

African Union Day of African Sport (AU-DAS) 14 December

The African Union (AU) Sports Council invites the African Sports fraternity to commemorate the **African Union Day of African Sport (AU-DAS)** that falls on 14 December of every year. "Happy Day of African Sports to all!!!"

The AU Sports Council is a specialised technical office of the African Union responsible for coordinating the African Sports Movement, and acts as a forum for concerted action between Member States for the promotion and development of sports and development through sports in Africa. The AU Sports Council is also responsible coordinating the organization of African Games.

The African Union Day of African Sport calls for all stakeholders in the field of sports: athletes, administrators, managers, technical experts, sports for development practitioners, funders, spectators and fans to reflect and take a stock of the achievements made in the past year, challenges encountered and serious introspection on what can be done differently and better in the coming year regarding sports and sports for development in clubs, communities, countries, regions and the African continent as a whole.

The African Union Sports Council recognises the role sport can play in promoting and contributing to African unity and integration in line with the African Union pan-African vision of "An integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa, driven by its own citizens and representing a dynamic force in the global arena."

Sport is crucial for promoting the AU Agenda 2063 Aspirations of the "The Africa We Want." In the words of the Former President of South Africa, Nelson Mandela, "Sports has the power to inspire, it has the power to unite people in a way that little else does, it speaks to youth in a language they understand."

Sports values such as fair play, equality, discipline, inclusion, perseverance, honesty, tolerance and teamwork make up important ingredients for building character and a better society in line with the AU Agenda 2063 Aspirations of the Africa We Want.

In the past year, the African continent stood tall in terms of international sports performances from the Rugby World Cup Paris 2023, FIFA Women's World Cup in Australia and New Zealand, the World Athletics Championship in Budapest to mention a few. The great performances of African athletes in these competitions

have not only brought a positive image and pride to the continent, but also financial benefits in terms of increased visibility, tourism and investment opportunities to the continent. Therefore, this calls for all actors in the field of sports, particularly national governments, that are primary funders of sports, not to see sports as a cost, but a long-term investment that can play an important role in shaping the future of the African continent.

In an effort to promote participation, build capacity and enhance excellence of African athletes while fostering the ideals of the African Renaissance, promoting social cohesion and stimulating nation building through sport, the African Union Commission with the AU Sports Council developed the Policy for Sustainable Development of Sports in Africa 2023-2033. The Policy has five pillars, namely:

- An **Active Africa**, aimed at promoting physically active and healthy citizens.
- A **Winning Africa** aimed at developing inclusive and effective high-performance sports systems for African athletes to attain international sporting success and excellence.
- A **Sustainable Africa** aimed at using sports as a tool for social and economic development.
- An **Innovative Africa**, aimed at developing strong governance structures and innovative approaches to sports development
- A **United Africa**, that uses sport and recreation to stimulate hope and social cohesion.

Domestication and effective implementation of the AU Sports Policy by African Union Member States and the entire African Sports Movements will enhance and promote sports as tool for economic and social development in Africa.

As we are commemorating the African Union Day of African Sport, we are also counting down: 86 days to the African Games 2023 in Accra, Ghana, that will run from 8 to 24 March, 2024.

The African Games are a platform for African athletes to showcase their skills and talents and also offer African athletes' high-class competition to prepare for the Olympic Games Paris 2024. The Games in Accra will bring Africa together in the strong spirit of African integration and strengthening African values and cultures through sport.

Happy African Union Day of African Sport to all!! See you all in Accra Ghana, March 2024.