

UNITED NATIONS



NATIONS UNIES

**THE SECRETARY-GENERAL**

--

**MESSAGE ON THE INTERNATIONAL DAY  
FOR THE ELIMINATION OF RACIAL DISCRIMINATION  
21 March 2010**

Fifty years ago today, scores of non-violent protestors were massacred in Sharpeville, South Africa, during a demonstration against the country's repugnant pass laws. The United Nations marks the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination on this solemn anniversary to reaffirm our commitment to guard against a repeat of the horrors rooted in racism – from slavery to the Holocaust, from apartheid to ethnic cleansing and genocide.

The focus of this year's observance on the interface between racism and sport is particularly timely as South Africa will be the first African country to host the FIFA Football World Cup. It is our collective responsibility to ensure that there will be no room for racist and xenophobic acts both inside and outside stadiums at this important event.

More broadly, we must push for all sports organizations to adopt stringent anti-discrimination policies, as well as frameworks for punishing the perpetrators of racist incidents and justice for the victims.

At the same time, we should see this International Day as an opportunity to spotlight the positive role of sports in bringing people of all backgrounds and cultures closer together. Sports can empower disenfranchised communities, influence our perceptions and inspire millions of people around the world.

Let us honour the memory of those who died in Sharpeville and other racist incidents by redoubling our efforts to eradicate all forms of racism and racial discrimination. Let us translate good intentions into legal standards and the will to uphold them. Above all, let us cherish the rich diversity of humankind and respect the inherent dignity and equality of every human being.