
Olympic Truce

Mwelwa C. Musambachime, Permanent Representative of Zambia, on behalf of the Member States of the Organization of African Unity (OAU)

[...] I am delighted to express once again, on behalf of the African countries, our support for the Olympic Truce.

As you may recall, the Millennium Summit of the Heads of State and Government, held in New York in September 2000, included in its final declaration the following paragraph. I quote *'We urge Member States to observe the Olympic Truce, individually and collectively, now and in the future, to support the International*

Olympic Committee in its efforts to promote peace and human understanding through sport and the Olympic ideal', end quote. The International Olympic Committee has also cooperated very effectively with the United Nations General Assembly by organizing Round Tables for the National Olympic Committees whose countries were or are still in conflict situations in Africa, in the framework of the International Year of a Culture of Peace. [...] I believe that it is our

duty to promote peace and human understanding for the well-being of the society, by encouraging the observance of the Olympic Truce. This is in conformity with past resolutions of the General Assembly, to pursue purposes and principles of the United Nations' Charter. Finally, I would like to commend the International Olympic Committee on its efforts to mobilize the youth of the world in the cause of peace.

Jacques L. Boisson, Permanent Representative of Monaco

[...] We are indeed certain that, during the present period when, in addition to numerous previous conflicts, new sources of concern to the international community have arisen, the joint initiative of the United Nations and the International Olympic Committee, which has been renewed, every two years, for eight years now, represents a chance for

the warring parties to make contact, open and re-establish dialogue, rejecting sterile mistrust. A few weeks of respite during fighting have often been put to good use for embarking upon urgent, neutral, balanced and humanitarian interventions, enabling emissaries to intervene with a view to finding, with the warring parties themselves, solutions to their dispute. [...]

If doubt is a tribute paid to hope, the pessimism towards which everything is carrying us today is but a passing feeling, one that a small ray of hope would enable us to disperse. The Olympic Truce decreed for the XIX Olympic Winter Games may be that ray of hope. We must believe this, and devote ourselves to it with optimism and confidence.

Elias Gounaris, Permanent Representative of Greece

[...] The term *'ekecheiria'*, that in ancient Greek literally translates as *'holding hands'*, indicates the creation of appropriate conditions, in order to allow athletes participating in the Olympic Games, as well as their relatives and thousands of ordinary pilgrims to travel, unobstructed by fear, attend the legendary Games in peace and then return to their hometowns in safety and security. Moreover, the purpose of the Olympic Truce movement is more far-reaching: it could become a

positive factor in international rapprochement and a useful tool for diplomacy. In every nation and society, culture or religion, the Olympic Games are recognized as the major sporting event of our world, a unique sports and cultural festivity, that should promote the values we wish to cherish in our global village.

[...] No other year could this message be more timely. We aim to emphasise the importance of the issues of dialogue, tolerance, mutual understand-

ing, respect and cooperation between cultures, religions and civilizations. This is our everyday challenge under the Charter of the United Nations: to promote those issues that unite us and practice dialogue on those that stand between us. We need to open ways of communication and to promote dialogue among those who do not already practice it.[...] The message of peace and reconciliation, originating in this Resolution, will give us, hope and vision towards our common goals.