

**2010 Global Athlete Congress
Marrakech, Morocco****Overview**

- ▶ A forum for more than 66 athletes with intellectual disabilities from all regions of the world to discuss and propose new policies for enhancing Special Olympics.
- ▶ Delegates will convene for four days in Marrakech, to discuss issues raised by their peers over the last 5 years in regional and national meetings.
- ▶ Athletes, ages 16-50, serve as delegates from the Special Olympics movement's seven regions, representing athletes from around the world.
- ▶ The congress is an extension of Special Olympics Athletic Leadership Programs (ALPs), which provide leadership opportunities in the areas of governance, public speaking and coaching to Special Olympics athletes. Delegates include past and present International Global Messengers who serve as spokespersons around the world.
- ▶ Following the first day of an Athlete-only Congress, athletes will join with other leaders from the global Special Olympics movement to discuss the 2011-2015 Strategic Plan and to network with those leaders concerning ideas for improving and expanding the movement.

Background

- ▶ The Global Athlete Congress (GAC) is meeting for the third time. The first Congress met in the Netherlands in May 2000, where 67 athletes from around the world took steps toward creating new terminology and the first global codes of conduct for athletes and coaches. The second congress in 2005 convened in Panama City, Panama and included 70 athletes.
- ▶ The first all-athlete Congress originated in North Carolina, USA, in 1994. The first regional Congress outside the United States met in Jamaica in 1995.
- ▶ ALPs gives athletes a chance to be leaders and serve in roles once considered untraditional. This allows Special Olympics staff and administrators to better understand the athletes they serve and athletes to show their talents off the playing field.

Global Athlete Congress Mission

- ▶ Show that athletes are the leaders of the Special Olympics movement.
- ▶ Create an opportunity for Special Olympics leadership to learn from the wisdom and experiences of the athletes.
- ▶ Share ideas for improving the policies and procedures of Special Olympics Programs.
- ▶ Develop proposals to report to the Special Olympics International Board of Directors.
- ▶ Represent and report back to the athletes in the Special Olympics seven regions.
- ▶ Continue the process of creating an inclusive environment in which athletes are full and active participants and play a role in guiding their own future.

Key Facts

- ▶ Number of countries represented – more than 35
- ▶ Number of participants – More than 60 athletes from the seven Special Olympics regions
- ▶ Moroccan athletes – 20 Special Olympics Morocco will also participate in the Congress
- ▶ All GAC International Delegates serve as a Board Director for a Special Olympics Program