



Organisation pour la Paix et le Sport

## ISRAEL & PALESTINE: A HISTORICAL HAND-SHAKE ON THE FIRST INTERNATIONAL "PEACE AND SPORT" FORUM

**Monaco, December 6, 2007** - The first international "Peace and Sport" forum has witnessed a historical exchange between Israel and Palestine today.

Intervening one after another to evoke the contribution Sport can bring in bridging the Israeli and Palestinian communities in the Middle East, His Excellency **Manuel Hassassian**, Palestine's Ambassador in the United Kingdom, and Mr. **Galeb Majadle**, the Israeli Minister of Culture, Sports and Sciences, spontaneously went up on stage to shake hands, among **H.S.H. Prince Albert II of Monaco**, who brought his High Patronage to the "Peace and Sport" international organization and its President **Joël Bouzou**.

This hand-shake, which triggered a loud applause from the 150 attending delegates, was hailed by **Mario Pescante**, President of the International Olympic Committee's International Relations Commission as a "historical moment", and "tangible evidence that sport can help bringing people closer and fighting prejudice".

In his speech, Mr. Hassassian explained how sport could enable to overcome «*the two factors that only get the situation between Israel and Palestine to deteriorate*», meaning "fear" and "distrust". Re-affirming that Peace is a global and regional requirement, he indicated that high hopes were recently born in Annapolis and that the solution will be "political". "Creating links", "favoring human interaction", "stopping competition for drama" are the ways to sustainable Peace and justice, he said.

After greeting the Palestinian Ambassador, Mr. Majadle started his speech with a reminder of the various sport initiatives which already brought Israelis and Palestinians together. He stressed that the fact that he was "the first Israeli minister to have met his Palestinian counterpart" was not casual: "sport is one of the pillars on which the Peace process must be built", he explained. Regarding the international "Peace and Sport" forum, Mr. Majadle said: "we do need encounters of this kind to help establishing Peace".

Mr. Joël Bouzou, President of Peace and Sport, added: «*We are proud and thrilled that such exchange took place on our Forum. This gathering's objective was in fact to trigger encounters, bridge people and communities, draw up new tracks for action and thinking with a purpose to establish sustainable Peace worldwide, more specifically in the Middle-East. Sport can be a powerful and original leverage to achieve this goal and help young Israelis and Palestinians better understanding and thereby accepting one another*».

Mr. Bouzou also suggested that International Sport Federations should mobilize their national federations in Israel and Palestine to develop grassroots action.

### THE END ###

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## Pictures available upon request

### About PEACE AND SPORT

“Peace and Sport” is a world peace initiative based in Monaco, founded under the High Patronage of HSH Prince Albert II.

“Peace and Sport” has set itself the objective to promote sport and to use the structuring values of sport and its practise to serve individuals and communities across the world. By implementing customised programmes in post conflict zones, extremely poverty-stricken areas or those lacking social cohesion, “Peace and Sport” uses sport to promote values of respect, sharing, tolerance and community-spirit with a view to instilling Sustainable Peace.

Supported by governments, world sport governance, international organisations, major global corporations and world class champions represented by the World Olympians Association, “Peace and Sport” creates synergies between the multiple players. Its action consists in two main axes: the development of Locally Based Projects and the organisation of an international annual forum, acting as a hub of exchange and convergence.

To develop and unfold its Locally Based Projects, “Peace and Sport” relies on an international Family of Partners of private and institutional bodies:

- INTERNATIONAL SPORT FEDERATIONS, whose experts stand out as legitimate and even compulsory players to act efficiently on the ground,
- THE “WORLD OLYMPIANS ASSOCIATION” (WOA), which brings its support to “Peace and Sport's” Local Projects by involving role-model athletes in the framework of customised programmes,
- THE “CRANS MONTANA FORUM”, an international organisation which cooperates with governments worldwide and assists them to progress on the paths of international cooperation on a daily basis,
- FINANCIAL AND LOGISTICS PARTNERS, like Mercure International of Monaco (sports and retail market) or Aegis Media (marketing communications group), who enable “Peace and Sport” to implement its projects and achieve sustainable results.

“Peace and Sport” was created by Joel Bouzou, its current President. Mr. Bouzou is an Olympic medallist and a Modern Pentathlon World Champion. He is the current General Secretary of the Modern Pentathlon International Union (MPIU), a Member of the World Olympians Association (WOA) Executive Committee, and an Advisor to HSH Prince Albert II of Monaco.

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