



UNITED NATIONS OFFICE ON  
SPORT FOR DEVELOPMENT AND PEACE

Villa La Pelouse  
Palais des Nations  
CH- 1211 Geneva  
Telephone: +41 22 917 27 14  
Fax: +41 22 917 07 12  
E-mail: [wlemke@unog.ch](mailto:wlemke@unog.ch)  
Website: [www.un.org/sport](http://www.un.org/sport)

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To whom it may concern,

In my capacity as Special Adviser to the United Nations Secretary-General on Sport for Development and Peace, I hereby express my support for the initiatives undertaken by APAID in the field of Sport and Disability.

Against the background of the *UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities*, non-governmental organizations such as APAID constitute eminent stakeholders in enhancing the quality of life for people with physical and intellectual disabilities, thereby illustrating the power of sport in fulfilling the basic rights postulated by the Convention.

APAID's approach of implementing capacity-building sports programmes which aim at the inclusion of persons with disabilities is an effective means of empowering those with whom they work. By providing expertise and assistance to already existing sports programmes, APAID enables persons with disabilities to develop the skills they need to advocate for and influence change. APAID's activities help in changing misconceptions about persons with disabilities and are important for the role they play in reducing stigma which is often linked to unfounded stereotypes, inaccurate assumptions, negative perceptions and prejudice. Through sport, APAID is helping build more inclusive communities and therefore greater social cohesion and cooperation.

I commend the efforts of APAID and sincerely hope that an increasing proportion of Sport for Development and Peace initiatives will integrate a disability component to ensure a consistent and concerted effort is made to reach out and change the lives of persons living with disabilities.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "W. Lemke".

Wilfried Lemke

Under-Secretary-General

Special Adviser to the Secretary-General  
on Sport for Development and Peace

APAID - France  
Lycée de l'Île Jeanty  
Rue Waeteraere  
59140 Dunkerque  
France

APAID - The Netherlands  
Gluckstraat 41  
5011 VE Tilburg  
The Netherlands