



United Nations



For the Good of the Game

KOFI A. ANNAN
SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE UNITED NATIONS

and

JOSEPH BLATTER
PRESIDENT OF THE FÉDÉRATION INTERNATIONALE
DE FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION

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MESSAGE WELCOMING THE OPENING OF THE FIFA WORLD CUP
6 June 2006

Football is a global language. It can bridge social, cultural and religious divides. It enhances personal development and growth, teaches us teamwork and fair play, builds self-esteem and opens doors to new opportunities. This, in turn, can contribute to the well-being of whole communities and countries.

That is why the United Nations is using football as a tool in our work to reach the Millennium Development Goals -- the set of powerful, people-centred objectives adopted by all countries as a blueprint for building a better world in the 21st century.

And it is why the United Nations is turning to football in our efforts to heal the emotional wounds of war among young people in refugee camps, and in countries recovering from armed conflict.

At the World Summit last year, all the world's Governments declared that "sports can foster peace and development, and can contribute to an atmosphere of tolerance and understanding".

Over the next few weeks, as billions of people worldwide focus on the FIFA World Cup, we appeal to players and fans everywhere to support us in our mission. Let us harness the magic of football to our quest for development and peace.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'K. Annan'.

Kofi A. Annan

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'J. Blatter'.

Joseph S. Blatter