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Press Release

One Million Run for International Friendship in 49 European Countries

The European leg of the World Harmony Run, a global torch relay that promotes harmony between people of different cultures, nationalities and beliefs, started in Rome on 27 March 2008. UN Ambassador of Sport and marathon legend Tegla Loroupe and FAO Goodwill Ambassador and actress Gina Lollobrigida launched a 7-month World Harmony Run through all **49 European countries**. An international team of runners carries the torch **24,000 km** until the run will arrive in Prague on 6 October 2008 for the European final ceremony. The run will cover in total some 100 countries in Asia, Africa, North and South America, Australia and Europe this year. An estimated 1,000,000 runners are expected to participate worldwide.

Endorsements have come from many world figures, including President Nelson Mandela, President Mikhail Gorbachev, Pope John Paul II, Mother Teresa and Carl Lewis. Carl Lewis, spokesman for the Run, said, "By carrying the Torch, millions of citizens are taking a step for Harmony and bridging the cultural and social boundaries that separate nation from nation."

On their way through Europe the team of runners will cover 70 to 160 km a day. Each runner covers 10 or more kilometres a day. The team will visit schools, associations, running clubs, as well as local and national government organisations. Runners will offer educational presentations in schools that promote international friendship.

The World Harmony Run was inspired in 1987 by the late visionary Sri Chinmoy as a way of giving citizens a dynamic way to express their own hopes and dreams for a more harmonious world. An athlete, philosopher, artist, musician and poet, Sri Chinmoy dedicated his life to advancing the ideals of world harmony and said, "If we have perseverance, then that is our first step towards world harmony." In recognition of his contribution for a more fulfilling world, Sri Chinmoy received UNESCO's Nehru Medallion, along with several honorary degrees from noted universities.

The World Harmony Run is organized and financed by an international network of volunteers inspired by Sri Chinmoy's vision of a more harmonious world. Partners in communities and cities often provide accommodation and food.

Everyone can participate in the World Harmony Run: athletes and non-athletes, young and old alike. Everyone can carry the Torch a few steps, a few blocks or a few miles or just come out and cheer the runners as they pass through. People can join local school children, celebrities, and government officials in one of the thousands of welcoming ceremonies along the route.

For more information and daily news from the road go to: www.worldharmonyrun.org