Story script and Shot log

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STORY HEADLINE: UN Secretary-General underscores UN commitment to IOC and its mission

LOCATION: Beijing, China
DATE: Feb 5 2022
LANGUAGE: English

STORY SCRIPT:
United Nations (UN) Secretary-General Antonio Gutерres delivered a strong endorsement of the International Olympic Committee (IOC) and its contribution to peace during a visit to the Olympic Winter Games Beijing 2022.

The Secretary-General called the Games a desperately needed antidote to division and hatred. He said: “When we see so many conflicts around the world, we see the absolute relevance of having Olympic Games in which all countries are represented - even, unfortunately, some that are in a war situation - to have them all here and to show that peace is possible, that unity is possible, and that solidarity is possible. This fully justifies the strong commitment of the United Nations to support the International Olympic Committee.”

The UN has long been a strong supporter of the IOC. The ties between the global diplomatic body and the non-profit sports organisation were further strengthened in 2009 when the UN granted the IOC official UN Observer status. Five years later, the IOC and the UN took the relationship to another level with a Memorandum of Understanding that pledged further cooperation and reaffirmed the organisations’ shared values of “contributing to a better and peaceful world through sport”.

In another sign of the strength of the relationship, the UN adopts an Olympic Truce resolution in advance of every edition of the Games, calling on all countries to cease hostilities during the Games. The 193 UN members approved this year’s truce by consensus.

The Secretary-General called the Olympic Truce “the most important and most ancient symbol of the importance of peace”. He stressed the relevance of the truce and the Games amid the current global tensions.

He said: “I think we need at this moment more than ever the message of unity and solidarity that is the message of the Olympic Games. In a moment when we see so many expressions of populism, so many expressions of racism, so many expressions of xenophobia, antisemitism, anti-Muslim hatred, to be here and to be with athletes that come from all cultures, from all countries, from all ethnicities, from all religions, it’s a fantastic
message. It's a message of tolerance, of mutual respect and a message in which it's proven that it's possible to compete loyally and at the same time to fraternise."

IOC President Thomas Bach and the Secretary-General used their time together in Beijing to explore ideas for more collaboration between their organisations.

President Bach said: "Both the United Nations and the IOC are about peace and understanding and solidarity. This has become once more very clear in this meeting where we also had the opportunity to discuss together further steps of cooperation so that we at the IOC can make an even strengthened contribution to peace and the realisation of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals."

The Secretary-General said the Games also send a powerful message that competition can occur without generating conflict.

He said: "This is what is needed in the world. Of course, there is competition in the world, but that competition does not necessarily mean an enmity. That competition needs to allow the world to come together and to face the enormous challenges of today: COVID-19, climate change, inequality, all things that require much more unity and solidarity in our world and the message of these Olympic Games is that message."

This echoed the comments of UN General Assembly President Abdulla Shahid, who is also attending the Beijing Games. He described Olympic athletes as diplomats and said the Games provide a platform for peace by "showing humanity at its best."

The Olympic Winter Games Beijing 2022 are taking place until 20 February 2022 and will be followed by the Paralympic Games from 4 to 13 March 2022.

SHOT LIST

00:01 SOUNDbite: Thomas Bach, IOC President (English Language)

"First of all, I would like to thank the Secretary General of the United Nations for having accepted our invitation to attend these Olympic Winter Games. It is indeed an expression of our shared values. Both the United Nations and the IOC are about peace and understanding and solidarity. And this has become once more very clear in this meeting where we also had the opportunity to discuss together further steps of cooperation so that we at the IOC can make an even strengthened contribution to peace and the realisation of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals."

01:00 SOUNDbite: Antonio Guterres, United Nations Secretary-General (English Language)

"Indeed, I think we need at this moment more than ever the message of unity and solidarity - that is the message of the Olympic Games. In a moment where we see so many expressions of populism, so many expressions of racism, so many expressions of xenophobia, antisemitism and anti-Muslim hatred, to be here and to be with athletes that come from all cultures, from all countries, from all ethnicities, from all religions, is a fantastic message, a message of tolerance, a message of mutual respect and a message in which it's proven that it's possible to compete loyally and at the same time to fraternise. And this is what we need in today's world. Of course there is competition in the world, but that competition does not necessarily mean enmity. That competition needs to allow the world to come together and to face the enormous challenges of today. Covid, climate change, inequality, all things that require much more unity and solidarity in our world. And
the message of these Olympic Games is that message. And the Olympic Truce is the most important and most ancient symbol of the importance of peace.

“I have had the opportunity a few days ago to invoke the Olympic Truce to ask Ethiopians to stop fighting. And when we see so many conflicts around the world, we see the absolute relevance of having Olympic Games in which all countries are represented, even unfortunately some that are in a war situation. To have them all here and to show that peace is possible, that unity is possible, and that solidarity is possible fully justifies the strong commitment of the United Nations to support the International Olympic Committee.”

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