



PRESS RELEASE

Tuesday, March 4, 2008

UNESCO-SONY ERICSSON WTA TOUR PARTNERSHIP TO LAUNCH PROGRAM IN INDIA WITH MAJOR PLEDGE FROM KARNATAKA STATE LAWN TENNIS ASSOCIATION

- Karnataka State Lawn Tennis Association, organizer of Bangalore Open, to contribute US\$100,000 to landmark partnership
- New women's leadership program to be selected in India in coming months, and to join existing programs in Cameroon, Liberia, China, Jordan and the Dominican Republic
- Global Promoter for Gender Equality Venus Williams on hand to further gender equality awareness

BANGALORE, India – The Karnataka State Lawn Tennis Association (KSLTA), organizer of the Bangalore Open, a standout event on the Sony Ericsson WTA Tour, announced today that it will donate US\$100,000 to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)-Sony Ericsson WTA Tour partnership for gender equality and women's leadership. The contribution will enable the establishment of a new partnership program in India, to be selected in the coming months, which will join previously announced programs in Cameroon, Liberia, China, Jordan and the Dominican Republic.

The KSLTA donation marks the single biggest contribution to the partnership since its formation, and will allow for the creation of a new program in the Bangalore region of India that will create real opportunities for women and girls to assume leadership roles as well as to raise awareness and promote the goal of gender equality. Since the launch over one year ago of the landmark global partnership between UNESCO and the Tour to further gender equality and promote women's leadership in all spheres of society, a substantial amount of funds have been raised or pledged, a series of programs have been established, a global advertising campaign has been launched, and global "Promoter of Gender Equality" Venus Williams has been joined by Tour stars Tatiana Golovin of France and Zheng Jie of China, with more announcements expected in the coming months.

At the announcement today, Venus Williams, the partnership's global "Promoter of Gender Equality", was flanked by Sunder Raju, the tournament director of the Bangalore Open; Sony Ericsson WTA Tour CEO Larry Scott; and Saniye Gülser Corat, Director of the Division for Gender Equality of the Bureau of Strategic Planning of UNESCO.

"The KSLTA, which operates the Bangalore Open, has been at the forefront of promoting women's tennis in India," said Sunder Raju, tournament director of the Bangalore Open. "This opportunity to partner with UNESCO and the Sony Ericsson WTA Tour is a moment of immense satisfaction, and it is our hope that this will be a trigger for other partners to come forward and participate in this effort. Venus Williams is a great champion and inspiration to women of all ages, and in her role as UNESCO Promoter of Gender Equality she has added focus and direction to these efforts. We are extremely pleased that this project in this part of the world is being launched by Venus."

"I am really inspired and motivated by the generous pledge made today by the KSLTA," said reigning Wimbledon champion and former World No. 1 Venus Williams, who is participating in the Bangalore Open this week. "These much needed funds will allow for the creation of a program in this region of India that will help form future women leaders in Indian society and beyond. I am really looking forward to coming back to Bangalore to help support this program."

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"We at UNESCO are pleased to see this partnership growing and expanding. The implementation of different projects and programmes, proposed by National Commissions for UNESCO around the world and funded by generous donors such as the KSLTA, is a concrete way to reach out and support practical measures to attain gender equality in different regions around the world," said Saniye Gulser Corat, Director of the Division for Gender Equality at UNESCO. "The timing of the KSLTA's donation is especially significant given that this year the United Nations has chosen "financing for women and girls" as its system-wide theme for International Women's Day in order to bring attention to the fact that sources of funding for gender equality and women's empowerment have been dwindling. Through this donation, the KSLTA is sending a strong message that funding for gender equality and women's empowerment has not been forgotten."

"Achievement of the ambitious goals that we have established for our gender equality and women's leadership program with UNESCO requires committed partners, and today the KSLTA has established itself as just that," said Larry Scott, CEO of the Sony Ericsson WTA Tour. "We look forward to working closely with UNESCO and the tournament to bring a new program to life in India that will move us one step closer to gender equality in this region of the world."

