

# **SPORTS FOR PEACE AND DEVELOPMENT**

**A**

**PAPER PRESENTED**

**AT THE**

**SECOND IIPT AFRICAN CONFERENCE ON PEACE THROUGH  
TOURISM**

**DAR ES SALAAM, TANZANIA, DECEMBER 7-12, 2003**

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*i. Introduction*

**I can not really do sufficient justice to this exciting and burning topic of sports as a catalytic vehicle for the promotion of peace and development** without first attempting to define the three interwoven concepts of Sports, Peace and Development.

**Sport may be defined as a ‘recreational or competitive activity that involves some amount of physical strength or skill’** (Britannica Micropaedia Ready Reference, Number 2). Sports in fact are physical or psychophysical activities undertaken for exercise and pleasure. Sports offer entertainment or excitement and may be undertaken just for the pleasure of it or on a competitive basis.

**Peace on the other hand may be defined as a state of harmony and tranquil coexistence in a community or between communities or nations, devoid of violence and war.** According to Darwinian principle, nature is always latent with conflict as a result of differing interests, competition for scarce resources and the need to survive. Potential for conflict will always exist among humans as well as among other living things. The latency for violence and war among people or between peoples can be said to be analogous to the biblical saying that: ‘*where two or more are gathered, I am in their midst*’. It cannot be avoided. What ensures peace is therefore not the absence of tension, but the presence of justice, good governance and equitable conflict resolution mechanisms in our societies, that ensures that, individuals and groups or nations do not adopt the jungle law approach to resolving differences and conflict.

**Last but not the least is the definition of Development.** There may not be a universally agreed definition and yardstick for measuring the development of societies and nation-states. However, **development in this context may be said to be the growth of communities and nations that is translated into a relatively high standard of living and well being of the people.** There are several indices such as relative gross domestic product, per capital income, level of literacy, technological advancement and many others that may be used in combination to measure development.

Having defined the relevant concepts, I will seize the opportunity to put a periscope on each by looking at them a bit more in detail, starting with sports and further examining how sports impinge on both peace and development and how they reciprocate each other.

*ii. Sports*

**Cats do play. Dogs also play,** hence the famous saying; ‘**dog bite dog, no blood**’ Even animals in the wild including carnivores play, hardly hurting their own kind. In fact, many animals naturally engage in play. **The human race is however the only species**

**that is known to have deliberately or accidentally invented sports as part of culture rather than nature.** It is not really known when humankind started to invent sports. The most famous association and religious sports, **the Olympic games date as far back as 776BC** though it might have been in existence long before then.

**The early occupation of man seems to be the genesis of all modern sports.** Hunting of animals and gathering of wild fruits, roots and herbs involved application of motor and psychomotor skills such as running, jumping, throwing, bending, lifting, digging, pulling and coordinating physical and mental functions. These appear to be the basis of most, if not all contemporary sports.

**Modern competitive sports can be broadly divided into individual and group sports.** On the one hand, group or team sports include games such as soccer or association football, American football, cricket, rugby, basketball, volleyball, netball, handball and hockey. Individual sports on the other hand include disciplines such as tennis, ping-pong, boxing, wrestling, skiing, taekwando, badminton, archery, golf, fencing, chess, athletics and some traditional African sports played in African villages and communities such as *owari* and *ampe* in Ghana. Unfortunately, we African's have not taken the trouble to promote our traditional sports to gain international recognition. Some of the sports I have just listed as individual sports such as tennis, ping-pong, badminton, relay races and *ampe* can also be played as team sports.

**Sports do, and have great potential for bringing people together, fostering unity, understanding, tolerance and love among people, which are essential ingredients in the promotion of peace.** The developmental impact of sports cannot be questioned. Some of the most popular organised sports festivals and tournaments such as the African Cup of Nations, the World (Soccer) Cup, the Olympic Games and association football in countries like the United Kingdom, Portugal, Spain, Germany, Brazil and Argentina have become major industries generating billions of dollars per annum. These sporting activities have rippling positive effects on human advancement.

