**SPORTS AS A VERITABLE PLATFORM FOR DIPLOMACY**

**Report of the NIIA Colloquium on Sports Diplomacy**

**Nigerian Institute of International Affairs, Victoria Island, Lagos**

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**The views published in this report are solely of the participants of the colloquium and do not represent the position of the NIIA.**

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**Experts**

**Welcome Address**

* Prof. EghosaOsaghe, Director General NIIA.
* Chief Sunday Dare, Hon. Minister of Youths and Sports Development.
* Amb. SegunOdegbami, MON, Afniia, Head, Sports Diplomacy Desk NIIA

**Special Guest of Honour**

* Chief Dr. OlusegunObasanjo, GCFR, Former President, Federal Republic of Nigeria

**Panelists**

* MrIdyUyoe, Sports Scholar, events Specialist and marketing professional
* Prof Ikaweba Bunting, Director , Department of Unity, MwalimuNyerere Foundation, Tanzania.
* Ron W. Davis, accomplished international facilitator, consultant and sports administrator

**Moderator**

* Dr. Godwin Ichimi, Research Fellow Nigerian Institute of International Affairs, Lagos.

**Participants**

* Mr Olumide Bamiduro, Federal Ministry of Youths and Sports Development, Abuja.
* Mr. Collins Nosa Atohuengb, Voice of America
* Prof. R.T Akinyele, University of Lagos, Akoka.
* Mr Johnson Elaigwu, Phillipine Consulate, Lagos.
* CSP Veronica Ameh-Akpa, Representative of AIG Zone 2, Zone 2 Police Headquarters.
* Prof. O.A Moronkola, Director General,National Institute of Sports
* Mr. Kunle Raji, Global Sports Concepts.
* Ms. Rachel Akintunde, Ministry of Physical Planning,Lagos
* Prof. Bola Akinterinwa, President, Bolyttag Centre of Diplomacy and Strategic Studies.
* Dr. KunleOgedengbe, Trinity University.
* Mr Bisi Olatilo
* Mr Joseph Obisesan, Brila FM
* Mr Busayo Onijala, News Agency of Nigeria.
* Ms Vivian Osuji, NTA, Lagos.
* Mr Emannuel Bassey, African Independent Television, Lagos.

**Executive Summary**

The Nigerian Institute of International Affairs (NIIA) in collaboration with the Federal Ministry of Youths and Sports Development organised acolloquium on Sports Diplomacy on Thursday, 24th February 2022bringing together stakeholders including sports administrators& personalities, academia, media and industry experts. The event which was aimed at establishing the role of sports diplomacy in the pursuit of Nigeria andAfrica’s interesthad both physical and online participants in attendance. The eventwas declared open by the Director General of the NIIA, Professor EghosaOsaghae, while the Welcome Remarks was by the Honourable Minister of Youth and Sports Development, Chief Sunday Dare.There were three paper presenters by industry experts namely: Prof. Ikaweba Bunting, Mr. IdyUyoe and Mr. Ron W. Davies. The speakers and participants highlighted the critical role sports diplomacy plays in inter-state relations, and the need for states particularly African countries to utilize sports diplomacy to achieve wide ranging economic, political and socio-cultural goals. Over the years, sports have been utilized as a major tool that shaped Nigeria’s foreign relations and national image, and presents a platform to achieve the tenet of African unity and pan Africanism. Participants were however unanimous about the need for concerted effort by governments especially in Africa and the global South to effectively harness and exploit the multifaceted benefits the sports industry provides, with a view to tackling the plethora of challenges facing their countries.

The report is a synthesis of ideas presented in the papers by the speakers and contributions by the audience on sports diplomacy and its multifarious role in foreign policy and inter-state relations.

The following recommendations emanated from the deliberations at the colloquium:

1. There’s a need for governments and policy makers in Nigeria and across Africa to reclassify sports as abusiness and multi-million dollar industry with potentials for achieving economic development. It has to be conspired as a business requiring all the inputs that develop and sustain businesses with impactful social interventions.

2. Sports Diplomacy should be seen as a potent foreign policy instrument, and a credible source of soft power. For a state like Nigeria that is looking to promote its national interest, sports can be used to influence its foreign policy by providing a platform for promoting its power and image, amplify friendship, boost peace, and share comradeship among nations, promote trade and tourism, encourage international development, integrate minorities, and most importantly to improve international relations.

