



Zoom Platform

Background

The United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, through its Division for Inclusive Social Development (DESA/DISD) has, since 2017, housed the substantive portfolio on sport for development and peace in the UN system. Guided by the UN Action Plan on Sport, DESA has been working to maximize the positive contributions of sport through its support for inter-governmental processes, research and thought leadership, capacity development work and partnerships.

DESA/DISD organizes the present multi-stakeholder dialogue as part of these efforts and in the context of the United Nations Decade of Action to deliver the Sustainable Development Goals. The dialogue will bring together stakeholders from different sectors with diverse backgrounds and experiences to share new research and good practices and to identify challenges, opportunities and policy recommendations on a key issue: the critical role that technology can play in advancing sport as an enabler of development and peace. This topic corresponds to General Assembly Resolution on Sport as an enabler of sustainable development, which “invites Member States to work together with the United Nations system and other stakeholders to increase engagement and cooperation with one another to harness digital technology to advance sport as a tool to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals and, in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic and beyond, to support sport and physical activity at home, while broadening access to sport training and physical activity opportunities via online platforms.” The Multi-stakeholder Dialogue will also contribute to the 2021 session of the Commission for Social Development, with its focus on *Socially just transition towards sustainable development: the role of digital technologies on social development and well-being of all*.

The role of technology in advancing sport for development and peace

As recognized by the United Nations Secretary-General, sport has served as “a pioneer and promoter of inclusive and sustainable development in an unstable and unequal world.” Today, the practice of sport is deeply entwined with the use of technology, which influences how it is carried out, the equipment used, how athletes and fans travel to matches, and how it is covered by the media and enjoyed by sports fans from afar. Similarly, technology, and recently digital technology, play an increasing central role in facilitating the use of sport as a means to advance development and peace. For example, technology allows organizations across the globe to connect and exchange best practices in networks such as StreetFootball World or Laureus Sport for Good. It contributes to the creation of affordable and durable sport equipment, such as the One World Futbol. It can increase access to sport for all, including through the development of assistive technologies, such as those, promoted utilized and provided by Motivation in the UK and Jumping Kids in South Africa.

In 2020, the world had to adapt to a new reality in which the usual means of practicing sports and physical activities with others was no longer possible. Global events such as the Olympic Games or regional events such as the UEFA Euro 2020 were postponed and many community-based organizations stopped their activities. In the absence of in-person opportunities for sport and physical activity, the use of technology has become even more central in the world of sport, playing a critical role in enabling many to stay active, for example, by participating in remote online classes or utilizing dedicated fitness apps and the wearable devices. Access to such opportunities, however, has been far from universal, as 3.6 billion people, many from poor communities and in developing countries, remain offline. In some cases, other forms of technology, such as radio and television, have been used to encourage physical activity for those who lack online access. However, much work remains to overcome the world’s digital divide.

Objectives and Outcomes

The objectives of the present dialogue are as follows:

1. Take stock of contributions of technology, in its many dimensions, to sport for development and peace;
2. Share good practices;
3. Identify gaps or challenges;
4. Propose recommendations and next steps within the context of the UN Decade of Action

The outcome of the dialogue will contribute both the UN Decade of Action and to the 2021 session of the Commission for Social Development.

Format

The multi-stakeholder dialogue will be a two-hour online event, taking place from 8.30 am to 10.30 am EST on 15 December. It will consist of an introductory session in plenary with a keynote speaker and opening remarks, and explanation of the methodology (30 minutes) that will set the stage for the second part of the event, which will consist of three thematic break-out sessions, one for Member States and two for the other participants.

The thematic break-out sessions will be 40 minutes long and led by pre-selected facilitators, identified based on the theme to be discussed by each group. At the end of their discussion, each break-out group will have a 10-minute break before re-convening in plenary.

A rapporteur will also be identified by the participants of each break-up group. Discussions in each break-up group will be guided by the themes (1. **Intergovernmental dialogue on sustainable and inclusive policies and building networks (Member States)**; 2. **Sharing experiences, best practices and sustainable actions during and post-Covid19**; 3. **Innovative approaches and strategies to make the world a more inclusive**) and guiding questions.

In the final session, the plenary will be reconvened, and the thematic interventions will be briefly presented (5 minutes each for a total of 15 minutes). The presentations will be followed by open floor discussion in which participants may ask focused questions or make short comments related to the presented thematic interventions. The outcome will be to identify one or two issues to translate into voluntary commitments to be implemented throughout 2021 as part of the UN Decade of Action.

The Dialogue will end with closing remarks from UNDESA/DISD.

After the event, rapporteurs shall send their written reports to UNDESA/DISD, which will compile the information in a short report to be shared with all participants once finalized.

Guiding questions for the three break-out groups

Group A. Intergovernmental dialogue on sustainable and inclusive policies and building networks and partnerships - The group will discuss how Member States working together with the United Nations system and other stakeholders can increase engagement and cooperation with one another to harness digital technology to advance sport as a tool to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals and, in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic and beyond.

Guiding questions:

1. What examples could be shared of good practices, approaches, and sustainable policies that enhance the practice of sport and physical activities among all members of society as a means to promote physical and mental health and well-being and cultivate a sport culture in society?
2. How can the role of productive public-private partnerships for funding sport for development and peace programmes, institutional development and physical and social infrastructures be strengthened?

3. How can the United Nations Department for Economic and Social Affairs help elaborate them in partnership with various stakeholders to break new ground?
4. What priority steps (2-3) could be taken within the context of the UN Decade of Action to support the role of technology in advancing sport for development and peace?

Group B. Sharing experiences, best practices and sustainable actions regarding how technology can advance sport for development and peace during and post-COVID-19 – The group will exchange good practices and suggest actions and solutions on how technology can advance sport for development and peace post the present pandemic.

Guiding questions:

1. Sport for all people, of all ages and abilities, is a social activity that brings all people together and is a powerfully unifying tool for development and peace. What experiences and best practices can be shared regarding how traditional technologies, ICTs and digital technologies are being used and/or can be used to advance sport for development and peace during and post COVID-19?
2. In considering how the world of sport may emerge from the COVID-19 pandemic, what would be key options and sustainable actions digital technology can play to create a new era of sport and physical activities for the well-being of all?
3. How can the United Nations Department for Economic and Social Affairs DESA help elaborate them in partnership with various stakeholders to break new ground?
4. What priority steps (2-3) could be taken within the context of the UN Decade of Action to support the role of technology in advancing sport for development and peace?

Group C: Innovative approaches and strategies to make the world a more inclusive place – the group will discuss how technology can advance sport for development and peace in a more inclusive and accessible manner

Guiding questions:

1. Data analytics can enrich the sport and physical activity experience. How can data contribute to finding innovative solutions to make sport more inclusive and accessible leaving no country and no one behind?
2. How does the digital divide impact the sport sector and what can be done to reduce the gap?
3. How can technology make sport more inclusive and facilitate networks and partnerships among the private/public/civil society?
4. How can the United Nations Department for Economic and Social Affairs DESA help elaborate them in partnership with various stakeholders to break new ground?
5. What priority steps (2-3) could be taken within the context of the UN Decade of Action to support the role of technology in advancing sport for development and peace?