

# United Nations and FIFA join forces for peace and development

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**On June 6th, 2006 United Nations Secretary-General Kofi A. Annan and FIFA President Joseph S. Blatter jointly launched a message for the opening of the FIFA World Cup in Germany.**

In a joint message welcoming the opening of the 2006 FIFA World Cup in Germany, United Nations Secretary-General Kofi A. Annan and FIFA President Joseph S. Blatter made an appeal for peace, tolerance, and development. Their message is addressed to the whole world as it comes together in Munich to witness the start of the world's biggest sporting event.

The message, which is the first of its kind, kicks off a month-long United Nations system-wide mobilization, from 9 June to 9 July on the issue of sport for development and peace during the World Cup. With billions of people worldwide following the World Cup, the event offers an unparalleled opportunity to raise awareness about the many significant contributions made by football (soccer), and other sports towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals by 2015 and fostering tolerance, understanding and peace.

Last January, the FIFA President welcomed Kofi A. Annan to FIFA headquarters for a discussion centred around their shared objectives. The two men talked about how sport in general and football in particular can play a key role in development all around the world.

Being aware and emphasizing the positive dimensions of sport and its great potential, to help create a better world, the United Nations and The FIFA jointly welcome the FIFA World Cup 2006. The integral version follows below.

MESSAGE WELCOMING THE OPENING OF THE FIFA WORLD CUP-  
June 2006

Football is a global language. It can bridge social, cultural and religious divides. It enhances personal development and growth, teaches us teamwork and fair play, builds self-esteem and opens doors to new opportunities. This, in turn, can contribute to the well-being of whole communities and countries.

That is why the United Nations is using football as a tool in our work to reach the Millennium Development Goals - the set of powerful, people-centred objectives adopted by all countries as a blueprint for building a better world in the 21st century.

And it is why the United Nations is turning to football in our efforts to heal the emotional wounds of war among young people in refugee camps, and in countries recovering from armed conflict.

At the World Summit last year, all of the world's Governments declared that "sports can foster peace and development, and can contribute to an atmosphere of tolerance and understanding".

Over the next few weeks, as billions of people worldwide focus on the FIFA World Cup, we appeal to players and fans everywhere to support to us in our mission. Let us harness the magic of football in our quest for development and peace.

To download the UN-FIFA Joint Message for the 2006 World Cup, please click on:  
[www.un.org/sport2005/](http://www.un.org/sport2005/)

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