



For Immediate Release

Government of Canada announces funds for Right To Play

Funding will support sport and play programs for children in five African countries

TORONTO, CANADA (April 22, 2010) – The Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) announced today a pledge of \$17 million in support of Right To Play. The funding, covering a three-year period, will support an initiative that uses sport and play to promote basic education, essential health awareness and disease prevention, for children and youth living in disadvantaged areas of Benin, Ghana, Mali, Rwanda and Liberia.

The Honourable Beverley J. Oda, Canadian Minister of International Cooperation, made the announcement following a meeting with Right To Play President and CEO, Johann Olav Koss, and a group of Right To Play's Canadian Athlete Ambassadors who were visiting Ottawa for the day.

“Canada recognizes the value of sport and play as a vehicle for human development and as a tool for achieving health, education, and conflict resolution-related goals,” said Minister Oda. “Too many children in developing countries have lost their childhood and the opportunity to learn from play and sports while struggling with the challenges of poverty. The Government of Canada is committed to improving the lives of children and youth around the world, and we are proud to support this unique approach to improving their lives.”

Founded in 2000 by Koss, a four-time Olympic Gold medalist, Right To Play is a leading international humanitarian and development organization using the transformative power of sport and play to build essential skills in children and thereby drive social change in communities affected by war, poverty and disease. Its programs target the most vulnerable, including girls, people living with disabilities, children affected by HIV and AIDS, street children, former child combatants and refugees. Right To Play is supported by an international team of top athletes from more than 40 countries. As role models these athletes inspire children, raise awareness and promote opportunities for funding for Right To Play projects.

The additional funding announced today will enable Right To Play to strengthen its existing sport and play programs and further the positive impact in Benin, Ghana, Mali, Rwanda and Liberia. The overall goal is to improve the lives of children and youth through inclusion of sport and play based programs into the overall development context affecting them and their futures. The program is expected to reach more than 200,000 children and youth, 2,500 teachers and 4,500 coaches

“We are pleased to have the opportunity to be here today to thank Minister Oda and CIDA for this significant contribution which will enable Right To Play to continue to reach children and youth in Western and Francophone Africa,” said Mr. Koss. “We are thrilled to be strengthening our relationship with CIDA and thank them for their leadership in recognizing the importance of sport and play, and the power it has to improve the lives of children and youth around the world.”

Right To Play Canadian Athlete Ambassadors Clara Hughes (speed skating), Caroline Ouellette (hockey), Shannon Rempel (speed skating), Anastasia Bucsis (speed skating), Mathieu Giroux (speed skating), Jan Hudec (alpine skiing), Andrew Willows (sprint canoe) and Michelle Kelly (skeleton) were in attendance for the announcement.

About Right To Play

Right To Play is an international humanitarian organization that uses sport and play programs to improve health, develop life skills, and foster peace for children and communities in some of the most disadvantaged areas of the world. Working in both the humanitarian and development context, Right To Play builds local capacity by training community leaders as Coaches to deliver its programs in 23 countries affected by war, poverty, and disease in Africa, Asia, the Middle East and South America. Founded in 2000, Right To Play is headquartered in Toronto, Canada and has national offices in Canada, Norway, The Netherlands, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, and the United States. The national offices raise funds, build awareness for Right To Play programs and advocate for Sport for Development.

-30-

For more information, please contact:

Laura Currie

AVP, International Communications

Right To Play International

Email: lcurrie@righttoplay.com

Phone: +1 (416) 498-1922 ext. 204

www.righttoplay.com