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**Statement by H.E. Mrs. Frances Rodrigues,
Ambassador and Permanent Representative of the Republic of Mozambique
to the United Nations Office in Geneva**

**2nd INTERNATIONAL FORUM ON SPORT FOR PEACE AND DEVELOPMENT
Keynote address
Quality Physical Education for All**

Your Royal Highness,

H. E. Pál Schmitt,
President of the Republic of Hungary;

Mr. Kassym-Jomart Tokayev
Director General of the United Nations Office at Geneva,

Mr. Wilfried Lemke,
Special Advisor of the United Nations Secretary General on Sport for Development and
Peace,

Dr. Jacques Rogge,
President of the International Olympic Committee,

Thank you
Your Royal Highness,
Excellencies,

Ladies and gentlemen,

First of all, I wish to express my happiness for the great privilege accorded to me to take part in the 2nd International Forum on Sport for Peace and Development. Indeed, this is an honour to me and to my country Mozambique.

I also wish to express our gratitude to H.E. Pál Schmitt, President of Hungary. As a former Olympic medallist, it is only befitting that he has found time to share with us his wisdom on how to use sports to foster developmental and peace, hence ensuring sports contribution to international endeavours towards the eradication of poverty.

I express my gratitude to Mr. Wilfried LEMKE, Special Advisor to United Nations Secretary General on Sport for Development and Peace for the invitation he addressed to me.

You and your predecessor, Adolf Ogi, the Former President of Swiss Confederation, deserve our collective acknowledgment for having paved the road so that we could once again proudly carry on the torch that illuminates our minds as we foster the advancement of sport as an important tool for social change.

I also wish to pay tribute to The International Olympic Committee and President Dr. Jacques Rogge for their commitment and for convening the Second Forum on Sport for Peace and Development.

Today's subject is passionate because it deals with our health, our well-being, our children and their well-being. It deals with our behaviour and emotions, our personality and character. It deals with gender, disabilities and discrimination in general, our tradition and culture. It deals with peace and development. In a nutshell, it deals with our civilisation as human beings!

I say with confidence that the advocacy of the theme of sports for all, as we see it today, is an international social movement. And we bet to remain relentless until the goal of a world in move is absolutely fulfilled.

As you may recall, the First Forum took place in Lausanne, where important decisions were taken on how to maximize the `impact of sports through partnership with the United Nations in searching for peace and in achieving the United Nations Millennium Goals.

We shall be cognizant of the need to build upon those decisions and renew our resolve to use sport as a catalyst for achieving the Millennium Developing Goals, thus contributing to peace, and to social and economic development.

Actually, this meeting serves as a moment of renewal to our commitments to mainstream physical education and sport in order to achieve universal primary education, promote gender equality, improve health, prevent HIV/AIDS and other diseases, preserve environment and contribute for global partnership for development and against poverty.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Let me refer to Plato when he said "the lack of activity harm and negatively affect the good condition of every human being". By contrast – he added – "the movement and methodical physical exercise cultivate and preserve it".

This is an ancient wisdom through which Plato was enlightening the humanity on the fact that sport is inherent to human existence. This ancient wisdom tended to gradually be forgotten, and therefore bringing a crisis on physical education and sport.

There was a widespread decline and marginalisation of physical education and sport throughout the world.

The International Charter of Physical Education and Sport adopted by UNESCO in 1978, was not being fully implemented. This landmark policy instrument declared the universal entitlement to access to physical education and sport as a fundamental right.

The World Summit on Physical Education and Sport held in Berlin, Germany in 1999 took stock of the prevailing reality and adopted the Berlin Program of Action on Sport and Physical Education.

Since then, a multiplication of initiatives and activities took place and were designed to reverse the tide and restore Physical Education and Sport to its right place.

Among them, the Costa Rica and Greece Meetings and the decision of the UN Secretary General to create the Post of Special Advisor on Sport for Development in International Development Policy were pivotal. The Declaration of 2005 as the International Year of Sport and Physical Education (IYSPE) was a turning point.

Our concerted efforts paid off. A fundamental change has occurred. Today there is a growing consensus around the world indicating that physical education and sports warrant serious consideration and attention and are one of the approaches to development and peace promotion.

Physical education and sport are essential means to enhancing the quality of life, health and well-being of all persons, regardless of their ability, disability, sex, age, cultural, racial, ethnic, and religious or social backgrounds.

They help to improve health by reducing diseases linked to obesity and sedentary life style, like heart disease, hypertension, certain forms of cancer and depression.

Ladies and gentlemen,

A policy of investment in physical education and sport can lead to job creation, and combat unemployment and poverty by promoting better standards of living.

Job creation will contribute for the economic integration of the vulnerable sectors of the community and will help eliminate social tensions more effectively, thus maintaining a peaceful social climate that is essential to socio-economic development in the framework of a culture of peace.

