



**Kofi Annan**  
FOUNDATION



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## Kofi Annan: We must use the power of sport as an agent of social change

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**Former UN Secretary-General calls for the international community to increase efforts to use sport as a tool to fight poverty, heal divisions and protect our planet.**

*Dubai* - In an address today to the SportAccord International Convention, former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan will recognise the impressive efforts being made around the world to use sport as a positive force, and call for increased partnership between the sporting community, development agencies, civil society and the private sector to maximise its impact for good.

Annan will argue that sport is vital to the health and strength of our societies. Citing the critical role that sportsmen and women and sporting organisations have played in unifying societies torn apart by conflict, tackling prejudice on issues such as HIV/Aids and in breaking down gender inequality, Annan will say that sport brings our world together in a way few, if any other activity, can manage. "It has an almost unmatched role to play in promoting understanding, healing wounds, mobilising support for social causes, and breaking down barriers", he will say.

A passionate football fan, Annan will highlight the importance of the FIFA World Cup for his home continent this year saying: "Just as sport helps undermine myths and prejudices for individuals and groups, I believe this summer will have the same impact on a continent-wide scale. A highly successful tournament will help alter perceptions and play its part in increasing investment and support. It will underline the rich talent and potential there is in Africa not just in football but in every area if the right framework is put in place".

From Liberia to Columbia, from Sudan to Georgia, Annan will reflect on the power of sport to bring people together. He will call on all of us, from the individual to the inter-governmental level to work together to build on these projects, to learn the lessons of what works and provide encouragement to expand successful initiatives within communities and countries.

Annan will state: "There is a huge amount of good work going on. We now need to maintain the momentum and build upon what has been achieved so far to tackle poverty, hunger, diseases, protect our planet and extend opportunity. With clear

goals and renewed effort, we can achieve together a great deal more in the years to come to harness the potential of sport to improve lives across our planet”.

**– Ends –**

**Contact**

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**Notes to Editors**

- Mr. Annan will deliver closing remarks entitled ‘The role of sport as an agent of social change’ at the SportAccord International Convention in Dubai on Thursday 29 April 2010.
- Kofi Annan served two terms, from 1997 to 2006, as UN Secretary-General. In 2001, Annan and the United Nations were jointly awarded the Nobel Prize for Peace. Since leaving the United Nations, Kofi Annan has established a Foundation through which he continues to provide leadership on critical global issues, particularly preserving and building peace and facilitating more equitable sharing of the benefits of globalization, by promoting poverty alleviation, good governance, human rights and the rule of law. Please visit: [www.kofiannanfoundation.org](http://www.kofiannanfoundation.org)