



International
Olympic
Committee

The President

Adoption of the Olympic Truce Resolution
UN General Assembly, New York, 2 December 2021

Dear President of the UN General Assembly, Your Excellency, Abdulla Shahid,
Dear Ambassador of the People's Republic of China, Your Excellency, Zhang Jun,
Dear Co-Chairs of the Group of Friends of Sport,
Your Excellencies,
Ladies and gentlemen,

Please let me convey to you the greetings and best wishes of the President of the International Olympic Committee, Thomas Bach. He would have loved to be here today, however the pandemic situation prevented him from coming. President Bach asked me to deliver his speech on his behalf, which I am honoured to do.

Please allow me to express my heartfelt thanks and gratitude to the Member States of the UN General Assembly for supporting this Olympic Truce Resolution.

In particular, I would like to thank the President of the UN General Assembly. My thanks go the Mission of the People's Republic of China for submitting the text in the tradition of previous Olympic Truce resolutions. I would also like to thank the Co-Chairs of the Group of Friends of Sport, Qatar and Monaco, as well as the many Member States that have supported this resolution as co-sponsors.

By adopting this resolution, you are supporting the mission of the Olympic Games to unite the best winter sport athletes of the entire world, without any discrimination whatsoever, in a peaceful and respectful competition.

This bond of our shared humanity is even more relevant in our polarised world today.

We can only accomplish this mission if the Olympic Games stand above and beyond all political, cultural and other differences. This is only possible if the Olympic Games are politically neutral and do not become a tool to achieve political goals.

Already the ancient Greeks understood this 3,000 years ago. They established the ekecheiria – a sacred truce – which allowed the participation of all athletes and spectators from the Greek city-states, who were otherwise almost constantly engaged in conflict with each other.

In this way there was from the very beginning, an inseparable link between the Olympic Games and peace, which allowed the ancient Olympic Games to take place for approximately 1,000 years.

Just a couple of weeks ago, the original parties of the ekecheiria – the cities of Olympia, Iliada and Sparta – have solemnly renewed their pledge with their Olympic Truce declaration. I hope that this meaningful initiative is an encouragement for all UN Member States.

History also shows us what happens if the political neutrality of the Olympic Games is not respected.

The ancient Olympic Games came to an end when the Roman emperor Theodosius effectively abolished them for political reasons. It took almost 2,000 years before the Olympic Games could be revived by our founder, Pierre de Coubertin. I hope very much that we all take this lesson of history to heart.

You may ask, why this lesson still matters today?

The answer is: because the Olympic athletes demonstrate to the entire world that yes, it is possible to be fierce rivals and engage in intense competition, while at the same time living peacefully and respectfully together.

In the Olympic Village, the athletes from every corner of the world are living together in harmony. In the Olympic Games, we are all equal, irrespective of social background, gender, race, sexual orientation, or political belief. In the Olympic Games, everyone respects the same rules – rules set by the IOC and the Olympic Charter.

In this spirit, the Olympic Winter Games Beijing 2022 will be an important moment.

These Olympic Winter Games will be the start of a new era of global winter sport. With 300 million Chinese people engaging with sport on snow and ice, the global participation in winter sports will be taken to new levels.

Already now, this sport engagement contributes greatly to physical and mental health in China.

Beijing 2022 will also show the way forward with all Olympic venues being powered with renewable energy. Most venues in Beijing are a legacy of the Olympic Games Beijing 2008. The millions of new winter sport enthusiasts will ensure the use of the Olympic venues for the future.

These Olympic Winter Games will also be a great demonstration of the safe organisation of such a global event in the context of the zero-COVID strategy, which has proven so successful for China.

In this respect, I would like to express my gratitude to the Beijing 2022 Organising Committee, which is preparing these Olympic Winter Games with such great efficiency and dynamism. All the recent test events have highlighted the outstanding state of

preparations. In all this, we highly appreciate the excellent cooperation with the Organising Committee, in line with the Olympic Charter and the Host City Contract.

The efforts of the IOC to strengthen sport as an important enabler for the UN Sustainable Development Goals do not end here. In our Olympic Agenda 2020+5 strategic roadmap, we have highlighted how we will fulfil this enabling role which you, the UN Member States, have assigned to sport.

With the Olympic Truce Resolution, you are recognising this contribution of sport to peace, health and many other SDGs.

Please allow me to highlight just one : climate action. The IOC is already a carbon-neutral organisation and we are committed to becoming even climate-positive by 2024. We are partnering with the UN to plant an Olympic Forest in Sub-Saharan Africa, to over-compensate our emissions and to improve lives and livelihoods in 90 villages in the region.

The pandemic, the UN SDGs, and all the challenges we are facing today have taught us one lesson: we can only go faster, we can only aim higher, we can only become stronger, if we work together.

This is why we amended our Olympic motto to: Faster, Higher, Stronger – Together.

The word “together” tells us: We need more solidarity. More solidarity within societies and more solidarity among societies.

Because: there is no peace without solidarity.

In this Olympic spirit, I invite you to join hands by adopting this resolution, as we work together, to accomplish the mission of the Olympic Games to unite the world in peaceful and respectful competition.