Sport contribution to peace is evident. It provides an ethical and social foundation for the spirit of fair play, mutual respect, gender equality, solidarity and mutual understanding, which are essential for the creation of a culture of peace.

Development of Physical education and sports contributes to the prevention of violence and juvenile delinquency and the impact on a child's social and moral development. It can be catalytic for cultural innovations and way of living, for the protection of environment through preservation and raising its awareness.

Through role model physical education and sport play a role in cultivating leadership and altruism among youths.

Physical education and sports can enhance cognitive, academic achievements and social development. Once sport is introduced, school attendance increases because it acts as an inducement to school and consequently contributes to the decline in the number of drop outs.

As Pierre de Coubertin, the founder of the International Olympic Committee once put it "sports can develop a new type of person, healthy in body and mind, sociable and free."

For that, governments have to put in place enabling policies and regulations to sustain the promotion of physical education and sport.

Unfortunately, we are still facing a gap between policy conception and policy implementation.

The situation is essentially typified by modest change mainly in developing countries and mixed outcomes in others.

In some cases Girls and young people with disabilities still face barriers. Women should be properly represented among athletes, coaches and sports managers and should participate on equal footing in all national, regional and international events.

In many countries sport development is usually not a top priority in the national budget or in the education system.

Less developed countries are unable to utilise the talent of their athletes and tend to lose the best of them to more powerful nations. It can thus contribute to what it is known as "muscle drain".

As we pursue the goals of sports for all, concurrently we shall also fulfill the goals of physical education for all.

Strengthening the quality of physical education and sport will be achieved by addressing:

- development of international quality indicators for Physical Education and Sport
- the Appraisal of training structures to facilitate assistance
- the expansion of Physical Education and Sport to all primary schools

- development of human resources
- University status for Physical Education and Sport teachers training.

As we move forward with physical education for all, we should strive to narrow the gap and reduce inequalities between developed and developing countries particularly in training, dissemination and exchange of information. We are pleased to note that pilot projects on quality indicators have been designed for Africa.

International cooperation is crucial. It allows the exchange of information on good practices and efficient ways to overcome difficulties.

Forms of cooperation and consultation in the field of physical education and sports at the national, regional and international level should be strengthened.

All Stakeholders, Intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, the public and private sectors, and international financial institutions should strengthen their cooperation in the promotion and development of physical education as an integral part of life long education.

Donor countries and international organizations should be encouraged to recognize as valid recipient of Official Development Assistance those programs and activities using sport and physical education as tools for educational, economic and social development.

Financial institutions should accord the required importance to physical education and sport understanding that expenditure in physical education and sport are profitable investments and therefore they should not be neglected when funding education and health.

We have our eyes and minds set on the next meeting of experts on Physical Education and Sport to take place in Paris next June, including the assessment of the impact of the international economic and financial crisis.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

In Mozambique, since independence we have been embracing the ideals of Physical Education For All along side with Education For All programs.

We encountered hurdles in the process. The major one was the prolonged war that ravaged the country for sixteen years. Even though, we continued to implement programs for training teachers in physical education and sports. As well as stimulating sports at all levels of the Education system.

We established an Institute for higher learning in physical education and sports and one University with a curriculum program on training of the teachers for physical education and sports, as well as the creation of the Ministry of Sports.

We hold regularly national school games involving all schools.

Is our Government policy that whenever a new school is built, sports premises should be included. In those cases that sport premises are not built, a plot adjacent to school shall be set aside for future construction.

Recently we just constructed a National Sports Stadium, the first of a kind since independence.

Under the Sport for All program, a Sports Center called Olympafrika was created by the Mozambique National Olympic Committee in a community in the outskirts of Maputo to promote the concept, philosophy and the values of Olympism. It is a shining example on how sports can contribute in addressing poverty, exclusion, unemployed and delinquency; on how sports can promote education for all and contribute to peace.

The Center trains disadvantaged youths, thus keeping them away from deviant behavior and delinquency, it employs members of the community and provides vocational training on the manufacture of sports goods. It also runs a program on environmental awareness through sports.

I would like to take this opportunity to express our gratitude to the International Olympic Committee and to the Association of National Olympic Committees of Africa for their cooperation and to all our partners in sports, particularly Brazil, Portugal and the UK.

Before I conclude, I would like to mention that Mozambicans are very proud to host next September the 10th All African Games. You are all welcome to this special event of sports, partnership, solidarity and friendship in Africa!

Ladies and Gentlemen,

We are aware that the upholding of the cause of Quality Physical Education for All is challenging and costly. But its benefits will have a strong impact for the achievement of the MDGs.

Acting otherwise will be more costly for today's and future generation.

I thank you all.

Geneva, 10 May 2011