### *iii. Peace*

**Peace has become one of the most illusive conditions affecting humankind in contemporary times.** Homo sapiens who claims to be the most civilized and intelligent of all living creatures ironically happens to be the one who invented war and the only animal that easily kills his own kind just for the sake of establishing superiority. Man has invented weapons of mass destruction such as nuclear weapons, biological weapons, chemical weapons, etc, to use against his own kind. The global spread of terrorism in recent years was given birth to, and festered by prejudice, intolerance, ignorance, poverty, greed and the desire of some human groups to establish hegemony over others. **The bombing of the United States embassies in Nairobi and Dar es Salaam (here) in August 1998, the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks on the World Trade Centre in New York, the bombing of a night club filled mainly with Western tourists in Bali, Indonesia on October 12, 2002, the bombing of the Paradise Hotel in Mombassa, Kenya in 2003, the bombing of the HSBC building and the British Consulate as**

recently as in November 2003 in Istanbul, Turkey, are living epitaphs of the handy work of terrorists, leaving thousands dead in their wake. The attack on the Twin Towers in New York alone claimed an estimated 3000 lives. The Bali bombing claimed 182 lives and left hundreds injured.

In spite of the efforts being made in Africa to establish peace and development through democracy, good governance, regional integration, bilateral and multilateral cooperation and economic structural adjustment, **Africa has not been spared its own share of lack of peace and socio-economic retrogression.** These have manifested in civil wars, civil strife and violent protests, fueled by ethnic, religious and political differences, poor political leadership and governance, neocolonialism and land tenure systems among other factors.

**There are presently only small havens and parchments of peace dotted on the African continent.** The fratricidal wars that took place in the last decade between governments and rebel groups in many African countries and still on-going in some of them such as Liberia, Sierra Leon, Cote d'Ivoire, Sudan, the Democratic Republic of Congo (D.R.C.), Burundi, Uganda, Algeria, Angola and Rwanda, just to mention some of them, are still vivid in our minds. The 1993 genocide in Rwanda alone claimed an estimated 800,000 victims, not to mention the millions who died in the other conflicts put together.

**All these armed conflicts have left a devastating peace and development deficit on the African continent.** Some form of epileptic truce and peace has been established in some of these countries and disputed territories, but peace still remains a mirage in many parts of Africa, despite the signing of peace accords between warring factions.

**Considering the fact that Africa lags behind the rest of the world in terms of development, peace should be our priority in establishing the enabling environment for accelerated development.** Unfortunately, peace it appears, is one of the most lacking conditions on the continent, though probably the most desperately needed to foster development.

#### *iv. Development*

**Development economists have come up with several indicators for measuring development.** These pointers include gross national/domestic product, per capita income, level of literacy, proportion of disposable income spent on basic necessities such as food, shelter and clothing, accessibility to education and health services, level of infrastructure development, industry composition of the economy in terms of primary, manufacturing and tertiary, technological advancement and food security among others.

**Development requires certain facilitating environments to take place or to be speeded up.** Chief among these are the presence of skilled human capital and peace. Even for the most advanced countries, war can reduce all that have been achieved in

hundreds of years to rubbles as it happened during the two World Wars and after other major modern wars that time will not allow me here to enumerate.

v. *Sports for Peace*

**Sports, whether individual or team sport could be a very powerful tool for promoting peace. This does not mean that there is no sports related violence.** Secondary school pupils have been known to fight and continue to fight running battles after soccer matches in many communities. Soccer hooliganism is very rife in some European, South American and African countries, sometimes resulting in the death of some fans or peace officers. A French gendarme (police) by name David Nivel was hit on the head by a German and left in a state of coma when he tried to break up a street fight involving German supporters during the soccer World Cup held in France in June 1998. A Leeds United Football Club fan was stabbed to death in Istanbul, Turkey in rival fan violence at a European Champions league match on April 5, 2000. A defender in the 1994 Colombian world cup national team called Escobar was shot dead when he returned home by an unidentified person in 1994, apparently for scoring an own goal during the 1994 world cup. Without the exercise of maturity, war could have easily broken out between Ghana and neighbouring Cote d'Ivoire in 1994 as a result of soccer related violence. Some Ivorian journalists misrepresented the facts in the Ivorian media by showing on television injured Ivorian soccer fans who were involved in a motor accident as victims of violent attacks by their Ghanaian counterparts while they were in Ghana to attend a soccer match. The injured fans were in fact, returning from attending a titanic African champions league match in Kumasi, Ghana between Asante Kotoko of Ghana and Asec Mimosa of Cote d'Ivoire when they got involved in a motor accident within Ivorian territory. This misrepresented news incensed the Ivorian populace and resulted in spontaneous reprisal by Ivorians against Ghanaians living in their country at the time. Many Ghanaians were murdered, maimed and their properties looted or burnt down. The two countries had to set up a joint-committee to investigate the issue and find an amicable solution to it. In North America Ice Hockey, fighting has become an integral part of the game and spectators would be disappointed if there were no fights.

