding of various issues that affect the youth and society. In this context, I would like to draw attention to our national icon for cricket Sachin Tendulkar, who is a Goodwill Ambassador of the United Nations Environment Programme and our former tennis star, Vijay Amritraj, who was a UN Ambassador of Peace in 2001.

Mr. President,

India has in the recent past successfully held the 19th Commonwealth Games, an event that featured participation by 71 countries and over 7000 athletes, who celebrated sporting excellence, human skill and endurance, and above all courage and character. These games upheld and renewed the essential spirit of peace, equality and friendship among all people and nations.

Recognizing the importance of sports in building a peaceful and better world, India has co-sponsored the resolution "building a peaceful and better world through sport and the Olympic ideal", which will be adopted today. We sincerely believe that all sporting events strengthen the cherished ties of goodwill and understanding that unite us as one family.

Thank you.

[BACK TO TABLE OF CONTENTS](#)