

**Speech of the IOC President Jacques Rogge
Lighting ceremony of the Olympic flame of
the 2010 Vancouver Games
Olympia, 22 October 2009**

It is always a special moment to be in Olympia, the birthplace of our Movement.

The Olympic torch and flame are the symbols of the values and ideals which lie at the heart of the Olympic Games.

It's a message of friendship and respect to millions of people of different nationalities, races and creeds.

And above all it is a message of peace sent throughout the world, symbolised by the tradition of the Olympic Truce or the "Ekecheiria" that was proclaimed and announced by citizens of Elis who travelled throughout Greece to pass on the message.

Three days ago, the UN General Assembly adopted the Olympic Truce Resolution for the Vancouver Games, inviting the UN member States to observe and promote peace during Games time in order to protect the interests of athletes and sport, and to contribute, through sport, to the quest for peaceful and diplomatic solutions to the world's conflicts.

I would like here to thank Her Excellency, The Right Honourable Michaëlle Jean, Governor General of Canada, the patron of the Olympic Truce Vancouver 2010, who introduced the resolution to the UN, and also VANOC for having taken some commendable initiatives in this respect.

I am also delighted that the United Nations has accepted to grant to the IOC an UN observer status, further underlining the role sport can play in contributing to a better and more peaceful world.

The Vancouver 2010 Olympic Torch Relay will allow us to celebrate together and be inspired by its message of peace, as it touches the hearts of thousands of torchbearers and spectators, who will witness its journey.

As the Relay passes through more than 1,000 Canadian communities, the excitement will steadily grow until the flame arrives in Vancouver on 12 February next year.

The longest national Olympic Torch Relay in history will create a spirit of global community and world citizenship.

It will unite us as world citizens, bound by the Olympic values of excellence, friendship and respect.

It will inspire new hopes, new dreams, particularly among the younger generation, to take part in the Games.

It will invite Canadians and visitors from around the world to gather and celebrate the Games with glowing hearts.

It will be another example of how the Vancouver Games will make a difference by spreading the Olympic values far and wide.

I would like to thank the Vancouver Organising Committee, and in particular its Chairman, Jack Poole, who could not be present with us today and to whom I bring a very warm and special salute, and also my utmost thanks to CEO, John Furlong, for all his efforts with his team and their dedication to making the Vancouver Games and Torch Relay a success.

Thanks also to the presenting partners, Coca-Cola and Royal Bank of Canada as well as the Government of Canada for helping us to spread our joint message.

My thanks go also to the Hellenic Olympic Committee, to its President, Spyros Capralos, and to my IOC colleague Lambis Nikolaou for their great support.

SAS EFHARISTÓ POLÝ FÍLY
MOU ÉLLINES YIA TIN
EKSERETIKÍ SYNERGASÍA