

Mr President, Dear Delegates,

It is with great emotion and humility that I address you today **on the subject of the Olympic Truce**. But it is also **with a strong conviction: that sport changes lives**.

Sport changes lives, and it changed Abebe Bikila's life.

As a child in the village of Jato, in Ethiopia, he tended the family herd. In 1960, unknown to the public, he owed his participation in the Marathon at the Olympic Games in Rome to a stroke of fate. He was called on to replace his injured compatriot. Yet it was Bikila who passed the Arch of Constantine **alone, and without shoes**, to become the hero of a continent. **He was the first athlete from sub-Saharan Africa to become an Olympic champion**, paving the way for a long line of African champions. Bikila would go on to win a unique double four years later in Tokyo, making him even more of a legend.. But he was later to suffer a serious car accident that left him paralysed. It was thanks to sport that he began his rehabilitation and took part, in a wheelchair, in the Stoke Mandeville Games, the forerunner of the Paralympic Games.

Sport changes lives, and it changed the life of Fanny Blankers-Koen. She was named Female Athlete of the 20th Century thanks, in particular, to her four gold medals at the Olympic Games London 1948. But was almost the least of her achievements... just to be at the start of the women's 100 metres on 2 August 1948 made 30-year-old mother-of-two was one of a tiny minority of women who dared to make sport their passion. She was a pioneer who shook things up. She changed the world's perception of women's sport.

Over the decades, thousands of athletes like Abebe and Fanny have thrilled us. They have made us dream, cry and feel proud. As true role models, they have inspired entire generations and have succeeded, thanks to the power of sport and its values, in taking part in the major challenges facing our societies and contributing to a better, more inclusive, more egalitarian, more responsible world, and, as a result, changing our lives beyond borders and differences.

Sport itself is a genuine call for tolerance and respect. In a competition, religion, cultural or social origin are of no importance - the only thing that counts is the result. And very often, diversity is even a strength, because complementary profiles make for a better team.

In sport, differences make the difference.

The Games are the best representation of the power of sport, because they spread these values of sharing, tolerance and respect throughout the whole world. **The Games bring together the values of sport and the diversity of the world: they are universal.**

With more than 200 National Olympic and Paralympic Committees represented, and 54 sports, millions of spectators and more than three billion television viewers, **the Games are the largest gathering place in the world.**

The Olympic Village, where thousands of athletes from all over the world live together peacefully, is the most symbolic representation of the universality of the Games. It is a place where, whatever your nationality, gender or skin colour, you can live in harmony, respecting others. **The Village is humanity united in one place, in all its diversity.** Like this United Nations General Assembly, of which you are the worthy representatives, **the Village and its athletes help to show that a better world is possible.**

In my sports career, I was lucky enough to take part in four editions of the Olympic Games. Aside from the highlights of sport and competition, my most vivid memories are of the Olympic Village, this place of fraternity. Moments of sharing, discovery and exchange with athletes from every continent, all united by a love of sport and a desire to be present for the most important moment of their careers.

The Games are about the whole world coming together in one place, but also about the whole world outside, watching and marching to the beat of the same emotions. From Kingston to New Delhi, from Sydney to Nairobi, everyone is holding their breath in anticipation of the performances of the 15,000 Olympic and Paralympic athletes.

If the Games are universal, it is because they speak to us in a language we all understand: that of emotions.

[...]

Of course, we know that the Games cannot do everything. But we believe that the Games are an extremely inspiring example, because they show what we have in common, rather than what divides us. **In the current climate of conflict and tension, we are convinced that we need the Games more than ever.**

After an absence of one hundred years, France, homeland of Pierre de Coubertin and the country of the revival of the modern Games, will be hosting the 33rd Summer Olympic Games. And for the first time, our country will also host the Summer Paralympic Games, for their 17th edition. **France has been preparing for many years, and is looking forward to welcoming the world.** This is an historic moment that we are about to experience, and an immense honour for the Organising Committee for the Olympic and Paralympic Games, of which I am the President. We are also looking at this honour with a keen sense of responsibility. That of keeping alive the powerful and universal ideal of the Games. And to do this, we have chosen a motto: Games wide open.

“Games wide open” is more than a slogan, it is a vision that permeates our entire project.

With Games wide open, we will be taking the celebration of the universality of the Games to its logical conclusion. We will transform Paris into an Olympic park to welcome the world with spectacular Games, in a spirit of communion between the public and the athletes:

- From 26 July 2024, the Opening Ceremony of the Olympic Games will pay tribute to the universal values of sport thanks to its original concept of a procession of boats sailing along the Seine, with athletes from the delegations from throughout the world.
- Throughout the Games, the most iconic monuments will be transformed into competition venues, at the service of sporting performance in the heart of the City of Light.
- Celebration venues will be open to the public, such as the Champions Park in front of the Eiffel Tower, which will celebrate Olympic medallists from throughout the world.

Games wide open also means taking action to ensure that the Games are committed and in tune with their era, in line with the Sustainable Development Goals and the implementation of the Paris Agreements. **With the support of International Olympic Committee President Thomas Bach,** whom I would like to thank, as well as all our public and private partners, Paris 2024 is first and foremost committed to the environment, with a reduction in carbon emissions by half compared to previous editions. For the first time in history, our Olympic Games will be 100 per cent gender-balanced, and women will be given a special place of honour. Our Paralympic Games will also help to build a more

inclusive society, to change the way people look at disability. We also wanted our Games to leave a useful and lasting legacy for our society, particularly for the younger generations, by developing the practice of sport for their health and well-being.

[...]

Mr President, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Dear Members of the Permanent Representation of France to the United Nations, Dear Representatives of the Member States,

Today we bring you a strong message, a universal message in favour of peace, according to the Ancient Greek tradition of the Olympic Truce.

I would like to thank all the delegations that have expressed their support and co-sponsored this draft Resolution, in close cooperation with the International Olympic Committee.

I stand before you humbled by the course of world events, but also with the deep conviction that, more than ever, sport has a role to play and can help us take a step towards a better world. The Olympic Games Paris 2024 are ready to play their part.

Before your prestigious institution, **I have the honour of presenting the Resolution “For a better world through sport”, looking ahead to the Olympic and Paralympic Games Paris 2024.**

Thank you very much.