**In spite of such problems, sports related violence is more strongly associated with social groups than with the specific nature of sports. All manner of sports have been successfully used, and continue to be used to bring individuals and groups from different races, social classes, religious creeds, nationalities and ethnic backgrounds together to interact at tournaments or sports festivals, to get them acquainted with each other in order to promote peace, love and harmony.** Athletes, officials and spectators from different cultural backgrounds commingle and tend to learn more about each other's culture and values during sports festivities. This results in attitudinal change, which ultimately impinges positively on social behaviour.

**Athletes develop friendships, on the pitch, off the pitch and in game villages at festivals such as the Olympics, the All Africa Games, the World Athletics Championships and the Commonwealth Games which many a time become life-long relationships.** The exposure to other perspectives gained during socialization at such

sports festivals or during tournaments make the participants become more understanding, empathetic and tolerant of other people's views and interests. The eventual impact on society is, people learn to peacefully co-exist and resolve their differences more amicably rather than through violent or militant means.

**Team sports by their very nature require a lot of cooperation and collaboration among individual members of a team in order to be effective.** Thus athletes in a team sport need to communicate effectively with each other and understand each other to achieve good results. This necessity creates esprit de corps among members of a team. Generally, team players tend to be less selfish, are more tolerant towards other people and are more likely to adopt a pacifist approach to resolving disputes in society. A classical example is George Opong Weah, the Liberian former world number one footballer of the year who became a symbol of hope for his countrymen and was actively involved in bringing peace to war torn Liberia in the late 1990s.

**Sports also enable athletes, particularly the youthful ones effervescing with energy to find vents for their violent energies and emotions** that could prove detrimental to society if allowed to go undirected towards productive avenues. It is said that the devil finds work for the idle hand.

**Sports also provide entertainment and vicarious experience to spectators and these serve as escape from everyday routine and drudgery.** The interaction among sports fans before, during and after a game and the honourable acceptance of defeat creates a culture of tolerance and fairness in society, which strongly contributes to the culture of peace in the human family.

**The rules and regulations that govern most sports disciplines and games stress fair competition and abhor cheating,** particularly the use of performance enhancing drugs. This requirement helps to develop more disciplined sports-persons and engender the sense of equity in the youth that are the heartbeat of sports in society.

**Sports may be used to promote peace and friendship as their themes.** Peace and friendship seem to be the themes of many existing sports festivals even if particular sports events have not been explicitly dubbed so. Therefore, all modern sporting activities, including games and festivals fundamentally and implicitly promote friendship. At the end of a game, athletes from both the victorious and the vanquished sides could be publicly seen shaking hands, exchanging shirts, hugging each other or consoling one another. This happens even at the end of martial sports such as boxing and wrestling. Such gestures epitomise empathy, tolerance, acceptance and love- all constituting a good recipe for peace.

**However, some sports festivals or events do proactively and officially promote the themes of friendship and or peace as their mission(s).** For example, Ghana and Nigeria used to hold annual friendship games in the 1970s that were meant to bring the two countries closer together. The hosting of the games was annually rotated between the two countries. In recent years, the two countries have revived the academics concept where

the national secondary school level soccer teams of the two countries play each other on home and away basis. There are several festivals around the world dubbed friendship games like the Friendship Games usually held in Moscow.

