



Independent Continental Youth Advisory Council On AfCFTA

Leveraging Sports and AfCFTA for Youth Engagement and Foresight Planning

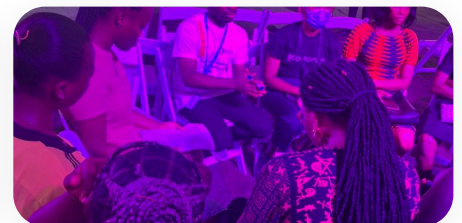
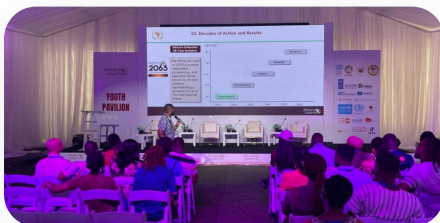
13th African Games, Accra, Ghana – March 2024

Executive Summary

The **Independent Continental Youth Advisory Council On AfCFTA (ICOYACA)** – Ghana Chapter successfully delivered an outstanding side event during the 13th African Games, held in Accra, Ghana, in March 2024. The session, themed **"Leveraging Sports and AfCFTA for Youth Engagement and Foresight Planning"**, empowered students and young entrepreneurs from Ghana's universities to explore the transformative power of sports and the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA).

This report presents an overview of the event's objectives, methodology, activities, and outcomes, while visually reflecting participant engagement in scenario mapping and discussions at the Youth Pavilion. The event fostered critical thinking regarding the role youth can play in shaping the sports industry and advocating for AfCFTA implementation and entrepreneurship and economic opportunity across Africa.

Event Highlights: The Youth Pavilion Experience



The Youth Pavilion was a vibrant hub of collaborative energy, with young participants engaging in challenging scenario exercises and interactive sessions facilitated by ICOYACA Ghana. The

innovative format encouraged rich exchange of ideas around AfCFTA, sports, entrepreneurship, and youth leadership.

Background: African Games & Youth Pavilion

The 13th African Games, hosted in Accra, Ghana (8th to 23rd March 2024), brought together athletes and youth from all 55 AU Member States, offering a unique opportunity for cross-continental connection through sport. The Youth Pavilion served as an empowerment space - its goals included:

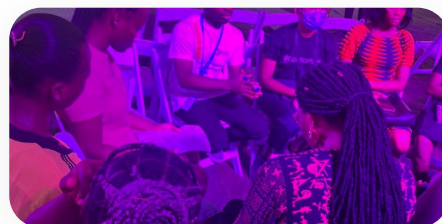
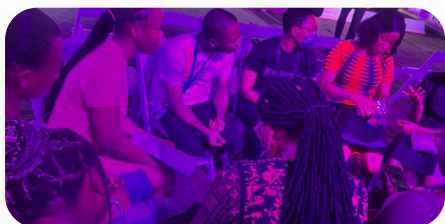
- Promoting youth-centric engagement and empowerment in sports.
- Showcasing youth entrepreneurship (with a marketplace for young innovators).
- Equipping attendees with 21st-century skills for professional growth.
- Facilitating dialogue and innovative projects through panels, masterclasses, and workshops.
- Championing the role of youth in advancing regional integration, especially via the AfCFTA.

The event aligned closely with the goals of the African Union Sports Council and the 1 Million Next Level initiative, offering a supportive and inclusive platform for the continent's future change-makers.

Methodology: Foresight Planning & Scenario Mapping

The core of ICOYACA Ghana's session centered on **foresight planning**—guiding participants through scenario-based exercises to anticipate the impact of AfCFTA on Africa's sports sector. The methodology included:

1. **Introduction:** Orientation on AfCFTA's significance and the key ecosystem stakeholders: Athletes, Sports Federations, Businesses, Government, and Fans.
2. **Team Assignment:** Attendees were randomly grouped, each representing designated stakeholders.
3. **Scenario Mapping:** Teams brainstormed positive/negative AfCFTA futures for their stakeholders (e.g., cross-border sports tours, market access risks, regulatory shifts).
4. **Visual Mapping:** Using templates, teams charted outcomes, trends, and interactions, then presented their findings.
5. **Group Reflection:** The group identified main risks, opportunities, and actionable recommendations, fostering advocacy and peer learning.



Outcomes: Scenario Mapping Insights

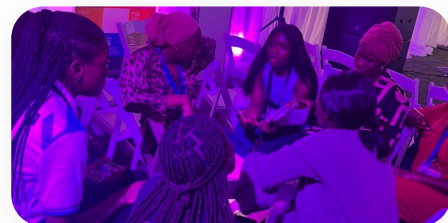
Key scenarios and insights generated from the activity included:

- **Enthusiastic Engagement:** Potential surge in international sports competitions, with Ghana (and Africa) becoming a sports tourism hub. Economic benefits included trade in sports goods and health/lifestyle promotion, but also highlighted the need for stronger infrastructure and more inclusive development to mitigate inequality.
- **Cross-Border Partnerships:** Emergence of partnerships among African federations and businesses, but also concern over dependence on foreign investors if intra-African capacity is not built effectively.
- **Monopolization Risks:** Risk of market monopolies by a few dominant players, underscoring the need for policies that encourage broad-based youth entrepreneurship and fair access to opportunities.

Overall, the scenario mapping helped participants build foresight for AfCFTA implementation, recognize both transformational and disruptive trends, and identify concrete advocacy pathways for youth in sports policy, business, and trade.

Participant Engagement

The session's design encouraged highly interactive learning, dialogue, and collaborative skepticism—participants debated real scenarios, navigated uncertainty, and networked with peers. Most attendees were university students and emerging entrepreneurs, reflecting a rich diversity of perspectives and ambition.



Testimonials

“This was my first time thinking strategically about how sports and trade intersect. The group scenario mapping made me realize how much we young people must advocate for fair implementation of AfCFTA in sports.”

– **University Student, Accra**

“I gained valuable insights into business opportunities and the importance of teamwork for success in a changing African economy.”

– **Young Entrepreneur, Ghana**

Recommendations & Way Forward

- Continue embedding foresight planning and scenario mapping in youth development activities at future African Games and similar fora.
 - Strengthen youth–policy dialogue channels to accelerate AfCFTA readiness in the sports sector, emphasizing locally-driven strategies and inclusive entrepreneurship.
 - Provide structured mentorship and long-term support for youth with leadership potential in sports trade and policy.
 - Expand partnerships with universities and sports federations to institutionalize scenario-based workshops and competitions on trade and integration themes.
 - Encourage further research and advocacy on the intersection of trade, sports, and youth empowerment across the African continent.
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For more information:

 **icoyacafrica.org**



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