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Global Sporting Goods Industry Unites to Help the Next Generation Move More

World's leading sporting goods companies commit to helping the next generation move more, as new WHO data shows 86% of adolescents are still not meeting recommended physical activity levels.

Bern, 4th November 2026 - 84 sporting goods companies and federations have signed an open letter coordinated by the World Federation of the Sporting Goods Industry (WFSGI), committing to strengthen efforts to help more young people enjoy the lifelong benefits of sport, physical activity and movement.

The letter comes in response to new global physical activity data published today by the World Health Organization (WHO) in *The Lancet*, which highlights the scale of the challenge facing young people around the world. The findings show that 86% of adolescents are not meeting recommended activity levels, while approximately one in four (240 million 11 to 17-year-olds) report no active days at all in a typical week. Girls remain less active than boys in every region of the world. Combined with the knowledge that physical inactivity is a top tier risk factor for non-communicable diseases which account for 75% of deaths globally, it's crucial to support young people to develop the habit of enjoying sport, physical activity and movement.

Signatories include adidas, ASICS, Bauer, Decathlon, New Balance and Nike joining a total of 84 sporting goods associations, manufacturers, brands and retailers from across the global sporting goods value chain.

United Industry Response to a Shared Challenge

The open letter reflects a growing recognition across the sporting goods industry that removing barriers and making it easier for young people to participate in physical activity is not only essential for public health, but also for the future of sport itself.

The companies signing the letter acknowledge that while the industry invests in grassroots programmes, community initiatives, athlete sponsorships and participation campaigns, the latest WHO findings show that more intentional collective action is needed, particularly to reach the least active young people and close persistent participation gaps.

No single company can reverse the trend alone, but the sporting goods industry is uniquely placed to lead the response, with the reach, influence, and credibility to inspire and enable movement at scale. According to *The Industry That Moves the World*, WFSGI's new economic impact report produced with Oliver Wyman, the sector contributes approximately $675 billion in annual revenue and supports 28 million jobs globally.

"Our biggest competitor is inactivity. Our greatest opportunity is participation," said **Emma Zwiebler, Chief Executive Officer of WFSGI**. *"The latest WHO data shows why we cannot stay quiet. As an industry, we have the reach, expertise and opportunity to help drive change. This letter is a commitment to work together and with public and private sector partners inside the*

sports ecosystem and beyond. If governments, industry and society are serious about creating healthier, more active populations, we should be equally serious about supporting young people, especially the least active, to have the opportunity to move, play and thrive."

Javier López, CEO of Decathlon goes on to explain, *"The WHO's latest findings reinforce the urgent need to accelerate action on youth inactivity. At Decathlon, we are continuously dedicated to understanding and addressing the barriers to movement and an active lifestyle. Securing our youth's wellbeing is a collective responsibility demanding cross-sector collaboration so that every child and teenager can experience the lifelong benefits of sport."*

Four Shared Commitments

Through the open letter, signatories commit to:

1. Deliver initiatives that increase youth participation, close the gender gap and reach the least active adolescents.
2. Share best practices and evidence-based solutions through collaboration across the sporting goods industry and beyond.
3. Work in partnership with global, regional and national stakeholders who can transform the systems and environments that shape adolescent physical activity.
4. Engage more with governments to advocate for stronger alignment between health, education, sport, trade and urban planning policies.

Collectively, these commitments are intended to strengthen collaboration between industry, governments, schools, health professionals and sports organisations. We will help ensure every young person has equitable access to safe, affordable and enjoyable physical activity, sport and movement opportunities.

