



## CONTRIBUTIONS OF PHYSICAL EDUCATION AND SPORT TO THE ACHIEVEMENT OF THE UN 2030 AGENDA SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

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The article summarizes the 17 priority goals of the United Nations on sustainable development in the 2030 Agenda. These goals are to save the planet, care for its ecosystems and increase the quality of life of people around the world. In addition to the systematic approach to the objectives of the 2030 Agenda, the article highlights the link between physical education and sport and the development possibilities of society in other fields, so that the theory can materialize in practice. Their parallel presentation, in this format, is a strong enough motivation to draw attention to the field of interest and understand it much more deeply and demonstrates that physical education and sport represent a complex system with values, specific means and valences, which, properly valued and used in an ingenious way become viable ways to achieve the 17 goals of sustainable development.

**Keywords:** physical education; sports; sustainable development; objectives.

The United Nations is the most important organization in the world, whose priority missions are: to ensure world peace; to facilitate cooperation among states of the world; to mediate possible conflicts between them; to guarantee and to respect fundamental human rights and freedom, as well as sustainable development, a concept that refers to the existence of a permanent mediation between economic and social progress, while protecting the natural balance of the Earth.

Physical education and sport, the values and means of these activities, used in a smart and interesting way, become sustainable levers that serve sustainable development, thus managing to help achieve each goal contained in the current strategy of the United Nations. Thus, the objectives of this article start from the need to know the possible involvement of physical education and sport in all other social branches, to understand this field as a vector or link between all areas that promote social evolution, and to deepen the objectives of the 2030 Agenda as benchmarks for future management of physical education and sports.

### **The dimensions of sustainable development, basic pillars of guaranteeing a good-quality living for all the inhabitants of the planet**

Sustainable development represents "the development that seeks to meet the needs of the present, without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs"<sup>1</sup>. Starting from the basic idea of this concept, mainly to guarantee the quality of life for all the inhabitants of the planet, both now and in the future, the UN is constantly concerned with identifying solutions and taking measures to guide the evolution of human society, the economic and social process in the future, by generating sets of values that concern man, the individual, one's current needs and those of future generations, in conjunction with the protection of the natural environment and the conservation of our planet's ecosystems. In this regard, on 25 September 2015, at the UN Special Summit held in New York, Resolution A/RES/70/1 "Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development - Transforming Our World" was adopted, which aims to fulfill 17 objectives (SDGs) on sustainable development, 169 complementary targets, general and universal objectives and also the balance between the three defining dimensions of sustainable development: the social dimension, the economic dimension and the environmental dimension. The three pillars

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underpinning the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development have been defined since 1987 in the Brundtland Commission Report<sup>2</sup>:

*The social dimension (of social equity)* ensures basic needs for quality of life such as employment by creating new jobs, food, providing utilities (water, energy, sewerage) in under- and middle-developed countries.

*The economic dimension (of economic growth)* is necessary for developing nations to reduce the gaps in quality of life compared to developed countries.

*The environmental dimension (environmental protection and preservation)* envisages the gradual change of the way of development and the use of new, ecological technologies that protect and conserve the environment and improve the available natural resource base. The document has direct implications for the internal and external policies of the world's states, and all countries and stakeholders are mobilized to carry out this very ambitious project. This resolution, paragraph 37, states that "Physical activity and sport are an important factor in sustainable development. We recognize their growing contribution to the achievement of development and peace, to the promotion of tolerance and respect and the contribution they make to the empowerment of women and youth in communities, and to the achievement of health, education and social inclusion goals"<sup>3</sup>.

### **Physical education and sport, vectors with major potential for sustainable development**

In the UN vision, physical education and sport are activities with great potential in sustainable development, which can be constructively involved in achieving all the objectives (17 objectives) of the UN 2030 Agenda<sup>4</sup>: eradicating poverty; eradicating starvation; health and well-being; quality education; gender equality; clean water and sanitation; clean and affordable energy; decent work and economic growth; industry, innovation and infrastructure; reduced inequalities; sustainable cities and communities; responsible consumption and production; climate stabilization actions; aquatic life; terrestrial life; peace, justice and efficient institutions; partnerships to achieve the objectives.

