

UNITED NATIONS



NATIONS UNIES

THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

MESSAGE CALLING FOR OBSERVANCE OF THE OLYMPIC TRUCE

10 February 2006

The Olympic Movement and the United Nations share fundamental ideals: tolerance and understanding; equal opportunities and fair play; and, most of all, peace. In a world growing ever closer and more interconnected, and yet still riven by brutal conflict, dire poverty and cruel injustice, it is more important than ever that we all join forces to give life to those ideals.

One way we can do that is to observe the Olympic Truce -- the call for warring parties to lay down their arms while athletes from the community of nations meet under the noble flame of the Olympic torch. While limited in duration and scope, the Olympic Truce can offer a neutral point of consensus, a window of time to open a dialogue, a pause to provide relief to a suffering population. Over the years, a great deal of support has been voiced worldwide for the concept of the Truce. The challenge before us is to ensure that it has as many practitioners as it has supporters on paper.

The United Nations General Assembly has called for observance of the Olympic Truce during the XXth Olympic Winter Games and Paralympic Winter Games in Turin. I join the Assembly in urging that athletes participating in the Games be afforded safe passage, and that all engaged in hostilities respect the truce. For these next few weeks, may the serenity of the Olympic flame silence the sound of gunfire.

Kofi A. Annan