



International Conference of Ministers and Senior Officials responsible for Physical Education and Sport

The 3rd Conference of Ministers and Senior Officials responsible for Physical Education and Sport (MINEPS III) was held in Punta del Este, Uruguay, from 30 November to 3 December 1999.

In his speech during the opening ceremony in the presence of the Head of State of Uruguay, Julio María Sanguinetti, the IOC President recalled that *“each sovereign state has the constitutional responsibility to provide for the education of its people and ensure their well-being. As a result, the contribution by the Olympic Movement is merely complementary to the efforts made by governments. That is why the National Olympic Committees must maintain excellent relations with their respective governments, in particular with the ministries of youth, sports, national education, health and environment. Sports practice today is a universal phenomenon. However, it is anything but a priority in countries facing socio-economic and political problems. It is thus*

important to address the issues of this reality by at the same time increasing our policy of technical and financial assistance to the most disadvantaged nations and encouraging sports development at a world-wide level.

The IOC has responded to this phenomenon by establishing a policy of technical and financial assistance for all the National Olympic Committees, and in particular the most disadvantaged, by contributing to the development of Olympic education, sport and culture. Sport must help to produce enlightened men and women who are capable of generous initiatives for the benefit of society. But unfortunately, the trend is for physical education to be reduced on the programmes of schools and universities all over the world, under the pressure of budget restrictions and preference given to other subjects.

Yet this trend may have important consequences for the all-round education of young people. Our desire to do more and do better for human

development must not hide the fact that our role and our means are limited. But our goodwill will never be found wanting.”

The Conference, which concluded with the adoption of a Declaration (see inset), was organized under the responsibility of Julio César Maglione, president of the Physical Education Commission of Uruguay, president of the UNESCO Intergovernmental Committee for Physical Education and Sport (CIGEPE) and IOC member. The two previous Conferences were held in 1976 in Paris and in 1988 in Moscow. CIGEPE, made up of 18 Member States of UNESCO, also met in Punta del Este. The IOC currently chairs the Permanent Consultative Council of CIGEPE, composed of inter- and non-governmental organizations. The new Director General of UNESCO, Koïchiro Matsuura from Japan, closed the Conference by undertaking to support the development of sport and physical education worldwide.

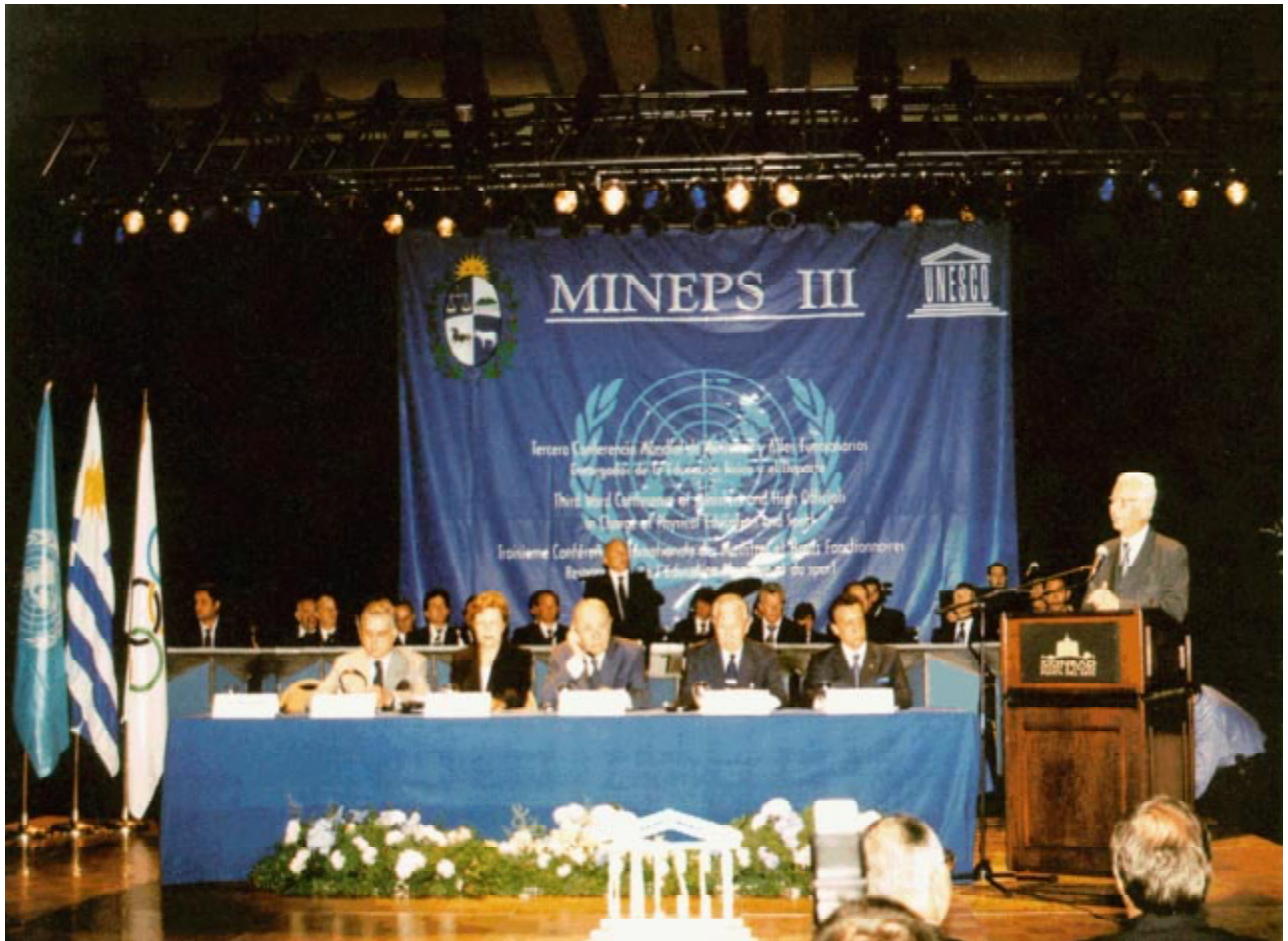
Punta del Este declaration

1. On the threshold of a new millennium, the third International Conference of Ministers and Senior Officials responsible for Physical Education and Sport (MINEPS III) met in Punta del Este (Uruguay) from 30 November to 3 December 1999. In a spirit of true global cooperation and mutual understanding, the participants adopted this Declaration

intended to mobilize governments, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations and individuals throughout the world.

