

Sport is force of social empowerment and an engine for equality – UNESCO

6 April 2017 – There is no more powerful platform for promoting shared values than sport, Director-General of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization ([UNESCO](#)), Irina Bokova, said in a message marking the International Day of Sport for Development and Peace.

“Sport is a passion shared by women and men across the world. It is a force for [physical well-being and social empowerment](#). It is an engine for equality, especially gender equality, for including everyone, especially the most disadvantaged,” Ms Bokova said in her message on the Day.

Sport also promotes solidarity, respect, teamwork, responsibility, honesty, self-esteem and motivation, she said. However, despite the positive benefits, 3.2 million deaths are attributed to physical inactivity every year.

“This is why UNESCO has joined forces with the World Health Organization ([WHO](#)) to combat sedentary lifestyles, starting with inclusive and equitable quality physical education at school,” Ms Bokova said.

The Director-General also called for new commitment from all actors to ensuring public policies in fields of education, health, transport and urban planning work also with the private sector to develop legislation and national plans for sport.

“As the world takes forward the [2030 Agenda](#) for Sustainable Development, we must do everything to support sport to leave no one behind,” she said, while commending the work of volunteers dedicated to supporting sport for peace and development around the world.

RELATED: [With more people sedentary, WHO urges everyone to get moving](#)

In November 2015, the UNESCO member States adopted the new [International Charter of Physical Education and Sport](#), the spirit of which was ensuring respect for the fundamental right to sport for all men and women without discrimination, Ms Bokova said. “Sport is a way to include everyone, including [refugees and migrants](#), to fight against stereotypes, to strengthen the foundations for peace in healthy society,” she added. In August 2013, the sixty-seventh session of the UN General Assembly decided to proclaim 6 April as the [International Day of Sport for Development and Peace](#).