3. For sports to have the power to impact our socio cultural and political lives, it must be able to decimate the barriers that exist between brothers and sisters on the African continent so that African can truly achieve its humongous potentials.

4. African governments need to work together as one continent to achieve their political and socio-economic goals through the instrumentality of sports. This can be achieved through commitments, selflessness, organization and resource optimization as critical pillars.

**5.**African countries should support Egypt as the first African country to host the Olympic Games. This will showcase the capabilities of Africa to the world, and bring the world closer to Africa through sports, while also providing economic opportunities to Africa.

**6.**There’s a need for a private and public sector collaboration andsupport for the industrialization of sport; with each fulfilling its obligations through monitoring frameworks and dialogue.

**7.** Sports should be utilized as a credible tool to bring Africans together to liberate the diplomacy of Africans from the hegemony of the Euro-American normative status quo, and create a new paradigm of diplomacy for unity, peace, prosperityand dignity of all African people.

8. There is a pressing need for a new Pan African collective agenda for intra-African diplomacy, cooperation and African centred policy objectives to unite the continent and bring the global pan African family together.

**Introduction**

In contemporary international relations, sport diplomacy has emerged as a key aspect of diplomatic practice and a growing part of the global sports industry. Sports is regarded as a tool for strengthening ties that transcend socio-cultural and linguistic differences among peoples. As a universal language understood by all, sports plays a central role in defining and influencea country’s identity, valuesand culture. The power of sports is formidable, as it brandsand defines the spirit of competitiveness among countries. Sport fosters competition, teamworkand fairplay and is used by global actors for building trust and enhancing interactions among countries. Similarly, sports diplomacy is seen as part of identity building for a state, and used by states in the pursuit of their national interest.

**Sports as a Tool for Promoting Socio-cultural Ties and Conflict Resolution**

Sports is an instrument for promoting cultural relations and fostering trade relations.And for sports to have the power to impact our socio cultural and political lives, it must be sustainably curated. It must be able to decimate the barriers that exist between the brothers and sisters of the continent so that Africa can achieve its humongous and true potentials. Sports Diplomacy allows people to put aside their differences and come together in the spirit of international cooperation.

Sports events such as the Olympic Games and the FIFA Soccer World Cup, have become very symbolic and a rallying point for countries to build friendship well beyond the fields of sporting competition. From the earliest times of the Olympic Games, sporting competition has assisted human societies in mediating estrangements, resolving conflict and sublimating competitive urges. As a universal language that is accepted and understood to all without discrimination of any kind, and with the core values of fairness, teamplay and competition which sports espouses, sports remains a veritable instrument that can used by states for promoting global peace, trust, solidarity and prosperity.

Furthermore, as aptly stated by Nelson Mandela, ‘sports simply is not just an instrument of diplomacy or just a soft power variable but also an instrument of peace and security.’ This explains the role, effect and power of sports in modern human interactions. Sports play key roles both in peace time and in the period of intra- and inter-state conflicts and wars. Africa is pervaded by widespread conflict and insecurity that threatens the economic development and stability of the continent.The role of sports in entrenching peace and resolving conflict cannot be over-emphasized, as intra and interstate conflicts in Africa can be reduced significantly through sports as a unifying factor. Since the earliest times, the instrumentality of sports has been employed by societies and nations in entrenching peace among warring parties. As a tool for enhancing peace in societies, the use of sports to unify widespread divergence and entrench peace and cordiality remains crucial.Africa nations can eliminate hatred and build bridges across cultural, religious and political divides by organizing sports. In this regard, hostilities have been halted during conflicts and ceasefires enacted to allow for sporting events to take place. A key example of the role of sports for enhancing peace among countries is the ending of the longstanding crisis between the United States and China in 1971 as a result of a table tennis competition.Termed Ping-Pong diplomacy, this led to the eventual normalization of relations between both countries.

**Sports as Soft Powerand a Foreign Policy Instrument**

Sports diplomacy embodies the use of sports as a foreign policy tool by countries in achieving their political, economic and social goals on the international sphere. In today’s highly globalized world, the use of soft power by states in achieving foreign policy objectives has been recognized as an important aspect of states bilateral and multilateral engagements. Hard power is no longer considered the main method of attaining foreign policy objectives, but insteadthe strategic use of both hard and soft power is deployed by states in achieving intended goals. Africa’s inability to effectively compete in military power compared to the West beckons the need to acquire and use sports as a source of soft power to gain international prestige and influence. Hence, sports is another source of power other than military hard power through which states engage on bilateral and multilateral basis to obtain international prestige, and which embodies international cooperation.

