

OFF-THE-CUFF

Full transcript of Secretary-General's remarks at joint press conference with Mr. Thomas Bach, President of the International Olympic Committee

Sochi, Russian Federation, 6 February 2014

Q: On Olympic truce and Syria, and on Syria's chemical weapons.

SG: It is tragic that this conflict still continues. It has been [going on] for three years. And it is not only in Syria we see such conflict – in South Sudan and the Central African Republic and elsewhere. That is why the United Nations General Assembly has adopted unanimously by all 193 Member States that all warring parties should lay down their weapons at least during this very festive, harmonious period of the Olympic Games. I am very much troubled that this is not being kept. I again urge warring parties to lay down their weapons.

About the chemical weapons, I believe that this process is moving on rather smoothly even though there have been some delays. When I met the Foreign Minister of Syria, Mr. Moallem, in [Montreux] last week he assured me that this chemical weapons destruction process will continue as scheduled. There are of course some security concerns. There are many countries now providing their logistical support and the technological support to destroy these chemical weapons as soon as possible. Now, our target is June 30 this year. This may be a very tight target but I believe it can be done with the support of the Syrian Government, I expect that they will do it, and also full logistical and political support from many countries. Thank you.