In this presentation, objectives of Agenda 2030 – physical education and sports, I indicated

in parallel, in summary, following the study of the main current bibliographic resources, my personal vision on the chances of further integration of physical education and sports in all social fields.

*The eradication of poverty*, in any context, form and geographical area, is an objective aiming to drastically reduce the number of people living in extreme poverty, to stimulate the co-optation of those able to work in the labor market, to develop a system of protection and social assistance. Physical education and sport, through specific skills and values, can play an important role in eradicating poverty and creating a long-term, sustainable and prosperous life. Thus, part of the revenues obtained through specific actions (demonstration matches, sports competitions, auctions with objects of some personalities from the phenomenon), advertising and other activities that produce money, can be used in programs and partnerships to achieve this noble goal.

*The eradication of the phenomenon of starvation* is an objective that aims at a sustainable and efficient development of the agro-food sector, food security, as well as improved nutrition based on products from sustainable agriculture. The efficiency of this sector has important effects in improving and increasing the quality of life of people and ensuring a civilized life for all citizens, as well as encouraging organic production. Through specific educational initiatives, the field of physical education and sport provides support in eradicating malnutrition and combating obesity and can also be a model for healthy eating and food security by choosing, promoting serious and responsible producers and addressing the impact of food waste. Activities specific to this field have the power to change people's behaviors, channeling them to a sustainable future.

Health and well-being. Guaranteeing a healthy life, ensuring and promoting the well-being of people at any age. The main objective is to reduce the mortality rate (especially for children), to reduce the incidence of viral and infectious diseases, as well as chronic pathologies. The aim is also to prevent and treat drugs and other harmful substances addictions and to treat mental illness. Practicing physical activities and thus, adopting an active lifestyle result in a positive mood, increasing self-confidence, reducing stress levels, important factors resulting in people's health and well-



being. Physical education and sport can be used successfully in health education and the concept of healthy and active living.

*Quality of education.* Ensuring a good quality of education and promoting lifelong learning opportunities for all. This objective aims in particular to ensure that all children have access to a quality education system, regardless of resource possibilities, geographical area or ethnicity, and to reduce school dropout. Moreover, there is a desire for a significant increase of the number of individuals, both young and adults with different professional skills necessary to obtain a decent job or to develop entrepreneurial activities. Quality education results in the acquisition of the knowledge and skills necessary to promote the sustainable development of society. Physical education and sports have a strong motivational role for children and young people, encouraging them to participate in classical, formal and informal education, helping them to improve their learning outcomes and increase their academic performance. Physical education and sport have the quality of creating opportunities for learning outside of school, helping to form and educate key life skills and values, such as tolerance, self-sacrifice, self-help and camaraderie.

*Gender equality.* Achieving gender equality and strengthening the empowerment of women in society. The aims of this objective are to prevent and combat violence against women, their unrestricted access and equal opportunities in obtaining employment and leading public, economic and political positions. On this point, physical education and sport play an important role in training and equipping women and young people with knowledge, skills and abilities, stimulating their progress in contemporary society and resulting in the elimination of discrimination against them. Gender equality is also promoted through physical and sports activities.

*Clean water and sanitation.* To ensure the availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all. The objective aims to increase the standard of living and quality of life by ensuring civilized sanitation and hygiene conditions (public services, water and sewerage networks), especially those in vulnerable situations, compliance with international standards on drinking water management, water recycling waste and also increase the efficiency of the water use process,

encouraging recycling and reuse to address the problem of water scarcity. Within the activities specific to the field of physical education and sports (swimming, rowing, etc.) specific actions can be promoted on improving water quality, reducing discharges of pollutants and recycling of wastewater. Also, a first step that can serve as a model in water management is to increase the efficiency of water use in sports complexes and facilities.

*Clean and affordable energy.* To ensure everyone's access to affordable energy in a safe, sustainable and modern way. This objective aims to increase the comfort and quality of life by ensuring unrestricted access to energy sources for all individuals and communities. It also aims to protect the environment through increased transfer to alternative sources that use renewable energy and low hydrocarbon fuels. The field of Physical Education and Sport can play an important role in achieving the objectives of using renewable energy, increasing energy efficiency and access to clean energy by applying and complying with industry standards and recommendations. Through specific activities, actions and campaigns can be initiated to support ensuring free access to energy, for all people and communities.

