

Marking Sport for Development Day, Japanese athletes take UN Global Goals forward

“Let’s use the 2020 Olympics and Paralympics as an opportunity to let the world know about the importance of [SDGs](#) [Sustainable Development Goals],” said [Koji Murofushi](#), the gold medalist in hammer throw at the 2004 Athens Olympics, in his video message.

The [2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#) and its 17 SDGs were adopted by world leaders in 2015 as a blueprint to achieve a healthy planet where people can live free of poverty and hunger by 2030.

“I often see poverty with my own eyes when I go overseas for tennis matches. Now, donation is probably the only way I can contribute but I support activities aiming to eradicate poverty,” said [Mai Minokoshi](#), a professional tennis player, in her message.

The campaign was launched by the UN Information Centre (UNIC) in Tokyo and Japan Sports Agency, with the support of Sport for Tomorrow, a Government-private joint venture, to commemorate the [International Day of Sport for Development and Peace](#), annually observed on 6 April – the day the first modern Olympics was held in 1896.

In the [2030 Agenda](#), sport’s role for social progress is acknowledged as “an important enabler of sustainable development.”



Video screen shot

A collage of screen captures from video messages by Japanese athletes joining a United Nations-backed campaign to promote Sustainable Development Goals through sports.

“I believe Olympics and Paralympics symbolize peace. I hope for a day where everyone can live peacefully” says [Taiki Morii](#), a silver medalist in Alpine skiing in 2018 PyeongChang Paralympic Winter Games.

The campaign has now gone beyond Japan, with [Sally Conway](#) of Scotland, who won the bronze medal in judo at the 2016 Rio Olympics, and [Kreshma Rasikh](#) from Afghanistan’s national women soccer team, joining the growing ranks of athletes disseminating their video messages on social media platforms.

The International Day of Sport for Development and Peace was [created](#) by the UN General Assembly in 2013.

In her message for the Day, Audrey Azoulay, Director-General of the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization ([UNESCO](#)), said that sport relies upon the concepts of respect, understanding, integration and dialogue, and it contributes to the development and fulfilment of individuals regardless of age, gender, origins, beliefs and opinions.

“That is why [sport is a unique forum](#) for action and reflection to transform our societies,” she said.