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CGF marks UN International Youth Day with Commonwealth Secretariat and UNICEF programmes for young sporting citizens at Samoa 2015 Commonwealth Youth Games

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For immediate release

To mark UN International Youth Day, the Commonwealth Games Federation (CGF), working with the Commonwealth Secretariat and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), have today (Wednesday 12 August) announced a dynamic and inclusive programme of athlete and public engagement activities at the upcoming Samoa 2015 Commonwealth Youth Games to provide support and inspiration to tackle the issues facing the next generation of global sporting citizens.

Taking place on the island nation of Samoa from 5-11 September 2015, the Commonwealth Youth Games will bring together up to 1000 young athletes aged 14-18, who will represent their country and compete for 107 Gold medals in 9 sports over 5 days.

A formative first taste of an international multi-sport environment for many, the new initiatives announced today will help fulfil the Games' core ambition to celebrate high-performance sporting competition, personal development and new Commonwealth friendships made on the level playing field of sport.

Welcoming the initiatives, CGF Chief Executive David Grevemberg said: **"We're thrilled to be joining forces with the Commonwealth Secretariat and UNICEF to enable innovative projects at this year's Commonwealth Youth Games which will engage, inspire and support our young Commonwealth athletes and young Pacific Island hosts. In line with our strategic ambitions, we hope the programme will have a lasting impact, recognising our young Commonwealth citizens as essential to achieving sustainable human development."**

The Commonwealth Secretariat, working with the CGF and the local Games Organising Committee in Samoa, will deliver a series of fun and interactive workshops to raise awareness among young athletes of the potential to use sport to contribute to Commonwealth development.

The workshops will take place on rotation each day throughout the Games, enabling athletes and officials to attend on an optional basis, and will be delivered by representatives from the Commonwealth Youth Sport for Development and Peace (CYDSP) working group, a network of young sport and development leaders from across the Commonwealth.

Oliver Dudfield, Head of Sport for Development and Peace at the Commonwealth Secretariat said: **"The opportunity for participants at the Games to learn more about how sport can be used as a tool for development is another example of the important role the Games movement can play in promoting the Commonwealth and our shared values."**

Running alongside the workshops, and building on one of the regional legacy programmes enabled by the CGF and UNICEF's groundbreaking fundraising partnership at the Glasgow 2014 Commonwealth Games, *Just Play* fan zones will also be set up at Games-Time to enable young locals, visitors, athletes and officials to participate in interactive games and activities.

Active in nine Pacific Island countries, *Just Play* uses sport to reduce vulnerability and address social issues affecting young people in the region. The *Just Play* programme promotes physical activity for children and young people through football and other sport-related activities, while creatively and inclusively addressing endemic issues such as non-communicable diseases, poor nutrition, gender equality, stigma and discrimination towards children with disabilities.

UNICEF Pacific representative, Dr. Karen Allen said: **"Sport is a powerful development tool to engage children and young people across the world. Within the Pacific, since the programme's inception in 2009, *Just Play* has attracted more than 200,000 girls and boys to engage in physical activity and learn healthy lifestyle habits and self-confidence. The programme also encourages gender equality, promotes social inclusion and reduces anxiety after natural disasters.**

For the Commonwealth Youth Games, UNICEF and *Just Play* have partnered with CGF to showcase how sport in the Pacific is helping make a positive impact on children's lives."

As a further legacy, both projects will collaborate closely on training and implementation, supporting networking and knowledge-sharing between CYSDP working group representatives and regional UNICEF Pacific volunteers.

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NOTES TO EDITORS

Just Play, an Oceania Football Confederation programme, is developed in partnership with UNICEF, the Australian and New Zealand governments, the Union of European Football Association Foundation for Children and the Football Federation of Australia.