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# UN-AUSC YOUTH FORUM: THE ROLE OF YOUNG PEOPLE IN THE 13<sup>th</sup> AFRICAN GAMES

## DRAFT CONCEPT NOTE

### BACKGROUND

The current youth generation is acknowledged as the largest in history, with the global agenda increasingly focused on young people as key drivers for meaningful and impactful social movements. Youth's diverse and unique actions have greatly contributed to promoting peace and identifying and addressing the triggers of violent extremism. Moreover, young people are the most able to mobilize their peers and become principal stakeholders of societies increasingly free from stereotypes, discrimination, and extremism. The United Nations acknowledges the value of the youth in peacebuilding through the development of United Nations Security Council Resolutions (UNSCR) 2250 (2015), 2419 (2018), and 2535 (2020) on Youth, Peace, and Security that called upon the United Nations (UN) entities and Member States to improve capacity-building by integrating the Youth, Peace, and Security agenda into their technical assistance plans. Also, the African Youth Charter recognizes that "youth are partners, assets and prerequisite for sustainable peace and prosperity of Africa with a unique contribution to make to the present and future development."

Through unique engagement, such as sports, the youth have led and sustained peacebuilding and development conversations across societies. Sports have historically played a significant role in disseminating positive values worldwide and across civilizations and cultures, thus making it a powerful vector for developing efforts to promote peace and prevent and counter violent extremism. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development recognizes the "growing contribution of sport and culture to the realization of development and peace in the promotion of tolerance and respect as well as the empowerment of youth and women, individuals and communities." Through the African Union Sport Council (AUSC), established in 2013, the AU promotes sport in Africa with a focus on youth development, gender equality, and regional integration, supporting programmes that use sports to promote the African Union Agenda 2063 aspirations of the "Africa We Want."

### YOUTH PERSPECTIVE OF THE UN GLOBAL SPORTS PROGRAMME

As such, the UN ***Global Programme on the Security Major Sporting Events and Promotion of Sport and Its Values as a Tool to Prevent Violent Extremism*** (Global Sports Programme), led by the UN Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT), and its partners, the UN Alliance of

Civilizations (UNAOC), the UN Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute (UNICRI), and the International Centre for Sport Security (ICSS), was launched as a cross-cutting global initiative to help the Member States leverage the power of sports to strengthen social cohesion and build resilience to violent extremism, safeguard sports from extremist activities, and protect major sporting events against terrorist threats. **A key element of the Programme’s workstream on PVE through sport has been to empower youth while ensuring that policymakers effectively consider their unique skills and perspectives on PVE through sport.**

The Programme has organized youth consultations such as 1) the Online Youth Consultation on Preventing Violent Extremism through Sport (20-21 January 2021); 2) the MENA Youth Forum on Preventing Violent Extremism (PVE) through Sport (21-23 June 2022) in Rabat, Morocco; 3) the Global Youth Forum on PVE through Sport in Fez, Morocco (21-23 November 2022); 4) the ASEAN-UN Regional Youth Forum on Preventing Violent Extremism through Sport in Bangkok, Thailand (8-9 December 2022) to produce policy recommendations on PVE-Through-Sport from a youth perspective, aiming to provide guidance and actionable steps for policymakers to effectively leverage the power of sport in preventing violent extremism while ensuring youth inclusion and evidence-based decision-making. These recommendations were highlighted on the occasion of the 8<sup>th</sup> review of the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy during the Programme’s side event dedicated to youth and the use of sport for PVE, at UNHQ, New York (23 June 2023). **Such activities are essential since youth are often excluded from PVE-through-Sport programmes and policies, despite their significant contributions. The Programme’s initiatives aim to contribute to addressing this challenge.**

Considerations for youth are integrated into all other activities and projects of the Programme’s PVE-related workstream. The Programme’s [“Guide for Policymakers for The Use of Sport for the Prevention of Violent Extremism”](#) and [“Preventing Violent Extremism through Major Sporting Events – A Handbook for Organizers,”](#) for example, actively advise on the role of youth in fostering sustainable peace and development. Major sporting events provide a platform that can contribute to the prevention of violent extremism (PVE). Thanks to their widespread appeal and ability to foster a sense of ownership and belonging within the hosting community, major sporting events are ideally suited to address its drivers. **A holistic approach is required, which includes the meaningful involvement of young people.**

## **PROPOSAL**

The Global Sports Programme will organize a Youth Forum on the role of young people in the upcoming 13<sup>th</sup> Edition of the African Games (Accra, Ghana, set to commence in March 2024) in partnership with the AUSC, which oversees the coordination and organization of the African Games—building on the power of sport to promote increased youth participation in

the organization of major sporting events. Other partners are the 13<sup>th</sup> African Games Local Organising Committee (LOC) which comprises key Ghanaian stakeholders, the Ghana National Peace Council which is responsible for implementing the National PVE Strategy, and the UN Country Team.

## **OBJECTIVES**

- Raise awareness of integrating youth in major sporting events, particularly from an African perspective.
- Establish a dialogue between youth and decision-makers about the power of sports and major sporting events to prevent violent extremism, showcasing unique youth approaches, including those targeting the vulnerable youth population.
- Encourage more investment and support towards youth-led sport-based PVE initiatives and increased youth participation in major sporting events.
- Concrete guidelines on the greater inclusion of young people in PVE-based activities within the context of a major sporting event.

## **TIME AND PLACE**

- 21-22 November 2023 (2 days) in Accra, Ghana

## **FORMAT**

- We count on the participation of approx. 15 African civil society leaders between 18 and 35 years old and involved in major sporting events, decision-making, and/or sport for PVE.
- This Forum will feature 'safe and brave spaces,' working groups, presentations, etc.
- The young people will have the opportunity to go into dialogue with the organizers of the upcoming 13<sup>th</sup> African Games, including the AUSC and the LOC, as well as other PVE-through-sport/sport for peace stakeholders, including civil society organizations and the UN.

## **EXPECTED OUTCOMES**

- Raised awareness of the role and significance of sport in PVE.
- Inclusion of strategies for PVE interventions while organizing major sporting events and its integration into NAPs.
- Compiled recommendations on integrating young people in organizing major sporting events and related sport-for-PVE initiatives.

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## **SELECTION OF PARTICIPANTS**

- Due to limited slots, participants will be subjected to a selection process that will consider the relevance of their application, their experience, the motivation and interest demonstrated, as well as their potential contribution to the discussions. To the extent possible, the selection committee will balance age, gender, and diversity of backgrounds (cultural, educational, professional) among selected participants.

## **ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA**

- Age: 18-35 years of age
- Region: African Union Member States
- Interest in themes: the applicant demonstrates some experience and knowledge (or a great interest in getting involved) in issues related to PVE (through sport), the organization of major sporting events, sport for development and peace, and/or meaningful youth engagement.
- Future impact and follow-up: the applicant expresses a strong commitment to further engage on the topics and has the ability to consult with and reach a wider group of young people, audiences, or networks, including leading initiatives at the grassroots and community levels.
- Experience and potential: experience in the development of policies and guidelines and advocacy in PVE.