2. The Ministers reiterate the importance of physical education and sport as an essential element and an integral part in the process of continuing education and human and social development. These activities can

also contribute to social cohesion, mutual tolerance and the integration of different ethnic and cultural minorities at a time when migration concerns all continents. They underline the importance of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) as a focal point for sport and physical education in the United Nations system.



The opening ceremony of MINEPS III. (on the front row, from l. to r.) Yamandu Fau, Kaisa Savolainen, Julio María Sanguinetti, the IOC President, Julio César Maglione and Francisco Mesa (at the podium).

3. In this era of globalization, the Ministers note the need for renewed effort for North-South dialogue and cooperation, and urge donor countries and international financial bodies to recognize sport and physical education as powerful tools for development with a view to reducing the gap between the developed and developing countries, and to provide resources for this through official development assistance programmes. They also note the need, and request UNESCO's support, for the inclusion of physical education and sport as Human development

indicators by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) at the same level as education, health and the environment.

4. They are deeply concerned to note that, in spite of the expansion of elite sport and sport for all programmes in recent years, opportunities for children to participate in physical education have been significantly curtailed. It is noted that the time required for physical education in schools is not being respected and is even being substantially reduced in many countries because of changing priorities. The

reduction of physical education programmes, they note, has contributed to the phenomenal rise in juvenile delinquency and violence, and rising medical and social costs. Studies undertaken at international levels indicate that \$1 invested in physical activity leads to a saving of \$3.2 in medical costs. In this context, they endorse the Berlin Agenda for Action adopted by the World Summit on Physical Education in 1999 and encourage Member States to ensure that sport and physical education are incorporated in school programmes or, as a mini-

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mum, that their legal requirements with respect to physical education programmes in school curricula are being met.

5. The Ministers note that, although substantial progress has been made worldwide, women are still underrepresented as participants, coaches, officials and decision-makers in sport. They urge Member States and sports bodies to undertake a course of action to raise the involvement of girls and women in physical education and sport in all capacities at regional, national and local levels, using the 1979 United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women and the 1994 Brighton Declaration on Women and Sport as reference documents.

6. The Ministers underscore the importance of promoting lifelong sport and ensuring that sport and physical activity programmes are made available to elderly persons and persons with disabilities.

7. The Ministers emphasize the ethical values of sport and urge all countries, both developed and developing, to work together to combat unethical behaviour, including doping in sport. They appreciate the initiative of the International Olympic Committee (IOC) in establishing the World Anti-doping Agency (WADA) and emphasize the important role of all governments in WADA and in eliminating doping in sport in general. They further encourage this Agency to assist developing countries in their efforts to fight against doping in sport. UNESCO's role in this field should concentrate on information and education in particular.

8. The Ministers support a policy of preserving and enhancing traditional indigenous sports based on the cultural heritage of regions and nations, including a "worldwide list of traditional games and sports", and of encouraging the holding of regional and world festivals.

9. The Ministers note that in the coming millennium UNESCO should play a leading role as a catalyst organization to reinforce global cooperation, based on the fact that physical education and sport can play a significant role in the socio-economic development of all countries. They urge UNESCO, in conjunction with other United Nations specialized agencies and the IOC, to prepare a comprehensive programme for financial and technical assistance to the developing countries.

10. The Ministers urge the Director General of UNESCO to allocate sufficient financial and human resources and to reinforce the structure within the UNESCO Secretariat in the field of physical education and sport.

11. The Ministers encourage the Director General of UNESCO to promote periodic regional meetings of senior officials and experts from Member States under the auspices of the Intergovernmental Committee for Physical Education and Sport (CIGEPS).

12. In order to ensure progress, the Ministers recommend to the Director General of UNESCO the holding of a Round Table of Ministers of Sport and Physical Education at the 31st session of the General Conference of UNESCO with a view to undertaking an interim review of follow-up action to MINEPS III.

13. The Ministers recognize the important role that non-governmental organizations play in promoting physical education and sport as an instrument for achieving social cohesion and democracy, and encourage Member States to strengthen their partnership with NGOs in the development of programmes and policies relating to sport and physical education.

14. They underscore the important role the media can play, especially in creating public awareness of the crucial social and economic contribution of sport and physical education to the well-being of a nation and its people.

15. The Ministers reaffirm their commitment to work in unison and with devotion to promote a Culture of Peace with the help of sport and to seek support for their efforts from the highest political level. They welcome the unanimous adoption of a resolution on the Olympic Truce by the United Nations General Assembly at its fifty-fourth session and reaffirm their resolve to promote peace, dialogue and reconciliation beyond the Olympic Games period.

16. The Ministers request the Director General of UNESCO to transmit the Declaration of Punta del Este to the Secretary General of the United Nations so that it can be taken into account in the framework of the International Year for the Culture of Peace (2000) and in the programme of the International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence for the Children of the World (2001-2010).