**Peace is the official theme of the modern Olympic games, which was revived in 1896.** The Olympic games seeks to bring humanity together once every four years on the global stage to remind us of the need for peaceful coexistence. There are a number of Peace runs around the world. There is the Sri Lanka Peace Marathon. There is also the Charlotte Peace run in the United States. On our own African continent, we have **the Annual Africa University International Peace Marathon, which started in 2002. It cannot therefore be over emphasized that sport is an essential variable in the promotion of peace, and both peace and sport promote development.**

#### *vi. Sports for Development*

**Sports do promote and contribute to development of societies and nations.** First and foremost, **a sporting culture just for the fun of it, produces healthy and more productive citizens. No wonder the ancient Romans used to say; ‘mens sana incorpore sano’, meaning a sound mind lives in a sound body.** A physically fit person is not only mentally alert, but also more productive when it comes to the use of motor and psychomotor skills in the work environment. There is also less loss of labour hours due to ill health in such economies. Organisations and business firms that recognize the importance of physical fitness of their human resources actually pay for their employees to visit the gymnasium. Some actually have it as a policy to hold aerobic sessions in their premises during specified periods within normal working hours.

**Professional sports-persons have become some of the biggest income earners around the globe and the goods and services they demand cause significant multiplier effect in the economies, in which they reside or spend in.** Nearly all the top-flight professional players in association sports such as the National Basketball Association (NBA) of the United States, European top-flight soccer leagues, United States baseball league and American football are multi-millionaires. So also are those playing individual sports such as athletics, tennis, golf and boxing at the world stage. These top sports performers earn their incomes from signing-on fees, winning prize money, regular salaries and product promotion endorsement contracts.

**Football stars in the English Premier League earn salaries on the average of about £20,000.00 a week. The very high paid ones earn close to £50,000.00 per week. But David Beckham was earning £90,000.00 a week at Manchester United.** Most of the best-paid soccer stars in the world however play in the Italian and Spanish national leagues. World heavy weight boxers earn tens of millions of United State dollars in just one world title bout. The Mozambican, Maria Mutola, who has dominated the world 800metres women’s track event for years, won bars of gold worth U.S.\$1 million, at the Van Damme athletics meet in Brussels in September 2003. This was for being the only athlete who won all her events at the athletic grand prix meetings for 2003. Meanwhile, she took home US\$60,000 for her world championship victory in August 2003.

Canadian Donovan Bailey won US\$500,000 in a showdown over 150metres with Michael Johnson in 1997.

**Africa and South America have become major exporters of talented soccer stars to Europe and most of these players earn huge incomes.** Many of these stars repatriate significant amounts of money home to improve the economic situation of their immediate and extended families, as well as contribute to the development of their communities. World class African sportspersons such as Haile Gebrselassie of Ethiopia, Tony Yeboah, Abedi Pele, Samuel Kuffuor and Azuma Nelson of Ghana, Peter Ndlovu of Zimbabwe, Nwankwo Kanu, Austin Okocha and Finidi George of Nigeria among others, have undertaken significant investments in their respective home countries. They have thereby contributed to the development of their countries.

**It is quite clear that sports talents (especially soccer talents) abound in Africa.** African governments must put effective policies in place to create the enabling environment to groom talents for the European market. Many of such sports persons will eventually become sources of foreign exchange and investment capital for their respective communities thereby furthering the development agenda of the African continent.

**Sports create employment for several people besides the athletes themselves.** This includes jobs for coaches, managers, agents, medical professionals, dieticians, journalists and bodyguards. All these people demand goods and services in an economy, which leads to growth and development of the economy and the society in which they live.

**Most big time professional sports clubs such as Manchester United, Real Madrid, the Chicago Bulls, Houston Rockets,** etc are major corporate organisations with some of them listed on stock exchanges with shares worth hundreds of millions of dollars each. Such sports organizations do not only provide employment in an economy for a significant number of people, but also carry out investments that contribute tremendously to economic growth and development. Apart from South Africa and some North African countries such as Egypt, Morocco, Tunisia and Algeria where soccer particularly is relatively professionally organized, the rest of Africa needs to pull up her socks in the professional management of sports to promote development.

