



OLYMPICS AND HUMAN RIGHTS

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ABSTRACT

Kofi Anna and Jaun Antonio Samaranch, Secretary General and former President of United Nations and International Olympic Committee respectively gave a joint statement on 23rd June, 2000, on the occasion of Olympic day Observance that "The Goal of Olympic Movement is to place sport at the service of humanity, by harnessing its great potential to the global struggle for peace, prosperity and the preservation of human dignity. The objectives of the United Nations are very much the same: it strives for the peaceful settlement of disputes, social progress and better standards of life, and harmonious relations among people and nations. Indeed, the United National General Assembly has repeatedly recognized the natural affinity between Olympic Ideals and those enshrined in the United Nations Charter and, in that spirit, has urged all member States to abide by the Olympic Truce".

KEYWORDS: social progress , peaceful settlement , human rights.

INTRODUCTION :

Further the resolution 1995/96 of commission of human rights states: Recalling the basic principles of Universal Declaration of Human rights which, inter alia, provide that it is essential to promote the development of friendly relations between nations and that education shall be directed to the full development of the personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and to promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations for the maintenance of peace.

Recalling also the value of the equal rights of men and women to the enjoyment of all economic, social and cultural rights and the recognition of the right of everyone to take part in cultural life.

Recalling further General Assembly resolution 48/11 of 24 October 1993 in which, inter alia, the Assembly, recognizing that the goal of the Olympic Movement is to build a peaceful and better world by educating the youth of the world through sport, practiced without discrimination of any kind and in the Olympic spirit, which requires mutual understanding, promoted by friendship, solidarity and fair play, recognized the efforts to restore the ancient Greek tradition of Olympic Truce, calling for the hostilities to cease during the Olympic Games, thereby mobilizing the youth of the world in the cause of peace, bearing in mind General Assembly resolution 50/13 of 7 November 1995 on the Olympic Ideal.

Taking into account in particular the sixth preambular paragraph of General Assembly resolution 49/29 of 7 December 1994.

- 1- Stresses the importance of the principles of the Olympic Charter, according to which any form of discrimination with regard to a country or a person on grounds of race, religion, politics sex or otherwise is incompatible with the Olympic Movement.

- 2- Reaffirms that sports may contribute to the promotion of social integration of target groups, such as women and youth.
- 3- Expresses its satisfaction that the General Assembly, at its 15th Session, decided to include in its agenda a biennial item entitled "Building a peaceful and better world through sport and the Olympic Ideal", to be considered in advance of each Summer and Winter Olympic Games.
- 4- Maintains its support for the Olympic Ideal on the occasion of the eve of the centenary of the revival of the Olympic Games in 1896 at Athens, at the initiative of a French educator, Baron Pierre de Coubertin.
- 5- Recognizes that the Olympic Games have exemplified excellence through education and cultural expression.
- 6- Reaffirms once again the valuable contribution of the Olympic Movement to the promotion, protection and implementation of human rights and to the creation of global friendship and the maintenance of world peace.
- 7- Urges all States to take the necessary and appropriate measures for the equal and full participation, without any discrimination of women and men in the Olympic Game in accordance with the spirit of the Olympic ideal and the principles of the Olympic Movement.

While Olympism has achieved a degree of success for its human rights ideals, more attention is required for the feature to the rights of the humans—as athletes, as spectators and as communities rather than continuing the current focus on sponsors, the media and the bureaucracy of the IOC and sports organization.

Sports and Human Rights—An Olympic Tradition

When black American Athlete Jesse Owens broke the winners tape in the 1936 Berlin Olympics shattering Hitler's Propaganda of German racial superiority, he showed the power of the Olympics to advance struggles for human dignity and human rights. This capacity was recognized in the opening ceremony of the 1998 Nagano Winter Games with the participation of land mines survivor, Campaigner and athlete Chris Moon as Torch Bearer and the call of Juan Antonio Samaranch for an Olympics Truce in the Middle East.

The Olympic Movement took a lead in opposing Apartheid and in welcoming the new South Africa back into the world of sporting community. The Seoul Olympics is credited with helping transform South Korea from dictatorship to democracy.

In the 1968 Mexico Games, black American athletes on the winner podium made a powerful statement for civil rights when they raised their clenched fists in victory. And in the face of tragedy at the 1972 Munich Olympics athletes took a brace stand against terror.

The relationship between sports and human rights goes beyond the Olympics. David Ginola, former French Footballer of the year, was chosen to succeed Princess Diana as figurehead of the International campaign to ban landmines.

Cathy Freeman's eloquent gesture in holding aloft the Australian and Aboriginal flags on her lap of honour at the Commonwealth Games expressed the mood of a nation searching for reconciliation.

The mass protests in Australia and New Zealand against the springbok tours in the Apartheid years expressed popular expectations of the contribution that sports people and institutions, can play in respecting protecting and promoting human rights.

Today this contribution can be seen in dusty streets of South Africa's townships, the divided countryside of Burundi and the city streets of Paris where sports is being used to build tolerance, understanding and respect and to offer new opportunities to those with few.

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