



WORLD'S LEADING SPORTS BRANDS CELEBRATE PHYSICAL ACTIVITY RECOGNITION BY UNITED NATIONS

- The World Federation of the Sporting Goods Industry (WFSGI) and top brands (New Balance, Nike, adidas, Amer Sports, ASICS, Decathlon, Speedo, Shimano, Under Armour) hosted “Moving the World Towards a Healthy and Active Future” in New York on 24th of September 2025 on the eve of the United Nations High Level Meeting on Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs).
- **UN Policy Milestone:** Physical activity will be recognized in the forthcoming UN Political Declaration on NCDs (25th September) as a core, cost-effective health intervention **for the first time since 2018.**
- **Urgent Health Challenge:** Only 1 in 3 adults meet recommended activity levels; 81% of youth globally will remain inactive without intervention. Physical inactivity will continue to be treated as a top tier risk-factor for NCDs.
- **Economic Impact:** The global economic toll of inactivity is expected to surpass \$300 billion by 2030. Tariffs and rising costs threaten access to basic sporting goods, further limiting participation – particularly among children and disadvantaged groups.
- **Call to Action:** Governments, NGOs, and industry are urged to advance implementation of the WHO Global Action Plan on Physical Activity (GAPPA) and invest in cost-effective movement initiatives.

New York City, 24 September 2025: The World Federation of the Sporting Goods Industry (WFSGI), together with leading global brands and high-profile ambassadors, hosted “Moving the World Towards a Healthy and Active Future,” a **landmark event to celebrate the inclusion of physical activity as a priority health intervention in the United Nations Political Declaration on Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs).**

The event took place on the eve of the 4th UN High-Level Meeting on NCDs (25th September), where Heads of State, Ministers of Health, global health leaders and civil society organisations will adopt a political declaration committing to measurable actions to prevent diseases such as cardiovascular disease, cancer, respiratory disease, and diabetes.

A global policy win for physical activity

For the first time since 2018, the UN Declaration recognises physical activity as a core, cost-effective solution to tackling NCDs—on par with other public health priorities such as reducing use of tobacco, alcohol and addressing unhealthy diets—and calls on governments to invest in active lifestyles as part of their national health strategies.



Physical inactivity – the silent crisis

Globally, only 1 in 3 adults meet the recommended levels of physical activity for good health, while an alarming 81% of young people are inactive, according to WHO data.

In his address to those attending the event in New York, WFSGI Board Member and New Balance Chief Operating Officer Dave Wheeler commented *“The global physical inactivity crisis is escalating. As a whole, today’s youth are the least active in history. As an industry, not only do we create products to help people move more, we also support programs that make activity more accessible – from training coaches, building cycling cultures, supporting run clubs, and providing disadvantaged groups opportunities to move, play, and thrive. As the UN General Assembly meets tomorrow, we would like to highlight that these are cost-effective interventions that every country can scale.”*

From policy to practice

The WFSGI Event took place at the Masaryk Community Gym and brought together WFSGI member brands, sports ambassadors, and health leaders. Along with Dave Wheeler, attendees heard from Speedo ambassador and four-time Olympic medallist Cullen Jones, UNICEF Senior Advisor Health Vivan Lopez, Managing Director C40 Cities Cassie Sutherland and CEO of United for Global Mental Health Sarah Kline and saw first-hand the Masaryk Community Gym program in action.

Cullen Jones shared his insights into the benefit of regular physical activity from both an elite athlete and supporter of grassroots sport perspective. *“Not only is swimming an essential life skill that every child should have access to, the physical and mental health benefits are invaluable for living a healthy and active life.”*

The event was the culmination of the work of the WFSGI’s Physical Activity Committee led by Elena Korf of Nike and Simon Rowe of Pentland Brands, which brings together the sporting goods industry’s brands and retailers to work together to help tackle the growing physical inactivity crisis and empower the world to move more.

The economic imperative

If inactivity trends continue, an additional 500 million people will be affected by 2030, with a projected global healthcare cost of US \$300 billion.

It is also recognised that tariffs and rising costs threaten access to basic sporting goods, further limiting participation – particularly among children and disadvantaged groups. In 2024, only 24% of children from U.S. households earning under \$25,000 a year regularly participated in sports. This figure is in stark comparison to 44% of children from households earning \$100,000+ regularly participating in sports.

A call to governments and partners

WFSGI is calling on governments, NGOs, and the private sector to accelerate the implementation of the WHO Global Action Plan on Physical Activity (GAPPA).



WFSGI CEO Emma Zwiebler stresses, “As an industry built on movement, we know that physical activity and sport is universal connector that transcends and unites communities. But we can’t do it alone. It is imperative that both public and private sectors act now to ensure these new commitments signed by UN Member States turn into action. Together we can and must invest in physical activity as a solution for the prevention and reduction of NCDs and for building a healthier, more active planet for all. We are ready. Let’s move the world – together.”

To view physical activity initiatives from the sporting goods industry please visit <https://wfsgi.org/2025/07/wfsgi-physical-activity-case-studies/>

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About WFSGI

The World Federation of the Sporting Goods Industry (WFSGI) is the global, not-for-profit trade association for the sporting goods industry. WFSGI is officially recognised by the International Olympic Committee (IOC) as the industry representative within the Olympic Movement.

Our members comprise sports and sports-inspired leisure brands, manufacturers, suppliers, retailers, national/regional federations, industry and trade associations. This represents approximately 70% of the global industry by annual turnover.

The purpose of the WFSGI is to unite and support the global sporting goods industry, and ensure a healthier, more active planet for all.

wfsgi.org

About Masaryk Community Gym and New Balance

In collaboration with the Masaryk community, ALD and New Balance carry out community-focused programming and initiatives through the game of basketball. The gym is a place where Masaryk residents and the Lower East Side community in New York can come to improve their game, compete, and interact with each other through sport-specific programming.

Media Assets

Download WFSGI Physical Activity Impact Report [here](#)

Images of event (please credit NAME photographer and WFSGI)

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