

World Cup Sports Initiative

Unifying the World Through Sports

As part of ECA's World Cup Sports Initiative, U.S. Soccer National Team players and coaches conducted soccer clinics, visited schools and spoke to over 4000 youths in South Africa, Bahrain, Uganda and Nigeria, September 13 - October 13, 2006. Their emphasis was on teamwork, respect, leadership and conflict resolution, and how these athletic qualities can translate into life skills and academic achievement. The players and coaches were selected by U.S. Soccer and served as Sports Envoys for the Department of State. The players included Women's World Cup champions and Olympic gold medalists Cindy Parlow, Shannon

MacMillan and Tiffany Roberts, and three-time World Cup veteran Marcelo Balboa. The coaches were Glenn Myernick, Curt Onalfo and Phil Wheddon of the U.S. Men's National Team's World Cup Team coaching staff, along with Lauren Gregg, the first woman to serve as an assistant coach for a U.S. Soccer national team.



Sports Envoys Marcelo Balboa and Lauren Gregg conduct a soccer skills clinic involving over 500 youths drawn from high schools in Lagos, Nigeria.



Sports Envoy Cindy Parlow explains a drill to coaches of Bahrain's girls soccer teams.

Setting the stage for these soccer clinics, 13 girls and 17 boys, ages 13-18, from Nigeria, South Africa, Uganda, China, Indonesia, Malaysia, Bahrain, Lebanon, Morocco, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Uzbekistan, and Bolivia participated in ECA's World Cup Sports Initiative. The Initiative highlighted the theme of the 2006 World Cup, "a time to make friends" with an emphasis on building international understanding and respect between young people around the world. The young soccer players took part in athletic, educational and community events in

Washington D.C. and New York City that showed how engaging youth through sport can spark a meaningful and lasting cross-border dialogue. Yasmine from Bahrain said, "I learned that wherever we are from around the world it doesn't matter when we play football, in football we all have one language and that's what matters."