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UNION AFRICAINE
UNIÃO AFRICANA

Addis Ababa, ETHIOPIA P. O. Box 3243 Telephone 002511-115 517 700 Cables: OAU, Addis Ababa
website : www.africa-union.org

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LAUNCH OF 2007 AS THE INTERNATIONAL YEAR
OF AFRICAN FOOTBALL

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INTRODUCTION

The African Union Assembly declared 2007 as “International Year of African Football” (IYoAF) in January 2006 during the Summit held in Khartoum, Sudan. This Decision emanated from the acknowledgement of the role played by the Confederation of African Football (CAF), which would celebrate its 50th Anniversary in 2007, in using sport as an instrument for the promotion of unity, peace and reconciliation, and its preventive campaigns against scourges affecting the youth of the continent. The mentioned Assembly Decision also called upon Member States to support their national football associations in the organisation of the 50th Anniversary of CAF in 2007, while highlighting the hosting of the FIFA World Cup by South Africa in 2010.

It has been decided that the African Union Launch of the IYoAF will take place immediately after the opening ceremony at the AU Assembly in January 2007, in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Other activities of the launch include a football match and a gala dinner in honour of CAF.

The documentation serving on the Assembly encompasses the Concept Note and Outline of the Programme for the International Year of African Football 2007, the Declaration by AU Heads of State and Governments, including clear directives to the AU Commission with regard to the implementation of IYoAF, as well as the Project Framework for the 2010 African Legacy Project.

1. INTRODUCTION

The African Union Assembly held in January 2006, Khartoum, Sudan, declared 2007 “International Year of African Football (IYoAF)” (Assembly/AU/Dec.93 (VI)) as proposed by the Government of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia. This decision emanated from acknowledging the role played by the Confederation of African Football (CAF), which will celebrate its 50th Anniversary in 2007, in using sport as an instrument for promotion of unity, solidarity, peace and reconciliation, and its preventive campaigns against scourges, such as HIV/AIDS, affecting the youth of the Continent.

The Assembly Decision also called upon Member States to support their national football associations in the organization of the 50th Anniversary of CAF in 2007, while highlighting the hosting of the FIFA World Cup in South Africa in 2010. The year 2007 will see an all-Africa launch of the International Year of African Football and a rolling programme of activities for the 2010 South Africa FIFA World Cup event. All peoples of Africa will share the proud history that for the first time, a FIFA global event will be held on their Continent. The African Union, together with the Government of Ethiopia and the Government of South Africa, will collaborate to organise the launch of 2007 International Year of African Football, and launch its many activities in African Union Member States and regions throughout Africa.

The International Year of African Football will mark the 50th anniversary of the Confederation of African Football and will witness not only the emergence of numerous- indeed, countless football events in the run up to the FIFA 2010 event, but create a new consciousness on the African continent as regards the contribution of the role of Football/sport at national level and in local communities to promote education, health, development and peace.

It has been decided that the launch of the IYoAF 2007 will take place immediately after the official opening ceremony at the next AU Assembly in January 2007, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

2. GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

African Football, as the no. 1 sport on the continent, has a meaningful role to play in the achievement of AU NEPAD Development objectives, as well as key priorities agreed by AU Heads of State and Government in the Ouagadougou Extraordinary Summit on Employment Creation and Poverty Alleviation. In addition, Football and sport in general, has the potential, as declared in the 2005 World Summit, “to foster peace and development, and to contribute to an atmosphere of tolerance and understanding”.

The overall goal of the International Year of African Football is to honour the important contribution of African Football and the Confederation of African Football in particular, and to peace and political stability in Africa, in general. The award to South Africa to host the 2010 World Cup adds a special dimension to activities marking 2007 IYoAF, to maintain momentum in the build-up to the tournament.

In accordance with the Khartoum Declaration (Assembly/AU/Dec.93 (VI)), the following objectives are proposed as the objectives of the IYOAF:

- Promote the idea of “Sport for All” within the African Union and among Member States as a means of creating health awareness, strengthening the spirit of achievement among the youth, promoting African solidarity entrenching social cohesion;
- Promote sport as a tool to contribute towards achieving the AU NEPAD development goals, including the UN Millennium Development Goals;
- Promote African solidarity and commitment to integration of the continent as envisaged in the Vision and Mission of the African Union;
- Promote sport as a viable engine for employment creation;
- Promote sport, as a means for integrated social development; and
- Strengthen national, regional and continental partnerships between all actors, including family, school, clubs/leagues, local communities, youth sports associations and decision makers as well as the public and private sectors, in order to ensure complementarities and to make sport and physical education available to everyone.