**Sports also provide tremendous business opportunity in merchandising and in the healthcare sector in many economies.** Whole lots of manufacturing industries have emerged producing sports attires, sports equipment, sports souvenirs, health products and services for sports men, women and fans. Such industries are contributing immensely to socio-economic development in various countries around the globe.

**The mass following that most sports draw and the concomitant mass media coverage major sporting events receive in the media has created vast opportunities for television advertising and other allied businesses in many countries.** Media organisations earn lots of income from providing local, national or global satellite coverage of major tournaments such as the European champions' league, the World Cup,



the N.B.A., American football and baseball. The Organisers of major sports events sell television rights to media organizations. This serves as a major source of income to sports organizers and clubs as well. The 2000 Sydney Olympics was watched by 3.7 billion pairs of eyes and generated A\$2.4 billion worth of publicity from 1997 to 2000 for Sydney.

**Many sports events such as walks, cycling, road run, golf tournaments are organized to promote awareness about a cause and/or to raise funds for charity and causes such as HIV /AIDS, cancer research, etc.** The funds raised from such sports activities are either directly used to further the cause in question or are invested to establish an endowment or a trust fund for the specific purpose. Such funds are often used to improve the well being of the underprivileged in society. The ultimate yardstick for measuring development is the level of standard of living and well being of individuals and communities. Thus sports in aid of charity also promote development.

**The hosting of major international sporting events and festivals drives growth and development in the host countries or cities.** It is for this reason that countries and cities compete to host such major sports meets as the Olympics, the F.I.F.A. World Cup, the Rugby World Cup, the Commonwealth Games, the All Africa Games, the African Cup of Nations and the World Athletics Championships just to mention the key ones.

**Such events are very difficult to plan and organize, but they generate a lot of business in an economy in the areas of construction of new hotels, stadia, roads, game villages, provision of information technology, security, media and hospitality services.** The Salt Lake City Winter Olympics held in 2002 was expected to raise 35000 job-years of employment and to generate US\$1.5 billion income to local workers and businesses as well as to stimulate a short term economic boost of U.S.\$4.5 billion for the city in an economic recession era. It also created a surplus of U.S.\$56 million for the organizers of the Salt Lake City Winter Olympics. The 2000 Sydney Olympics resulted in a net increase of A\$ 88 million retail sales in the month of September 2000 alone. In the case of the 1996 Atlanta Olympics, retail sales in the city went up by an estimated U.S.\$2 billion. Both Barcelona and Seoul constructed Olympic villages in 1992 and 1988 respectively and these have developed into full-scale ultra modern urban centers for the two cities each.

#### *vii. Sports and Tourism*

**Tourism is not only one of the biggest foreign exchange earners of many economies, but also the engine of growth and development in several countries.** It has created millions of jobs in the hospitality, transportation and entertainment industries around the world. Sports tourism contributes billions of dollars to the global economy. Sports tourism therefore plays no mean role in the tourism equation. **The rate of growth of visitors to host Olympic cities increase on the average by 25% in the second year after each Olympic games.** The Salt Lake City winter Olympics for instance attracted 700,000 visitors in just 17 days. **Statistics for the past four summer Olympics show that, hotel room supply increased by 15%-35% in the two years leading to and**

**including the games.** According to the Australian Rugby Union (ARU), the recently held Rugby World Cup (RWC) in November 2003 would generate between A\$ 800 million to A\$ 1 billion for the Australian economy from tourism, transportation, logistics and accommodation services.

**There are no immediate figures available to determine the economic impact of the recently held All Africa Games in Abuja, Nigeria this year,** but obviously, it would have a tremendous impact on tourism, transportation, construction and other industries associated with the games in Nigeria.

*viii. The Annual Africa University International Peace Marathon Initiative*

**Africa University (AU) is a United Methodist related pan-African institution situated in a beautiful valley near Mutare, the third largest city and the jewel of the Eastern Highlands of Zimbabwe. Africa University has a mission to provide high quality holistic tertiary education that is blended with moral and ethical values for the youth of Africa.** The policy of the university is to have 60% of its students and faculty coming from other African countries, while 40% are sourced from the host country, Zimbabwe. Thus the United Methodist church established this unique university on the African continent to create a melting pot for the youth of Africa to interact, learn more about each other, learn tolerance, and establish networks that they may explore in later life to promote peace and development on the continent.

