

UNITED NATIONS



NATIONS UNIES

THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

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**MESSAGE CALLING FOR OBSERVANCE
OF THE OLYMPIC TRUCE**

8 August 2008

The Olympic Games celebrate the human spirit. They bring together athletes from myriad backgrounds, all cultures and every nationality in a common endeavor to excel -- to run faster, reach further, and aim higher. But the true excellence of the Games rests in their ability to unite humanity around universal aspirations: equality, fair play, sportsmanship, tolerance and, above all, peace.

These values represent the driving force of the Olympic Movement, which employs the potential of sports to promote a culture of peace, prosperity and human dignity. These same ideals underpin the United Nations Charter and its aspirations to promote human welfare, safeguard human rights and enhance global understanding and cooperation. Taken together, the Olympic Movement and the United Nations constitute a gold medal team in the race to advance humanity's most cherished ideals.

The most visible and immediate manifestation of teamwork between the UN and the Olympic Movement is the Olympic Truce, which calls for a worldwide cessation of all hostilities for the duration of the Games.

Though limited in duration, this Truce has unlimited potential. It can provide a pause in which to reconsider the heavy cost of war; an opening to initiate a dialogue, and a window to provide relief for suffering populations. It can demonstrate to the world that peace is possible in even the most seemingly intractable situations if we truly work towards it.

But the Olympic Truce is only meaningful in its observance. I join the International Olympic Committee and the United Nations General Assembly in calling on all those who are at war to observe this Truce. Let them lay down their weapons, if only temporarily, so that humanity can lay claim to gold even before the Games begin.