*Decent work and economic growth.* To promote sustained, open and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all. This objective aims at: sustainable economic growth; permanent creation of new job vacancies; entrepreneurship; technological modernization and innovation, ensuring decent working conditions for all citizens, regardless of age; inclusion of people with disabilities in the workplace; fair remuneration and access to various sources of funding. Also, this objective promotes cultural diversity, products with zonal and local specificity, respect for customs and traditions, for the particular environment in which we live. The values of physical education and sport can play an important role in promoting sustainable and constant economic growth by eliminating all forms of discrimination and relating production and employment to specific labor standards, resulting in the creation of multiple employment opportunities, employment and skills development skills.

*Industry, innovation and infrastructure.* To build resilient infrastructure, to promote sustainable industrialization and to encourage innovation. This

objective aims for the quality development and sustainable infrastructure to support economic progress and increase the quality of life of all people, modernize infrastructure and make industries profitable through refurbishment based on environmentally friendly methods, develop scientific research and increase the number of employees in this field, intensify collaboration of the state with the private market, encouraging innovation. Physical education and sport can stimulate innovative approaches to industrialization and can constructively inspire research and innovation processes. The contribution of sport-specific activities to this goal can be materialized by ensuring equitable access to sports infrastructure and also by supporting the construction of new gyms and modern sports facilities.

*Reduced inequalities.* To reduce inequalities within and from one country to another. This objective aims to reduce the gaps, eliminate all discrimination and initiate policies on the progressive achievement of equality between states and between people, in all areas (fiscal, wage, educational and social protection), promote social values such as equality, tolerance, diversity, social inclusion, regardless of geographical area, age, sex, race, ethnicity, origin, sexual orientation, gender, religion, social status, having the opportunity to successfully resolve the elimination of inequalities and injustices; and in hard-to-reach areas, thus integrating human communities.

*Sustainable cities and communities.* Development of cities and human settlements so that they are open to all, safe, resilient and sustainable. The aim is to ensure the necessary conditions for a dignified life for all people, both urban and rural, through access to basic services and efficient public transport, all at affordable costs, the protection and conservation of cultural heritage and the reduction of negative impact on the environment. Physical education and sport can serve to overcome obstacles and barriers of any kind, from the environment, transport or public services by ensuring unrestricted access for all to its facilities and helping those in vulnerable situations. Also, the use of public spaces specific to the field of physical education and sports such as gyms, stadiums, etc. encourages and facilitates human interaction and socialization.

*Responsible consumption and production.* To ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns. The objective aims at the gradual transfer to an innovative development model, characterized by increasing the efficiency and productivity of resources, good waste management and reducing the phenomenon of food waste. In order to achieve these elements, the aim is to reduce consumption, recycling and reuse, as well as to encourage companies and enterprises to implement sustainable production practices in the field of public procurement. All these aim to increase the awareness of the population on what means a lifestyle led in harmony with the natural environment. Physical education and sport can play an important role in this new development model that promotes environmentally friendly lifestyles and natural resources by organizing and promoting education and awareness campaigns and promoting services and industries beneficial to these new world guidelines.

*Climate stabilization actions.* Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impact. The aim is to find the best and most viable solutions to combat the dangers and adapt to climate change in recent years, to reduce the consequences of natural disasters and to increase the level of education and awareness of these climate changes and their influence. Through specific activities, sports-based projects and messages on climate change, the field of physical education and sport can actively contribute to campaigns to combat the effects of these changes, raise public awareness of these phenomena and encourage and support a return to normalcy and reconstruction. facilities in disaster-affected communities.

*Aquatic life.* Preservation and sustainable use of oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development. The main courses of action of this objective are: prevention and reduction of the effects of contamination and pollution of the marine environment; protection and conservation of marine ecosystems and coastal areas and ensuring the conditions for sustainable fishing. In this respect, physical education and sport also contribute to this sector of activity, through organized sports actions and events, especially those in the field of water sports, which can promote the protection, conservation and long-term use in a balanced way, of the seas and oceans.



