



 [Click here to print](#)

## In Europe, Annan promotes sports for peace and development

24 January 2006 – On his way the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland later this week, United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan today visited major athletic organizations to continue to promote sports for peace and development.

“In the past we talked of ping-pong diplomacy, today we talk of cricket diplomacy,” Mr. Annan [told the press](#) after meeting with International Olympic Committee President Jacques Rogge in Lausanne, referring to the softening of relations between India and Pakistan through that game.

“I don’t know what else you are going to give us, Mr. Rogge, but what is important is that you are putting sports in the service of peace and development,” he added.

Speaking to Olympics staff, the Secretary-General said that governments have begun to take the potential of sports seriously, following the designation of 2005 as the International Year of Sports and Physical Education and other such initiatives.

As one sign of that, the General Assembly has supported the revival of the ancient concept of the Olympic Truce and has urged all countries to observe the truce during the Winter Olympics in Turin, he said.

Mr. Annan also visited the Zurich headquarters of the International Football Federation (FIFA), where he and FIFA President Joseph Blatter reiterated their support for the societal benefits of football (soccer).

“I can’t think of a single sport that has a capacity of bringing so many people together and getting them for 90 minutes to forget their worries,” Mr. Annan [said](#). “I’ve seen societies that have been divided for that brief moment forget their divisions and they become one nation, one people sharing for their people and nation to do things.”

In Davos, Mr. Annan will continue the sports theme at the opening media lunch on the subject of “The Impact of Sports in the World.”

Also while in Davos, at a plenary session of the World Economic Forum, he will deliver a speech entitled: “A New Mindset for the United Nations.”

Mr. Annan’s travel plans also include a stop at The Hague, for a meeting of the UN Development Programme (UNDP), and in London, for meetings on the Middle East peace process and the future of Afghanistan.