The IYoAF 2007 will also strive to reach the above-set targets through the dissemination of best practices and compiling an inventory of all sports for peace and development activities in Africa.

3. RATIONALE FOR THE INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF AFRICAN FOOTBALL

3.1 OVERALL APPROACH OF THE IYoAF 2007

Under the guidance of the African Union Commissioner for Social Affairs, a detailed programme of activities will be presented to AU Member States for implementation during 2007 International Year of African Football.

The Khartoum Decision to declare 2007 as International Year of African Football was a milestone development that recognises that 50 years of continental partnership, solidarity and sportsmanship has delivered Africa its historic World Cup 2010. As Africa’s integration vehicle, Africa will take a lead in strengthening partnerships and promoting a “Sports for All” culture that embraces tolerance.

The AU will further utilise the occasion of the Year to advocate integrated sports policies; promote wide consultation and participation in the elaboration and implementation of sports policies; strengthen continental sports organisations; and integrate and mainstream sport within AU policy instruments.

Due to shortage of resources, African countries face the challenge to ensure highest quality sport programmes. The disparity between investing on sports facilities in urban and rural areas also demonstrates the challenge faced by Governments in ensuring equity and creating an environment conducive to “Sports for All”. Adapting sports programmes to communities’ needs and different target groups, as well as promoting the recreational aspects of sport, also poses a challenge. Moreover, the commercialisation of sport promotes an excessive focus on creating opportunities for the talented, rather than a sport for all environments. Thus,

there is need to broaden participation by bringing in the youth and developing sport that would contribute to the creation of employment.

4. MAJOR EVENTS

Amongst the other many activities to kick off the IYoAF 2007, the African Union will convene a launching ceremony, organise a football match in Addis Ababa and co-host, together with the Governments of Ethiopia and South Africa, the official Gala Dinner in honour of the 50th Anniversary of CAF.

An Organizing Committee was constituted to prepare for the launch consisting of:

- AU Commission – Office of the Chairperson and Department of Social Affairs.
- South African Government - Department of Sport and Recreation/ Department of Foreign Affairs.
- Ethiopian Government – Ministry of Youth and Sports / Ministry of Foreign Affairs.
- Confederation of African Football (CAF).

The Organizing Committee is working in close collaboration with the UN New York Office on Sport for Development and Peace, the South African Local Organising Committee (SA-LOC) and other partners. A technical and logistical sub-committee comprising senior officials from the AUC, Ethiopia and South Africa are tasked with finalizing the technical details for the three main events of launch, gala dinner and football match at the margin of the January 2007 Assembly.

4.1 The Official Launching Ceremony

The launching ceremony is scheduled during the opening ceremony of the 9th African Union Assembly on 29 January 2007. The launch constitutes an important event to establish a formal framework for ensuing activities marking 2007 the International Year of African Football and to create linkages with the 2010 World Cup.

There will be the introductory statement by the Commissioner for Social Affairs followed by statements made by:

- FIFA President
- CAF President
- African Footballer of the Year
- President Thabo Mbeki of the Republic of South Africa
- Prime Minister Zenawi Meles of Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia

It is important to establish linkages between the 50th Anniversary of CAF, the dedication of 2007 as International Year of African Football and overall events culminating in the 2010 World Cup Tournament. To that end, the activities of 2007 will need to forge linkages with CAF African Cup of Nations in Ghana in 2008, in South Africa in 2009, and Angola in 2010.

The launch will be animated by the under-15 young players from Ethiopia and South Africa, accompanied by women players, who would enter the hall and present to each African Union Head of State the memorabilia that may include a number of football related items.

President Thabo Mbeki of the Republic of South Africa accepted the FIFA baton in Germany in 2006, marking the formal acceptance of the 2010 World Cup event by South Africa. During the launching ceremony, President Mbeki will brief the 9th AU Assembly that the 2010 World Cup baton has now been received from FIFA in Germany. He will outline issues facing South Africa in implementing this mandate, and expected outcomes for the Continent. Hence, the Assembly will chart a meaningful role for all African countries to ensure that 2010 is an African World Cup.