*Earth life.* Protecting, restoring and promoting the sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainable forest management, combating desertification, halting and repairing soil degradation and halting biodiversity loss. This objective aims at: protecting, conserving, using and sustainably managing terrestrial and mountain ecosystems; stopping illegal and uncontrolled deforestation; combating the phenomenon of desertification; restoration and reintroduction into the agricultural circuit of lands with degraded soils, affected by drought, floods and desertification; development of green infrastructure; protection and conservation of wetlands and support for research in the field. Physical education and sport can contribute to and support the conservation, protection and sustainable use of ecosystems, also through actions, activities and messages of a suggestive nature, which encourages practices and protection measures and aims to raise public awareness of respect for the environment.

*Peace, justice and efficient institutions.* Promoting peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, access to justice for all and the creation of efficient, responsible and inclusive institutions at all levels. This objective aims at: the development of the social capital; promoting peace, tolerance and understanding between people; cultivating non-violence on all levels; eradication of corruption; development and modernization of state institutions; increasing the level of representation of citizens at all levels of the decision-making process; protecting the interests and respecting the fundamental freedoms of the people and ensuring free and unrestricted access to information. Physical education and sport through their core values such as fair play, respect for the adversary, self-help and teamwork, represent a powerful channel for communication, transmission and dissemination of messages of unity and reconciliation and provide a favorable framework for promoting peace, understanding and dialogue between people and states. It also militates through its entities and institutions for a correct policy, an efficient government and promotes the respect of fundamental human rights.

*Partnerships to achieve goals.* Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development. This last goal of the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable

Development aims at respecting all actors involved, the international commitments made on sustainable development, identification in the debates within the UN, EU and other international institutions is the sustainable development of viable and realistic solutions for supporting developing countries, stimulating investment and other initiatives, economic activities and voluntary projects, which promote principles, methods and practices conducive to the sustainable development of developing countries.

The field of physical education and sports has unsuspected resources that, set in motion, are able to bring people together, generate synergies, create networks and form partnerships with entities from a multitude of different sectors, but interested and engaged in the fight for peace, and sustainable development.

Given the objectives of the 2030 Agenda as a projection for the development of society, personally, I can strengthen the image of the field of physical education and sports and its involvement for sustainable development by indicating some concrete examples in this regard:

- sports events organized by the Invictus Team Romania Association in which volunteers, military and civilians, support various charitable causes (Invictus Paralympic Games, Royal Duathlon, Veterans Relay, etc.);

- the charitable events organized by the "Roger Federer Foundation" called "The Match in Africa", involving the participation, besides R. Federer, of various prominent personalities of public life such as Bill Gates, Rafael Nadal, Andy Murray, Trevor Noah, etc. on the occasion of which important funds were raised for the realization of some solidarity projects on the African continent (in 2017 at the match organized in Seattle they raised around 2,000,000 dollars);

- *Swimathon*, one of the largest charitable sporting events in Romania, organized with the stated purpose of raising funds to ensure easier access for children from disadvantaged rural areas with serious chronic diseases to free medical services and the implementation of a pilot service treatment and monitoring of the patient at home.

- Gerar half marathon, a traditional sports event among runners in Romania organized by the Sports Club RO CLUB MARATON and the association People for Sport Romania in partnership with

the Polytechnic University of Bucharest and the Bucharest Running Club Association with stated objectives such as waste reduction, environmental protection and support community.

In conclusion, the 2030 UN Agenda for Sustainable Development is an extremely ambitious and important strategy for the future of the planet and for the progress and quality of life of its inhabitants. All 17 sustainable development goals are universally applicable, are interconnected, have a global character, in their achievement all countries, regardless of the current level of development, represent a common responsibility. Therefore, the UN and the Member States are constantly focused on identifying solutions and methods to achieve these goals, and, as presented earlier, the use of the values and resources characteristic of the field of physical education and sport is one of the viable ways to achieve them.

In my opinion, the support of the physical education and sports system and the involvement of all decision makers for the use of this field would bring added value to the entire Romanian society in the medium and long term. The present article may have the effect of increasing the awareness of the main objectives of the UN 2030 Agenda both by those working in the field and by the general public, a planning of future sports activities in view of these objectives, giving due importance to physical education and sport by all specialists in all social fields, as well as capitalizing on the resources of this field to contribute to the sustainable development of society.

#### NOTES:

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