Industry Leaders Team Up to Get the Next Generation Moving

Vanessa Garcia-Brito, VP and Chief Impact Officer, NIKE, Inc. *– "The new WHO data is a reminder that too many young people around the world aren't getting the physical activity they need to thrive – with girls more likely than boys to have no active days, something our industry knows and that we're working to change alongside our WFSGI peers. We need to act now, with urgency, to make sport and play easier to access, more fun and welcoming to everyone. At Nike, we're working with our employees, athletes, community organizations, experts and coaches to create a future of youth sport that's accessible, fun and inclusive and where every young person, especially girls, feel they belong."*

Gary Raucher, Global Head of Marketing and Executive Board Member at ASICS – *"Our Movement Conservation Report shows how modern life is quietly designing movement out of daily life. Today's new WHO Youth Inactivity Data shows how this is especially affecting young people. Movement is essential not just for our bodies but also our minds, a belief that has guided ASICS for more than 75 years. But no single brand can solve this challenge alone. That's why ASICS is standing with the industry on this."*

Mary-Kay Messier, CMO at Bauer Hockey – *"Sport builds health, confidence, friendships and a lasting sense of belonging. Declining youth activity demands action. Bauer has long worked with*

community leaders to welcome more kids into hockey. Through WFSGI, we can combine our industry's reach and resources to remove barriers and create more opportunities to play. As Bauer approaches its 100th anniversary, the power of play will be at the heart of everything we do."

WHO Report: A Generation Missing Out

The WHO analysis draws on data from 389 population-based surveys conducted across 140 countries and territories, representing more than 3.2 million adolescents aged 11 to 17 years.

Globally, one in four adolescents reported no active days during the previous week, equivalent to approximately 240 million young people worldwide. This new data supersedes previous global estimates which reported that in 2016 81% of adolescents did not achieve recommended activity goals.

Closing the Gap for Girls

The new data highlights a persistent gender gap in participation across every region. 28% of girls reported no active days in a typical week, compared with 22% of boys.

Recognising that barriers to participation are often different for girls, signatories have committed to sharing insights and exploring approaches that help more girls remain engaged in sport and physical activity, including through access to equipment, safe spaces, coaching and school-based programmes.

What Happens Next

The open letter remains open for endorsement by companies across the sporting goods value chain, including manufacturers, brands and retailers.

Companies interested in supporting the initiative can contact Caroline Brooks, WFSGI Head of Physical Activity, at cbrooks@wfsgi.org. The goal is simple: bring more organisations together behind a shared effort to ensure the next generation has every opportunity to experience the lifelong benefits of sport, physical activity and movement.

The full letter and list of the 84 signatories are available at HERE

##ENDS##

Notes to editors

- Data on adolescent physical activity is from the World Health Organization and The Lancet, published 4 November 2026 – see the following two links below:
- Strain T, Flaxman SR, Ricardo LIC, Guthold R, Riley LM, Cowan M, et al. National, regional, and global trends in adolescent physical activity from 2010 to 2025: A pooled analysis of 389 surveys with 3.2 million participants from 140 countries. Lancet Global Health. 2026; https://doi.org/10.1016/j.langlo.2026.104099
- The WHO report: A generation missing out: global trends in adolescent physical activity, 2010–2025. Geneva: World Health Organization; 2026. https://doi.org/10.2471/B09945

- Industry figures are from *The Industry That Moves the World* (WFSGI and Oliver Wyman, September 2026). economic-report.pdf
- The open letter, signatory list and launch visuals are available at: https://wfsgi.org/news-events/open-letter-youth-inactivity/ Embargo date 4 November 2026 16:00 CET
- Spokespeople available for interview: Emma Zwiebler, CEO, WFSGI; Gary Raucher, Global Head of Marketing and Executive Board Member at ASICS
- WFSGI together with SGI Europe are hosting a webinar on the 12th of November 'Policy, Participation & Prosperity: Why the Sporting Goods Industry Matters' where the new WHO Youth Inactivity data will be discussed. Register here.

About WFSGI

The World Federation of the Sporting Goods Industry (WFSGI) is the global federation representing the sporting goods industry. Its more than 150 member companies, including brands, manufacturers and retailers, account for around 70% of global sporting goods turnover. WFSGI brings the industry together to align, advocate and act on the priorities that shape its future, from trade and sustainability to physical activity. It is the only non-public sector organisation to hold Official Relations status with the World Health Organization.

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