

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation



Collective consultation aimed at creating an international
platform for the promotion and development
of traditional sports and games

Paris, 13 March 2006
UNESCO Headquarters

At the initiative of UNESCO, a collective consultation of NGOs, IGOs, Government representatives and experts met to explore the way and means to improve the issues related to the promotion and development of traditional sport and games (TSG).

The meeting aims at contributing to build momentum on the outcomes of MINEPS IV held in Athens in 2004, the Maggigen Call to Action in 2005 and UNESCO's 33rd session of the General Conference which adopted Resolution 21 on the Organization's perspectives regarding the challenge of TSG (see attached).

The present report fixes and frames the objectives being pursued by the Section of Physical Education and Sport which will continue to monitor and supervise the outcomes of this collective consultation to be consider as a "draft road map" for the perspectives agreed upon.

Summary of interventions by attendants

The organisations and experts present at the meeting each had the opportunity to present their work and experiences. The following represents a summary of the main items of the meeting that were raised, and which found a consensus among the participants and chaired by Mr. Djibril Diallo.

1) All actions to be envisaged must a scientific basis rooted in research and empirical experience. One of the main tasks will be to catalogue not just the existing Traditional Sport and Games (TSG) themselves, but also to define their typical features, and to assess how TSG can be used in various contexts (education, culture, environment conservation, sport competitions). At the same time, TSG are not static, but evolve. TSG should not be "put in a museum", rather they should be perceived as living culture.

2) UNESCO and all organisations involved in this field must work together to create an awareness for TSG as being a part of human cultural heritage, and cooperation must be sought with the institutions that are already working in this field. The strategic goal would be to mainstream TSG into such existing activities.

3) All actors should do their best to promote TSG in schools, as examples from various countries have shown that TSG can be an effective and culturally sensitive way of designing physical education lessons with relatively little and "low-tech" means.

4) The values carried by TSG, which include first and foremost solidarity, peaceful resolution of disputes and conflicts, diversity, inclusiveness, respect, and cultural awareness, should be promoted as one of their distinctive features. One aspect that was pointed out was the fact that TSG can be used as link between generations, where juniors are learning from seniors.

5) All actors must be cognisant of the fact TSG can also be misused for chauvinism and nationalism, and that such tendencies should not be ignored. TSG could find

themselves in the midst of political conflicts that can be summarised under the heading "Hopes of integration via promotion of TSG as cultural heritage vs. Fears of disintegration via use of TSG to serve nationalistic agendas".

Pragmatic approach / Suggested action steps

1) Coordination and leadership of initiative should be undertaken by UNESCO, as a neutral body.

2) A "bottom-up" approach is better than a "top-down" one, which means that future initiatives should be planned and carried on the basis of existing ones, of which there are numerous examples (e.g, by TAFISA, ISCA, IATW, ISHPES, and others).

3) The focus should be placed on actions that can be achieved with the means at our disposal.

4) As a first step, the organisations and experts present at the meeting could be considered as an informal Coordinating Committee for Traditional Sports and Games (CCTSG) under leadership of UNESCO, of which one of the main tasks would be to work towards the establishment of a formal umbrella organisation specifically concerned with TSG.

5) Activity areas for the CCTSG could be: research (ethnological approach) / cataloguing of ludodiversity, / promotion of practice in its cultural context / make games available (factsheets, website, textbooks, other publications, etc.)

6) Strategic goal for the CCTSG could be: "To establish TSG as part of the Intangible Heritage of Humanity"

7) Immediate measures for the CCTSG could be the creation of website, with information provided by experts, literature, links, organisation profiles, existing projects, etc...

8) Regular meetings of the CCTSG, perhaps in the context of UNESCO/CIGEPS meetings, should be envisaged and convened.

9) The popularisation of the goals, visions and concepts of the CCTSG would fall within the responsibility of the individual organisations and experts that compose it.

10) The CCTSG should work towards the staging of a large international congress on TSG (date to be defined). One of the goals of the Congress could be the creation of an International Council (as a formal organisation) on TSG.

Chair: Djibril Diallo, UN Office, New York, for Sport for Peace and Development

Reporters: Christophe Mailliet, Executive Director ICSSPE.

Secretariat: Marcellin Dally, In Charge of Physical Education and Sport Programme, UNESCO

Participants: see attached list and contacts

Next meeting of the CCTSG: November 2006, Kazakhstan