

THE SECRETARY-GENERAL
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MESSAGE TO “CHESS FOR DIALOGUE” EVENT
ORGANIZED BY THE PERMANENT MISSIONS OF HUNGARY AND
UKRAINE
New York, June 18 2015

Delivered by Ms. Hua Jiang, Officer-in-Charge, Department of Public Information

It is a pleasure to convey greetings and best wishes to all who have gathered for this event organized by the Permanent Missions of Hungary and Ukraine.

We at the United Nations are big fans of the global sport of chess.

One might wonder why this is so, given that chess involves so much violent imagery. We see knights doing battle, and pawns being blockaded. We see attacks and counter-attacks, as well as attempts to capture the Queen and isolate the King.

But it is also true that the characteristics and values of chess can help the United Nations achieve its goals.

Chess is global, and can be played anywhere, from refugee camps to city parks to international competition halls. Its low cost and universal rules make it an affordable and inclusive activity for all. It can help build friendships across the barriers of language, age, gender, physical ability or social status. In a world torn by crisis and division, chess can help promote mutual respect. On the chess board, skill is what counts, not origin or background.

I salute the chess champions gathered here today – especially the young future champions from the New York area. I also thank the Permanent Representatives who have agreed to play; since diplomacy is often likened to a game of chess, I assume you will do well -- but given the competition here today, you may wish to hold on to your day job!

I welcome the efforts by the Permanent Missions of Ukraine and Hungary to put chess at the service of development, dialogue and peace. With the help of partners such as the World and National Chess Federations, chess champions and leaders of community programmes, we can harness the great potential of this universal sport in our efforts to build a better world.

Please accept my best wishes for a memorable event.