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SUSTAINABLE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT**

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**PAPER TITLE -- WORLD PEACE AND SUSTAINABLE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT:
PROMOTING DIALOGUE AMONG CIVILIZATIONS THROUGH THE COMMERCE OF
SPORTS**

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Abstract

Today, the commerce of sports is expanding not only the number of international mega sporting events but also the strategic value of sports-related business in the promotion of international dialogue and advancement of world peace. The support of and participation in sports can transcend political, sociocultural, and economic barriers globally. As spectators and athletes come together on a scale larger than ever before national and local governments must collaborate with the private sector to develop and implement policies in support of sustainable forms of tourism that benefit local communities, nations, and international alliances alike.

This paper examines the potential to facilitate dialogue to advance peace through world sports, and identifies past achievements in conflict resolution or increased knowledge exchange following an international sporting event. The research includes comparative critical analysis of several major mega-sports events case studies, such as the development and sustained growth of the Special Olympics (SO). Unknown to many, the SO is the world's largest sports

organization, founded in 1968, and now manages over 2,500,000 athletes (75% outside the USA), 21,000 competitions, 200,000 coaches, 6,000,000 million family members, and 750,000 volunteers. This paper highlights the SO for its transformative power on a global scale. For example, the 2007 Shanghai Special Olympics were the world's largest sports event in 2007 with 9,000 athletes, 160 economies, and 40,000 volunteers. International media viewership via the Internet exceeded hundreds of millions of spectators. Over the past four decades, the Special Olympics Games have led to increased self-confidence, self-esteem, and socialization of participants— characteristics essential to the foundation of strong civilizations. For host communities such as China, support for the Special Olympics movement resulted in the construction of a hospital for children with intellectual disabilities in Beijing – the first of its kind in the developing world - within a year following the SO Shanghai games. Additionally, this paper explores past, present, and future international sports events including the 2009 World Baseball Classic to be held in destinations throughout the world, the 2010 World Cup in South Africa, the 2012 Summer Olympics in London, and the 2008-2009 regular season National Basketball Association and National Football League games in London. These upcoming events offer opportunities to address past challenges using new strategies. The paper also examines aspects of international leadership in sports through review, for example, of renowned sports broadcasters such as Jim McKay in the US, among other international figures.

This paper concludes with a summary and recommendations for tourism policy-makers and international sports organizations to support both existing approaches and new strategies for promoting peace through the commerce of sports.

KEY WORDS: peace, commerce, global, world, government, international relations, tourism policy, sports tourism, sports, soccer, baseball, basketball, football, Olympics, Special Olympics, World Cup, South Africa, London, Los Angeles, NBA, NFL, MLB, WBC, leadership and sports, Jim McKay.