The 2007 International Year of African Football is an ideal opportunity to promote capacity building in all African sports, not only in football. In this regard, linkages will be created between IyoAF 2007 and the All Africa Games scheduled for Algiers in 2007. The culmination of three events, namely the 2007 Year, the CAF 50th anniversary and the 2010 process, makes the launch not simply another event, but an important milestone in the history and development of the continent.

The South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) has offered to provide live coverage of the launch ceremony. There would also be opportunity for live interviews with keynote speakers and other relevant participants.

President of FIFA, Mr Sepp Blatter, will be attending the launching ceremony. The presence of Mr Blatter in the ceremony is a recognition and testimony played by Mr Blatter in the 2010 World Cup. Mr Blatter is special Guest at the launching ceremony. The African Union will elaborate activities to deepen the fraternal relations between the African Union, CAF and FIFA and to promote shared ideals of Sport for Peace and Development on the continent.

4.2 Soccer match (under 15's)

As part of the activities during the 2007 International Year of Football, a soccer match will be organized between under-15 teams from Ethiopia and South Africa, on Sunday, 28 January 2007, at 10H 00 at the Addis Ababa Stadium.

The Governments of Ethiopia and South Africa will be responsible to prepare for the celebratory football match between their two under-15 sides. The teams of the under-15s were selected on the basis that in 3 years time these players may likely participate in the 2010 World Cup. It is also to provide the youth with a meaningful role as key players in the activities leading to the 2010 World Cup. Mobilising under 15's is also partly a recognition that the youth will carry the hopes and aspirations of the entire continent during the 2010 World Cup.

The Ethiopian Ministry of Youth and Sports undertook to prepare the National Stadium, ensure local publicity for the event, and sponsor suitable accommodation for the South African under-15 team, consisting of a group of approximately 22 players. The necessary social activities will be organized for the players during 28-29 January 2007.

A short curtain raiser for the above match would be played by two under-15 girls' teams from Ethiopia, which the Ministry of Youth and Sports will facilitate. The matches would be open to the general public, but with an emphasis on attendance by schools. UNICEF will be approached to mobilise sponsorship of the event. The Ethiopian Television Corporation is expected to provide live coverage of the event. Guests of honour to the match will include some of Africa's soccer icons.

4.3 Gala dinner (in honour of 50th Anniversary of CAF)

The gala dinner in the evening of 29 January 2007 will take place to honour the 50th anniversary of CAF. During its 50 year existence, CAF made an outstanding contribution to the upliftment of African Society through football for peace and development.

The gala dinner will be sponsored by the AUC, Ethiopia and South Africa at the Sheraton (Addis) Hotel. The AU Commissioner for Social Affairs, and the Ministers of Sport of Ethiopia and South Africa, will preside as Directors of Ceremony.

The Speakers at the Gala Dinner will include:

- CAF President
- FIFA President
- Chairperson or Captain of the Nigerian Women Soccer team (current African champions)
- Brief statements by soccer Icons
 - Abedi Pele (Ghana)
 - Roger Milla (Cameroon)
 - Hossam Hassan (Egypt)
 - Kalushi Bwaliye (Zambia)
 - Prof Alpha Konaré

Musical entertainment at the gala dinner will provided by musicians and or groups from South Africa, from a West African country and from Ethiopia.

5. MAJOR PROGRAMMATIC AREAS OF FOCUS

It is necessary to decide on series of activities and events that could be held throughout the year as observances that would have far reaching impact for the entire continent and as a vehicle to launch the 2010 World Cup in South Africa.

The following programme areas are proposed as the main areas of focus to mark the IYoAF 2007:

- Reinforce solidarity with South Africa for the 2010 Football World Cup
- Promotion of Sport as an embodiment of values of Tolerance, Peace and Development

- Capacity Building and Human Resource Development in order to safeguard Africa's opportunities to win the 2010 World Cup
- Celebration of African Sport Day on the 14 December 2007
- Africa and the Diaspora to promote Pan African solidarity
- Sport and Gender mainstreaming
- Calendar of Sporting events
- Position of Africa at the Global level
- Football development
- Communication

6. EXPECTED RESULTS

Overall the IYoAF will strive to enhance Africa's overall preparedness to host and win the 2010 World Cup and to strengthen African solidarity in order to create a conducive environment for the use of sport in integrated development programmes."

