
Olympic Truce

Extracts of speeches at the UN General Assembly

Senator Rosemary Crowley (Australia)

[...] Equally importantly, we support the resolution's affirmation of the principles of international friendship and cooperation, and the important role the Olympics, and sport more broadly, can play in helping to foster healthy, productive and peaceful communities beyond the limits of the Olympic Games. [...] Growing-up in Melbourne in the late 1950's I well remember the pride and excitement our city and nation felt in hosting the 14th Olympic Games. In many respects, those games helped bring the world to Australia and Australia to the world, at a time when we had been accepting many migrants from many nations. It was an important event in our nation's life, and a peaceful event in a hard year. They came to be known as the «Friendly Games», due to the inspiration of a young Chinese student who wrote to the Organising Committee suggesting that athletes walk together under the flag of the IOC in the closing cer-

emony, as a symbol and example of international goodwill. That practice has become a part of all the games since and it continues. [...] The Olympics are very important for other reasons. First, the Games are a major exercise in building capacity for the host country, from physical infrastructure to broad cultural activities. Second, people come from around the world to see sporting excellence and at the same time, participate in the host country's society, activities and culture. The Olympic Ideals must necessarily extend to cover all these opportunities. Many have commented that Australia did this brilliantly, from the opening to the closing ceremony. Australia smiled and Sydney sparkled. [...] The Olympics are about international excellence rather than nationality, and this resolution reflects that. [...] While the UN principles and activities are well met through this resolution, it

is very important that the opportunities presented by the Olympic Games themselves are used to put these principles into practice - for example non-discrimination in bringing sporting opportunity to women as well as men. Olympic villages have become places where lasting friendships are built and no-one is discriminated against because of race or religion. The Olympics are a young people's forum par excellence. Their skills, training, hard work and dedication, their sacrifices for their sport, their pride in representing their nation, their coping with disappointment, their celebrating of other contestants are some of the vital ingredients in this resolution. We, who are older, whom age is wearying, must learn from our young people and provide them with the necessary support. They are the future, and we must accept the challenge of this resolution to leave them a better world.

William J. Hybl, United States Public Delegate

Building a peaceful and better world is the underlying principle of the United Nations Charter. Usually the Organization does this by considering peace and security, sustainable development, human rights, and humanitarian assistance. Today we are considering how to build a peaceful and better world through sport and the Olympic Ideal.

Through sport one learns fair play, mutual understanding, solidarity, and friendship. These are virtues that the United Nations strives to embody in their work and as an example to the world community. Today the Assembly can support the ideal of teaching the youth of the world - not about sport - but to use sport to promote peace and the well being of society. [...]

Once again those somewhat simple but inspiring acts will reinforce the scope and power of the Olympic Movement and, for the first time, link athletes of the 21st Century with those of ancient Greece. The Salt Lake Organizing Committee and all those concerned, including over 27,000 volunteers in Utah, are promising to do their best to ensure the success of this world festival of winter sport.