**Responding to the needs of the continent, Africa University has established an Institute of Peace Leadership and Governance (I.P.L.G.) with unique programmes offering specialization in peace, leadership and governance studies at the masters and diploma levels. In the same breadth, Africa University has also instituted the Annual Africa University International Peace Marathon to complement the I.P.L.G.**

**The Africa University International Peace Marathon is held on the last Saturday in September each year.** The timing is perfect for the weather. Being just about six weeks into each new academic year, AU students and staff tend to participate more actively in the event because of less academic pressure.

**The primary objective of the Africa University International Peace Marathon is to promote peace and development.** The annual race is organized with the support of the corporate world and is self-sustaining. The Africa University International Peace Marathon has 10 race categories that start at different points and intervals along the same route. **The race categories include the 42km main event, a 21km event, a 10km wheelchair event for the physically challenged, a 5km event for primary school going-age children and a 500meter race for pre-school children.** All these are subcategorised into the two genders. The purpose is to cater for the full demographic spectrum of society.

**During the maiden event in 2002, the Africa University International Peace Marathon brought together over 2000 athletes of different ethnicity and social class,**

**converging from all corners of Zimbabwe.** This included whites, blacks, coloured, able-bodied the physically challenged and children. It is so far the richest road race in Zimbabwe. Our ambition is to make it the richest road race in Africa, once we start raising international sponsorship. **The overall winner of the 2002 maiden race took home US\$4000 and over Zim. \$2 million cash was given out in prizes to about 150 deserving athletes as part of the development agenda of the Annual Africa University International Peace Marathon.** Africa University believes some of these winners would wisely invest their prize money in micro businesses to improve their standard of living as well as contribute to the development of their immediate communities. **We at Africa University also believe that, the discipline required to prepare for and take part in a marathon will help inculcate better self-control in the youth and thereby curb the tendency towards immorality and the scourge of HIV/AIDS in our communities.**

**The 2003 Africa University International Peace Marathon attracted over 3000 athletes. U.S.\$4000 and Zim. \$5 million were given out in prize money to over 100 athletes to further the course of poverty alleviation on the continent.** There were quite a few foreign participants in the 2003 event including a 67-year-old United States citizen who completed the 21-kilometer event and won the prize of grand master. **We are aiming at promoting the event intensively in the coming years to attract more international participation in 2004 and beyond.** It is the vision of Africa University that, **the Africa University International Peace Marathon in subsequent years will become one of the most famous sporting events on the African continent and will attract a lot of tourists to Zimbabwe and Mutare, while spreading the message of peace, unity and love on the continent and around the globe.** For those of you interested in learning more about the Africa University International Peace Marathon, you can read more about it at the Africa University website ([www.africau.edu](http://www.africau.edu)).

#### *ix. Conclusion*

**When all is said and done, one neither needs the wisdom of Solomon, nor the ingenuity of Einstein to realise the fact that, sports can be a very potent and effective mechanism for promoting peace and development,** if well harnessed. Peace is the basis of civilization. Without it, *all ye who labour labour in vain*. Violence and wars can wipe out hallmarks of development in a twinkle of an eye as we saw the Twin Towers of New York crumble under terrorist attacks. Destruction of human capital and infrastructure in Iraq during the two Gulf Wars, in Bosnia Herzegovina, in Germany by the end of World War II, in Hiroshima and Nagasaki are countless other examples of how war can decimate the legacy of development. Very wealthy and powerful people in communities have been known to have been all of a sudden reduced to refugees and living as paupers in other countries as a result of war and civil strife. Finally, sports also drive development by fathering many major industries that generate monumental business opportunities and wealth annually to promote the advancement of humankind. The challenge for Africa particularly is to take advantage of the opportunities provided by sports to explore our God-given sporting talents to promote peace and leverage the development of our continent.

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