The social responsibility program, which draws upon the history of the Tour and players in fighting for equality, marks a new level of commitment by the Tour and players to raise awareness of the importance of gender equality and advance opportunities for women. The program also represents the first time that UNESCO, the only Organization of the United Nations system with a mandate for education, the sciences, culture and communication and information which are critical for laying the grounds for gender equality, is partnering with a professional sports league for this objective embraced by all world leaders (2005 World Summit Outcome). UNESCO, with a Division specifically devoted to women's empowerment and gender equality (www.unesco.org/women), is committed to mainstreaming gender equality considerations in all its programs, globally and at the country level.

Key elements of the program include (i) a Sony Ericsson WTA Tour/UNESCO Fund for women and leadership, (ii) a "Promoter of Gender Equality" player program, which involves players as role models at both a global and national level in awareness raising activities as well as direct involvement in specific gender equality and women's leadership programs throughout the world, (iii) mentoring, scholarship and fellowship programs designed to support women's individual leadership and provide them with the opportunities to succeed in any and all walks of life, (iv) television and print advertising to raise awareness of and promote the internationally recognized goal of gender equality, and (v) usage of existing UNESCO and Sony Ericsson WTA Tour tournaments, social events and conferences as awareness and fundraising platforms.

For UNESCO, gender equality is a fundamental human right, a commonly shared value, and a necessary condition for the realization of sustainable development, human rights and peace at global, regional and local levels. This is why UNESCO promotes gender equality and women's empowerment as an organizational priority in its five fields of competence: Education, the Natural Sciences, Social and Human Sciences, Culture and Communication and Information. In particular, UNESCO seeks to integrate a gender equality perspective into all stages of its programme cycle from conceptualization to implementation and evaluation as well as to promote the full and equal participation of women at all levels and in all areas of UNESCO's action. In this endeavor, UNESCO has a wide range of initiatives in all its domains as well as special partnership programmes with the private sector, such as the L'Oreal-UNESCO "For Women in Science" programme (<http://www.loreal.com/en/ww/index.aspx>), and the "Suzanne Mubarak/Japan-Egypt Friendship Research Fellowships" for the empowerment of women in peace and gender studies. With DaimlerChrysler, UNESCO has forged the highly successful Mondialogo Partnership, which promotes intercultural dialogue among schools and students through concrete projects (www.mondialogo.org).

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ABOUT UNESCO

The **United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)** was created on November 16, 1945. As a specialized agency of the United Nations, UNESCO contributes to the building of peace, the eradication of poverty, sustainable development and intercultural dialogue through education, the sciences, culture, communication and information.

Paris-based UNESCO provides a platform where global challenges for humanity can be addressed on the basis of equality among Member States. Founded on the principles of universality, diversity and dignity, UNESCO's actions continue to be guided and shaped by a set of commonly shared values that include justice, solidarity, tolerance, sharing, equity, respect for human rights, including women's rights, and cultural diversity, pluralism and democratic principles. As mandated by its Constitution, UNESCO helps to build the defences of peace in the minds of men.

ABOUT THE SONY ERICSSON WTA TOUR

The Sony Ericsson WTA Tour is the world's largest premier professional sport for women with more than 2,000 players representing 90 nations competing for \$70.8 million in prize money at the Tour's 60 events in 34 countries. More than 4.7 million people attended women's tennis events in 2007 with millions more watching events on television networks around the world. The Sony Ericsson WTA Tour season concludes with the Sony Ericsson Championships – Qatar 2008 in Doha, Qatar, November 4-9, 2008. Further information on the Tour can be found on the Internet at www.sonyericssonwtatour.com.

ABOUT KSLTA

KSLTA is the Governing body of Tennis in Karnataka and is in the forefront in the country for Tennis Development. In recognition of KSLTA's Tennis development program, the All India Tennis Association (AITA) awarded the Best State Tennis Association to it during 2004. The KSLTA Tennis Stadium was originally created in 1976 to stage the First Davis Cup in Bangalore. The entire stadium was renovated fully to International Standards during October 2000 for conducting the ATP World Doubles Championship 2000 for the first time in South Asia. In appreciation of the organization, ATP allotted the second ATP World Doubles Challenge Cup, which was held in January 2002