Furthermore, sports is used by countries to achieve certain political objectives and a means of exertingdiplomatic pressure in the international sphere. For instance, the Olympics is seen as the biggest political example of using sports for diplomatic means. In the case of the South African apartheid, sport was deployed to break the apartheid regime by isolating South Africa in several sporting competitions. In the 1976 Olympics in Montreal, Canada, Nigeria led twenty four black African countries to boycott the Olympics sending a very strong statement to the world about the brutal and unjust apartheid government. The current Russia Ukraine war and the use of sports as a sanction by sports bodies to force Russia end its invasion in Ukraine is another example of the *weaponisation* of sports to achieve political certain goals. FIFA expelled Russia from the World Cup scheduled to take place in Qatar late 2022, and banned the country’s clubs from international competitions ‘until further notice’. The governing body of European football, UEFA also removed Russia as the host of the 2022 Champions League Final moving the match from the Krestovsky stadium in St. Petersburg to the Stade de Francein Paris.

**Sports, Pan-Africanism and African Unity**

Pan-Africanism is an ideology and an aspiration for African people and nations fighting for political and economic independence from colonialism, imperialism and anti-black racism. Only a united Africa can redeem Africa’s past glory, renew and reinforceits strength for the realization of destinies. Sport is one instrument that can be utilized to achieve these lofty goals and aspirations of the African people globally:whether in decolonization, struggle against racism and apartheid, defence of social justice, and the rights of nations and peoples for self-determination. The initiative of sports presents the opportunity to set a new course for determining how Africa can utilize its human resources that are on every continentin the world for realizing the great aspirations for the African continent and its people.The destiny of Africans as one people with one destiny regardless of the artificial boundaries which the colonialists invented lies in unity and solidarity.There’s therefore the need to work collectively to formulate a new paradigm of sports diplomacy that energizes and emboldens Africa’s strategies and policies to fulfill its aspirations for economic liberation, cultural self-determination and epistemological independence. In addition, is to change the focus to bring Africans together to liberate the diplomacy of Africans from the hegemony of the Euro-American normative status quo and create a new paradigm of diplomacy for unity, peace, prosperity and dignity of all African peoples through sports.

**Commercializing Sports for Economic Development**

Across the world, sport has grown beyond mere physical activity or recreation into a major industry with significant contribution to national growth and employment. Sports can stimulate economic activity and improve the wellbeing of societies. Sport has the capacity to ensure economic growth and development, and build a value chain that benefits the youths and the nation at large. The sports industry is said to be growing [faster than the national economy in China](https://www.forbes.com/sites/augustrick/2018/01/17/chinas-sports-industry-is-allegedly-growing-faster-than-the-national-economy/#62434d3b2a4d), and the rate of sports employment has been growing at a [faster pace than total employment in the European Union (EU)](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Employment_in_sport#Context) .However, despite the huge potential the sports industry provides for economic growth and development, African countries including Nigeria are yet to fully leverage on these for employment opportunities.  The gains of sport in Africa have largely been limited to its recreational roles in the socio-cultural sphere. Even the occasional hosting of international competitions has not been met with the needed commercialization of the standard infrastructures, leaving under-utilized sporting infrastructures from [Abuja](https://www.pulse.ng/sports/special-report-abuja-national-stadium-in-ruins-despite-huge-maintenance-funds-id6497629.html)  to [Cape Town](https://www.theglobeandmail.com/sports/soccer/world-cup/white-elephants/article19064519/). Many developing countries still struggle to industrialise to speed up the pace of economic growth and development. Given this, they continue to search for antidotes to the challenges of their underdevelopment. Sports development is touted by many as one of the antidotes to the underdevelopment challenges of developing countries. However, the major challenges developing countries face in recent times are how they can develop sports and how they can adequately harness its benefits for economic growth and development.One of the way out is that sufficient and sustained levels of all kinds of investment in sports, coupled with strong institutions, good governance, and practical and interrelated policies, are critical for sports development and economic growth and development in developing countries.

**Recommendations**

1. There’s a need for governments and policy makers in Nigeria and across Africa to reclassify sports as a business and multi-million dollar industry with potentials for achieving economic development. It has to be conspired as a business requiring all the inputs that develop and sustain businesses with impactful social interventions.

