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Organización
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para la Educación,
la Ciencia y la Cultura

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Combating doping in sport

The use of performance-enhancing drugs is one of the biggest threats to sports today.

Doping does irreparable harm to sports and all athletes. The use of performance-enhancing drugs diminishes the moral and ethical principles that underpin sports. Doping destroys fair play and equitable competition, harms athletes and damages the credibility of sports.

These concerns were first highlighted in the UNESCO International Charter of Physical Education and Sport (Paris, 21 November 1978). Article 7 of the Charter notes the deleterious nature of doping and states that: *"No effort must be spared to highlight the harmful effects of doping, which is both injurious to health and contrary to the sporting ethic, or to protect the physical and mental health of athletes, the virtues of fair play and competition, the integrity of the sporting community and the rights of people participating in it at any level whatsoever."*

HEALTH CONSEQUENCES

In recent times doping has become more pervasive and insidious. Athletes and athlete support personnel (including coaches, managers and medical personnel) have become increasingly sophisticated in their attempts to gain even the slightest of advantages, often with severe health consequences. Misuse of substances or methods has led to cardiovascular disorders, liver and kidney disease, psychological or physical dependence, even death. The spectre of harm has been further raised by blood doping and

gene manipulation to enhance sporting performance.

The impact of doping also extends beyond the athletes concerned or sports itself. It is a problem that affects society as a whole. This is because the benefits of sports carry well beyond playing fields. Sports are a powerful vehicles for peace that forge closer relations, mutual respect and understanding between peoples. Sports



Doping destroys fair play and equitable competition.
(© UNESCO)

also contribute to development, drawing individuals together, providing facilities and access to community services. They foster cooperation and help strengthen social ties and networks. Sports are also an important learning tool for young

people. It is often during the playing of sports that children learn important values and models of good conduct that last a lifetime. Doping has the potential to cut across these many benefits, making it essential that governments, communities, sports organizations and individuals all take action to eliminate doping.

INTERNATIONAL RESPONSE

The international community has been very active in the fight against doping in sport. International efforts gained considerable momentum in 1999, with the establishment of the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) and the development of a unified World Anti-Doping Code (the Code) in 2003 to harmonize anti-doping standards and ensure a consistent global approach.

Combating doping in sport

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International Convention against Doping in Sport

On 19 October 2005, the 33rd session of the UNESCO General Conference unanimously adopted the International Convention against Doping in Sport, the first truly global anti-doping convention. Its purpose is to harmonize anti-doping efforts worldwide and to provide a legal framework within which governments can take action to remove doping from sport that are complementary to those being taken by the sporting movement. The Convention ensures that all governments have a legal commitment to implement the Code.

The Convention is a permissive document. The obligations are articulated in non-prescriptive language, requiring a commitment to undertake measures at the national and international level consistent with the principles of the Code. There is flexibility in the approach governments can take to give effect to the Convention, either by way of legislation, regulation or policies, however, States Parties are required to:

- Restrict the availability of prohibited substances or methods to athletes (except for legitimate medical purposes), including measures against trafficking,
- Facilitate doping controls and support national testing programmes,
- Withhold financial support from athletes and athlete support personnel who commit an anti-doping rule violation, or sporting organisations that are not in compliance with the Code,
- Encourage producers and distributors of nutritional supplements to establish 'best practice' in the labelling, marketing and distribution of products which might contain prohibited substances, and
- Support the provision of anti-doping education to athletes and the wider community.

The final task was UNESCO's preparation of an international instrument. This was necessary to provide a legal framework within which governments can take action to remove doping and support the Code.

UNESCO is actively involved in international efforts to tackle doping in sport largely through the administration and monitoring of the International Convention against Doping in Sport. A new anti-doping programme, involving education and capacity-building initiatives, has also been introduced to support the Convention.

UNESCO will assist States Parties to develop and implement effective anti-doping programmes through the application of the *Fund for the Elimination of Doping in Sport*. This fund, established under the Convention and made up of voluntary contributions, will provide for anti-doping capacity building programmes across the world as well as the sharing of knowledge and best practice.

These activities sit alongside a strong focus on education by UNESCO. Ultimately one of the keys to success will be providing quality advice to the athletes of tomorrow and building resilience among young people around the globe. Schools provide an ideal

learning environment because it is often there where young people first learn about fair play, teamwork and cooperation. It is also important to sensitize the wider community to the harm caused by doping in sport. UNESCO believes that if the values of fair play are effectively instilled, they will have a lasting impact in the fight against doping in sport.



In 2001, UNESCO and the International Council of Sport Science and Physical Education published a booklet "Champions don't cheat".
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To Find Out More

Anti-doping:
www.unesco.org/education, click on 'physical education and sport'

Website of the World Anti-Doping Agency:
www.wada-ama.org

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