Integrated Sport Policies has the potential to harness the value of sport as a partner for the achievement of development and peace goals.

Sport for all should be mainstreamed as a national priority. It strives to expand the perception of "sport for all" by the general public, particularly targeting the less talented. Africa needs to guard against elitism in sport. The collective achievement of great results by African and Diaspora sports people at international sports competitions promotes national and continental unity and a country's value and competitiveness.

African Football is seen as integral component of African life. Sport and football should be recognised as an integral part of quality education. Though an essential component of quality education and an integral part of lifelong learning, physical education is continuously losing ground in formal education systems. The neglect of physical education reduces the quality of learning, with negative future impacts on public health and health budgets.

By engaging under 15's to kick start the activities of the IyoAF, African stresses that young people are important partners in sport for peace and development. In view of the many events culminating in the IyoAF 2007, a Programme of activities will be developed outline promote football and sport for education, health, development and peace in a coordinated way.

7. STAKEHOLDERS

- Member States
- Sport Associations and federations
- SCSA
- UN System through the UN Office for Sport for Development and Peace
- EU,
- Non African governments
- Intergovernmental and NGO

IMPLEMENTATION, MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Continental level

AU in collaboration with the UN system, CAF, FIFA, SCSA and Pan African Sport organizations through the establishment of an AU Technical Committee

Regional level

RECs and regional sport bodies

National level

Governments through multi-stakeholder national committees or focal points to plan, coordinate and implement the various strategies planned.

DECLARATION

We, the AU Heads of State and Government, meeting in our 9th Ordinary Session Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, on 29-30 January 2007,

Recognizing the role of sport in the promotion of peace, solidarity, social cohesion and sustainable social development;

Aware of the need for reflecting on the collective history of football in Africa and also the need for commemorating the 50th anniversary of CAF's as part of our appreciation of its outstanding contribution to the development of soccer in Africa;

Appreciating the briefing by South Africa on the preparations to host the 2010 World Cup, for the first time in the history of the continent which in a sense a legitimate recognition of Africa's contribution to the advancement of world sports;

Pursuant to our commitment to ensuring the Success of the 2010 World Cup tournaments on our Continent;

Re-calling the Decision we made during our January 2006 Summit in Khartoum, the Sudan to declare the 2007 as the International Year of African Sports as per the commendable proposal of the Government of the Federal Republic of Ethiopia;

Convinced that promoting sports in Africa forms an integral part of the ongoing social, cultural and economic and political revitalization of the continent since sports provide, if duly promoted, could provide tremendous employment and income generating opportunities, cultivate a sense of achievement and self actualization among the youth, serve as a platform for cultural exchange, shared vision and common identity;

Recognizing the supportive role of sports in Africa's effort to achieve the Millennium Development Goals;

We therefore:

1. **REAFFIRMS** our commitment to make the 2010 World Cup a truly African World Cup, by committing our countries to the full and substantive involvement in the preparations leading to the 2010 World Cup;
2. **COMMITTS** ourselves to provide all-rounded support to the Government and People of South Africa in their efforts to organize the 2010 World Cup tournaments successfully and effectively;
3. **URGES** CAFs, FIFA, the international sport community and friends of Africa to provide the necessary support to South Africa in its preparation for the 2010 World Cup;
4. **MANDATES** the Commission to develop a Programme of Activities to mark the International Year of African Football;

5. **FURTHER MANDATES** the Commission to organise the relevant Conference of Ministers of Sports to provide leadership to the organisation of activities marking the International Year of African Football, as well as to elaborate concrete activities in connection with the 2010 World Cup;
6. **REQUESTS** the Chairperson of the AU Commission, in collaboration with CAFs, FIFA, and other development partners, to follow-up the Implementation of the activities of the IYoAF and report the achievements to the next and subsequent Assemblies;
7. **CALLS ON** the Commission to mobilise necessary resources for the implementation of this Declaration and to strengthen Pan African Sports Structures to give full meaning to “Sports for All” programmes and activities.

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