

STATEMENT BY MRS. RAJKUMARI RATNA SINGH, MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT & MEMBER OF THE INDIAN DELEGATION, ON AGENDA ITEM-11 - *SPORTS FOR PEACE AND DEVELOPMENT: BUILDING A PEACEFUL AND BETTER WORLD THROUGH SPORT AND THE OLYMPIC IDEAL AT THE 68TH SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY ON NOVEMBER 06, 2013*

**Mr. President,
Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,**

I feel honored and privileged to participate in this debate today, under agenda item-11 entitled “Building a Peaceful and Better World through Sport and the Olympic ideal”.



Mr. President,

India welcomes the resolution adopted by the 67th General Assembly proclaiming April 06 as the International Day of Sport for Development and Peace. We hope that observance of the day will help spread awareness about the importance of sport as a tool for development and peace. We are also happy to be a co-sponsor of the resolution entitled “Building a Peaceful and Better World through Sport and the Olympic ideal”, to be moved in the ongoing session of the General Assembly.

We also welcome the deliberations at the third International Forum on Sport for Peace and Development, organized at the UN Headquarters in New York in June this year, jointly by the UN Office on Sport for Development and Peace (UNOSDP) and the International Olympic Committee (IOC). We are confident that collaboration between

the United Nations and the IOC will lead to integration of sport in all areas of development and peace, and help achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MGDs).

Mr. President,

Ever since the dawn of human civilization, the intrinsic linkage between sports and games, and the human pursuit of excellence, has been recognized. This pursuit of excellence through sport reached its epitome in the ancient Greek civilization, which was the progenitor of the modern Olympic movement.

In India too, sports and physical activities have been an integral part of our civilization, through the practice of yoga and its highly evolved system of physical, mental and spiritual regimen. Yoga, as a form of physical and mental exercise, is now popular across the world. In addition, India also has a range of highly developed indigenous games and martial arts.

After India attained independence in 1947, the integration of physical education and sports with formal education was emphasized in the First Five Year Plan. Subsequently, a separate department for sports was set up in 1982, and a National Sports Policy was announced in 1984. The Sports Authority of India (SAI) was also established in 1984, for the effective and optimum utilization of various sports facilities, and all matters pertaining to sports promotion and sports management.

India has encouraged the autonomous functioning of national sports federations, and we are proud to mention that the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) is one of the most resourceful autonomous sports bodies in the world. All sections of our society, including the media and corporate sector, are actively involved in the promotion of sports.

Mr. President,

Sport is the most effective tool to help achieve the development objectives in the areas of health, education, and child development. It helps generate public awareness and inspires broad and inclusive action in support of the developmental agenda. It is heartening to note that sport has been recognized as one of the tools to address developmental challenges.

We appreciate the work of the UN Office on Sport for Development and Peace (UNOSPD), and the Special Advisor of the UN Secretary General on Sport for Development and Peace, for bringing the worlds of sport and development closer together. Efforts should continue to focus on sport for development, and to make it firmly rooted in the UN system.

Associating sporting personalities with the UN, with the objective of creating public awareness about education, health and development issues, and promoting tolerance, understanding and peace within and between communities and cultures, is praiseworthy. I would like to mention here that Indian sportsmen have also been

associated with different UN entities, and while Indian tennis star Vijay Amritraj was a UN Messenger of Peace, cricketing hero Sachin Tendulkar is a Goodwill Ambassador of the UN Environment Program.

Mr. President,

India welcomes the work of the International Olympic Committee and the International Paralympics Committee in promoting and strengthening a culture of peace, based on the spirit of the Olympic Truce. I assure them of India's full cooperation and support in their efforts to use sport as a tool to promote peace, dialogue and reconciliation.

India also cherishes and celebrates the noble ideals and values of the Olympic movement, and stands committed to furthering international fraternity, friendship, goodwill and unity. We believe that there is no better medium than sport to inculcate and foster the values of respect, diversity, and tolerance across communities, civilizations and cultures.

Thank you, Mr. President.

[BACK TO TABLE OF CONTENTS](#)