



INTERNATIONAL  
OLYMPIC  
COMMITTEE  
**The President**

**Speech on the occasion of the adoption of the resolution**

**“Building a peaceful and better world  
through sport and the Olympic ideal”**

**UN General Assembly, New York, 26 October 2015**

**-Check against delivery-**

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Votre Excellence Président de l'Assemblée Générale des Nations Unies.

Excellences, Mesdames et Messieurs,

Le Comité International Olympique a l'honneur de prendre la parole aujourd'hui devant l'Assemblée générale des Nations Unies.

Le CIO souhaiterait remercier le Gouvernement du Brésil et ses représentants auprès des Nations Unies de soumettre à l'Assemblée générale, cette Résolution, en prélude des Jeux Olympiques et Paralympiques qui se tiendront l'année prochaine à Rio de Janeiro.

Nous tenons également à adresser nos sincères remerciements au Groupe des amis du sport et tous les Etats qui ont co-sponsorisés cette Résolution, et au Conseiller Spécial du secrétaire général des Nations Unies pour le sport au

service du développement et de la paix pour leur soutien en vue de l'intégration du sport dans les travaux des Nations Unies.

Both the United Nations and the IOC are built on the shared values of tolerance, solidarity and peace. The UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon described this in the best way: "Olympic Principles are United Nations Principles."

The IOC applauds the General Assembly once more for recognizing sport as an important enabler to foster peace and understanding in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

As during the most recent UN Sustainable Development Summit, I want to emphasize that the United Nations and all its Member States can count on the unwavering support of the IOC to achieve our common goal of the peaceful development of humankind.

With our Olympic Agenda 2020 we are fully aligned with the United Nations 2030 Agenda. In particular this is true for Goal 16 of the SDGs, which is about building accountable, effective and inclusive institutions. The IOC with its Olympic Agenda 2020 has ensured that we are in compliance with the highest standards of good governance and transparency. In this respect, we are asking other major sports

organizations to undertake the necessary and swift reforms in order to restore their reputation.

The Olympic Truce stands for our shared values of tolerance, solidarity and peace. Sport is in a unique position to put the spirit of the Olympic Truce into practice. Sport is the only area of human existence that has achieved universal law. Regardless of where in the world we practice sport, the rules are the same and apply to everyone. They are based on our shared values. Sport is always about building bridges it is never about erecting walls.

We can only build bridges if our autonomy and our neutrality are respected. In the mutual interest of both sport and politics, I urge you to continue to protect and strengthen the autonomy of sport, as you did when you passed a UN resolution recognizing the autonomy of sport last October.

In Olympic sport, all people are equal, regardless of their race, gender, social status, cultural background, faith or belief. This fundamental principle of non-discrimination allows sport to promote peace and understanding among all people.

The Olympic Games are the culmination of this vision. The Olympic Games are the time when the values of tolerance, solidarity and peace are brought to life. This

is the time when the international community comes together for peaceful competition.

In the Olympic Village, we see tolerance and solidarity in their purest form. Athletes from all 206 National Olympic Committees are living together in harmony and without any kind of discrimination. This is the true spirit of “Olympic Unity in Diversity”: athletes from every corner of the world, living together under one roof.

In what is literally a global village, the athletes get to know and understand each other not just on a human level by sharing their experiences, emotions and meals. They share also their respect for excellence, victory and defeat. In this way, the Olympic athletes set an example to the whole world that it is possible to engage in competition while living peacefully together at the same time.

In this Olympic Spirit of peace and solidarity the IOC is together with the UNHCR assisting refugees all over the world by giving them activity, hope and self-confidence through sport.

The UN Secretary-General has appointed our Honorary President Jacques Rogge as Special Envoy on Youth Refugees and Sport in 2014. The IOC is happy to

support these activities financially and has additionally created a fund of 2 million US dollars to bring hope through sport to refugees.

At the same time, we are assisting high-level refugee athletes to continue their sports careers. We help them to make their dream of sporting excellence come true even when they have to flee from violence and hunger. I would like to appeal to all UN Member States to help us to identify such hopeful great athletes.

At present, none of these athletes would have the chance to participate in the Olympic Games even if being qualified from the sports point of view, because with their refugee status they are left without a home country and National Olympic Committee to represent.

Today, I am happy to announce to this UN General Assembly that the International Olympic Committee will invite the highest qualified refugee athletes to participate in the Olympic Games Rio de Janeiro 2016. Having no national team to belong to, having no flag to march behind, having no national anthem to be played, these refugee athletes will be welcomed to the Olympic Games with the Olympic Flag and with the Olympic Anthem. They will have a home together with all the other 11,000 athletes from 206 National Olympic Committees in the Olympic Village.

This will be a symbol of hope for all the refugees in our world, and will make the world better aware of the magnitude of this crisis.

Another wonderful example of how sport can promote peace and inclusion happened recently with the recognition of the NOC of South Sudan by the IOC. With this recognition, we wanted to send a signal of hope to a young nation and its people – a signal of hope, because sport always builds bridges between all people and cultures. The President of this newly recognized NOC of South Sudan thanked the IOC Session by saying: “Now we will arm our young people with sport, and not with guns.”

This is the spirit of the Olympic Truce that you will be upholding by supporting today’s resolution.

The Olympic Games are the moment when the international community comes together to celebrate our common humanity. There is no doubt in my mind that the upcoming Olympic and Paralympic Games Rio de Janeiro 2016 will provide a spectacular stage to showcase the best of the human spirit.

We can look forward to inspiring Olympic Games. I would like to reiterate the warm-hearted invitation to the international community to come together in Rio de

Janeiro in 2016, as expressed by the Organizing Committee so ably led by our friend and colleague Carlos Nuzman. Brazil and the Brazilians will enthusiastically welcome the world and overwhelm us with their joy of life and their passion for sport. Through the Olympic Games, the Brazilian people will remind the world of their unique combination of passion and efficiency.

History will talk about a Rio de Janeiro before the Olympic Games and a much better Rio de Janeiro, after the Olympic Games. Rio de Janeiro is building a legacy of the Olympic Games through very concrete measures. A much needed improvement of the public transportation system and education programmes for all will benefit generations to come. The Olympic Games in Rio de Janeiro are already now a symbol for the efforts of Brazil to build a better future for all its citizens.

The values of tolerance, solidarity and peace are a central part of Rio de Janeiro's legacy for the Brazilians. They will showcase sport as a key tool for peace, social inclusion and tolerance, in the fight against racial, ethnic or gender discrimination. I would like to commend the efforts by Brazil and the Paralympic Movement to promote the rights and inclusion of persons with disabilities at the Paralympics and beyond. This is another example of how sport can inspire social progress. Another example of this is the cooperation between the IOC and UNWomen. Our joint

initiative targets girls between the ages of 12-14 in schools across the State of Rio de Janeiro. Using a series of sports programmes we are empowering them to become future leaders.

The mission of the IOC is to put sport at the service of humanity. We are aware that we can only reach this goal in partnership with others. This is why today we are reaffirming our strong commitment to the United Nations and its Member States to work in partnership towards making our shared goals a reality.

The Olympic Truce can give hope for a better future for all. With your support for the resolution on the Olympic Truce today, it is my hope that the Olympic Games Rio de Janeiro 2016 will become synonymous with the efforts of the international community to build a peaceful and better world for all through sport.