

My dear friends of football,

In our world so disturbed, often hostile and violent,  
I will say only one thing this evening ... and in French:

**We do not yet know the true power of peace,  
nor the true power of football.**

Let us be ambassadors for a positive vision of the world.

Let us be the ones to carry a message of peace, high and strong.

Let us make a difference.

If this evening has a touch of France about it,

It is because **the Ballon d'Or first saw the light of day in France.**

Let us not forget that it was created in 1956 by my friends at *France Football*, to whom I extend my regards.

A project launched by friends sat around a table...

This evening, we are all a little bit French, which only increases our sympathy **for our neighbours who have seen so deeply scarred** by the violent events of recent days.

So allow me to repeat **my appeal for peace, plaction and tolerance.**

**In my New Year's address** to FIFA's member associations all around the world, I appealed for us all to be **ambassadors of peace.**

If we are together and united, we are stronger and can build the future.

Let us overcome those who oppose us!

When I wrote that letter, I never imagined just how fatefully prophetic those words would be.

But let us not merely renounce.

We can all do something – every single one of us can.

And allow me to remind you – we are not alone:

We have a **vast community behind us,**

One made up of all those who love our game,

At least 1.2 billion human beings around the world

And also allow me to say this: if everyone – at all levels of the game – is ready to **shake the hand of an opponent,**  
Then they too will have helped to create a better world.

The Handshake for Peace is a symbol that is unique in the world,

It is a gesture that embodies the values of friendship, respect and forgiveness.

That is why I hope that this will become an accepted part of football.

**Let us shake hands while looking each other straight in the eye,  
Before and after each and every football match,**

At every level, from the very youngest of ages

What an example this would set! What a step forward this would be!

We will of course never succeed in stopping all wars

But we can help to promote mutual understanding among people.

Something has already been set in motion,

Something unstoppable

**I am talking about the power of peace that drives us all on,**

But also about the power of sharing and mutual support

We are seeing more and more of this in our everyday lives.

Such as in **our fight against Ebola**, for example

We have stood up and accepted our responsibility; we have shown solidarity.

And I thank all of the players who have given their time to help spread this message.

But this evening is, above all, an evening of celebration:

We are here to pay tribute to the finest talents in football,

And that is always difficult because football is a team sport.

**What a paradox, then,** that we are here to celebrate **individuals!**

I believe, however, that the triumphs of those who are here tonight are not just personal – they are also for the entire team:

The great team of football

This evening's stars are the nominees,

But also you, **who have stayed so loyal** to this evening of celebration by coming here, to Zurich, year after year

I would like to mention and thank the following for their presence, to name but only a few:

- Federal Councillor, **Ms Doris Leuthard**
- Mayor of the City of Zurich, **Ms Corine Mauch**
- Prime Minister of Hungary, **Mr Viktor Orbán**  
(to whom I also extend my condolences as I have just learnt of the passing of **Jenő Buzánszky**, the last surviving member of the Hungarian team that lost to West Germany in the World Cup final on 4 July 1954)
- And of course IOC President **Thomas Bach** and his colleagues
- As well as my colleagues on the **Executive Committee** and our Senior Vice-President

In wishing you all a very pleasant evening,

I will say only one more thing: let us unite around a common cause, to build a better future on the basis of understanding.

So let us talk to one another, let us discover our differences and talk about them,

As we do not yet know enough about each other

And, as my good friend Nelson Mandela once said,

**Let's celebrate humanity!**

**Joseph S. Blatter**

FIFA President