



INTERNATIONAL
OLYMPIC
COMMITTEE

Thomas Bach
President

Remarks on the Occasion of the Arrival of the Olympic Flame at the United Nations

United Nations Office in Geneva

29 April 2016

Excellence, Monsieur le Secrétaire général des Nations Unies, Ban Ki-moon,
Monsieur le Président d'honneur du CIO, mon cher collègue et ami Jacques Rogge,
Votre Altesse sérénissime Le Prince Albert II de Monaco,
Monsieur le Président du comité d'organisation des Jeux Olympiques et Paralympiques de Rio 2016, mon cher collègue et ami Carlos Nuzman,
Excellence, Monsieur le Ministre des Sports du Brésil, Ricardo Leyser,
Monsieur le directeur général du bureau des Nations Unies à Genève, Michael Møller,
Monsieur le conseiller spécial des Nations Unies pour le sport au service du développement et de la paix, Willi Lemke,
Excellences,
Les Membres du CIO,
Chers collègues et amis,
Mesdames et Messieurs,

Permettez-moi de remercier le Secrétaire général pour ses aimables paroles et la bienvenue aux Nations Unies à Genève. Nous sommes très heureux d'être ici aux Nations Unies pour un événement à la fois symbolique et historique. La flamme des Jeux Olympiques de Rio 2016 a été allumée il y a une semaine à Olympie, berceau des Jeux Olympiques de l'Antiquité. Elle a fait ensuite voyager l'esprit et les valeurs olympiques à travers toute la Grèce. Ces valeurs olympiques ont trouvé toute leur signification lorsqu'un jeune réfugié syrien a porté la flamme olympique à Athènes. Aujourd'hui sur sa route vers le Brésil, la flamme est aux Nations Unies où toutes les nations se rassemblent autour du même objectif : promouvoir la coopération internationale et la paix pour faire avancer l'humanité.

At the IOC, we share the same principles that are at the foundation of the United Nations. Both the United Nations and the IOC share the values of tolerance, solidarity and peace.



One expression of this solidarity is the creation of the Refugee Olympic Team that the IOC has initiated for the Olympic Games Rio 2016. By welcoming this team of refugees on an equal basis together with all other 206 National Olympic Committees, we want to send a message of hope to all refugees in our world that they are not forgotten. In our fragile world, the Olympic Values of solidarity and peace are more important than ever. The Olympic Games are the time when these values are brought to life.

In ancient times as today, the Olympic Games are a message of hope and peace. Sport always builds bridges. Sport never erects walls. The Olympic flame and the Olympic Games are sending the message that our shared humanity is greater than the forces that divide us. In a world shaken by crises, this message is more relevant than ever before. What better place than the United Nations to share this universal message of our shared humanity and peace.

The foundation for the ancient Olympic Games to take place in peace was a sacred truce – the *ekecheiria*, or the Olympic Truce. The *ekecheiria* ensured a halt to hostilities, allowing athletes and spectators to travel safely to Olympia and home again. Recognising the symbolic relevance of this ancient tradition for today's world, the United Nations is continuing this 3,000-year-old tradition, most recently by adopting a resolution calling on all nations to observe the Olympic Truce for the Olympic Games Rio 2016.

These will be spectacular Olympic Games. In just a few weeks, the Brazilian people will enthusiastically welcome the world and amaze us with their joy of life and their passion for sport.

I would like to send from here, the best wishes to the President of the Organising Committee, Carlos Nuzman and all his team and all the Brazilian people for the great preparations for these Olympic Games. We look forward in anticipation to arrive in Brazil and to be welcomed by the warm and hospitable Brazilian people.

Over the years, our partnership with the United Nations has deepened on many levels. It was a truly historic moment last September in New York when the General Assembly adopted the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Mr. Secretary-General, your tireless efforts and great personal initiative to rally world leaders behind the SDGs was the key factor in making



this agreement a reality. The IOC wholeheartedly supports the SDGs' objectives and is honoured to join hands with the United Nations to work together for a better world.

Mr. Secretary-General, your appointment of our Honorary President Jacques Rogge as Special Envoy on Youth Refugees and Sport is another expression of our deep connection. The historic resolution by the United Nations General Assembly recognising the autonomy of sport and the leadership role of the IOC is another milestone. This milestone is of fundamental importance because sport can only play this enabling role in society if its autonomy and neutrality are respected.

To honour this close partnership, it is now my great privilege to officially present the United Nations with the Olympic Cup for the year 2015. The Olympic Cup was created in 1906 by our Founder, Pierre de Coubertin. The Olympic Cup is the highest honour awarded by the IOC to an organisation or institution that has rendered a distinguished service to sport and that has contributed to the promotion of the Olympic idea.

Mr. Secretary-General, this close cooperation that our organisations enjoy today would not be possible without your personal dedication to Olympic Values. By awarding the Olympic Cup to the United Nations, we are also recognising your outstanding personal engagement to build a better world through sport. Thank you for your steadfast commitment to our shared values.

I would now like to invite you, your Excellency, Mr. Secretary-General, onto the stage to receive the Olympic Cup of the International Olympic Committee on behalf of the United Nations.

[President presents the Olympic Cup]