2. Sports Diplomacy should be seen as a potent foreign policy instrument, and a credible source of soft power. For a state like Nigeria that is looking to promote its national interest, sports can be used to influence its foreign policy by providing a platform for promoting its power and image, boost peace, promote trade and investment, increase tourism, encourage international development and most importantly to improve international relations.

3. For sports to have the power to impact our socio cultural and political lives, it must be able to decimate the barriers that exist between brothers and sisters on the African continent so that African can truly achieve its humongous potentials.

4. African governments need to work together as one continent to achieve their political and socio-economic goals through the instrumentality of sports. This can be achieved through commitments, selflessness, organization and resource optimization as critical pillars.

**5.** African countries should support Egypt as the first African country to host the Olympic Games. This will showcase the capabilities of Africa to the world, and bring the world closer to Africa through sports, while also providing economic opportunities to Africa.

**6.** There’s a need for a private and public sector collaboration and support for the industrialization of sport, with each fulfilling its obligations through monitoring frameworks and dialogue.

**7.** Sports should be utilized as a credible tool to bring Africans together to liberate the diplomacy of Africans from the hegemony of the Euro-American normative status quo, and create a new paradigm of diplomacy for unity, peace, prosperity and dignity of all African people.

8. There is a pressing need for a new pan African collective agenda for intra-African diplomacy, cooperation and African centred policy objectives to unite the continent and bring the global pan African family together.

**Profile of Speakers**

** Professor Eghosa Osaghae**

**Director General, NIIA**

Professor Osaghae is a Professor of Political Science and Director General of the Nigerian Institute of International affairs(NIIA). He was Vice Chancellor, Igbinedion University Okada, Nigeria between 2004 and 2018. Professor Osaghae was the 2019 Claude Ake Chair at Upspsala University and Nordic Africa Institute, Sweden. He is a Fellow of the Stellenbosch Institute of Advanced Studies in South Africa, the 2017 Van ZylSlabbert Professor of Politics and Sociology at the University of Cape Town, and the 2014 EmekaAnyaoku Chair of Commonwealth Studies at the University of London. Prof Osaghae was leader of the Ford Foundation funded Programme on Ethnic and Federal Studies, and Director of the Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies at the University of Ibadan(2001-2004). He was Professor and Head of Department of Political Science at the University of Transkei, South Africa(1994-1998). He has also been a Visiting Professor/Fellow/Distinguished Senior Scholar at the Carter Centre of Emory University USA (1989); University of Liberia(1989/90); Salzenburg Semina, Austria (1993); University of Cape Town, South Africa (1994); The Nordic Africa Institute, Uppsala, Sweden (1994); University of Ulster, Northern Ireland(1999/2000); Northwestern University USA(2002/2004); University of Cambridge UK(2003);a number of universities and research institute in India(2005, 2009); Dartmouth College USA(2005); Yale University USA(2009). He was a Rockefeller ‘Reflections on Development’ Fellow (1989/90), and most recently a MacArthur Fellow. Professor Osaghae was Chair of the Panel on Quality Assurance Assessment, United Nations Economic Commission for Africa(2011-2012), and currently serves on the UN Secretary-General’s Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters.

**Chief Sunday Dare**

**Honourable Minister of Youth and Sports Development**

Chief Sunday Dare is a veteran Nigerian journalist who has worked in diverse aspects of the media including broadcasting(Television and Radio), spanning over twenty five years. He holds a Bachelor of Science Degree in International Studies, 2nd Class Upper from the Ahmadu Bello University Zaria, and Master’sDegree in International Law with a distinction from the University of Jos, Plateau State. Chief Sunday Dare has at different times been at Oxford University Research Fellow, Harvard Nieman Journalism Fellow; and New York University Freedom Forum Fellow. Prior to his appointment as minister by President Muhammadu Buhari, he served as Executive Commissioner(Stakeholder Management) at the Nigerian Communication CommissionNCC.

**Amb.Segun Odegbami MON**

Ambassador Patrick OlusegunOdegbami is a retired Nigerian footballer. He is nicknamed *mathematical* for his skill,speed and precisionwith the ball. Odegbami is regarded as one of the greatest Nigerian players of all-times.He won 46 caps and scored 23 goals for the National Team, and guided Nigeria to its first Africa Cup of Nations title at the 1980 tournament. AmbassadorSegunOdegbami is an Associate Fellow of the Nigerian Institute of International Affairs, and the Head of the Sports Diplomacy Desk at the Institute.

**Mr.IdyUyoe**

**Sports Scholar, events specialist and marketing professional**

IdyUyoe is a sports scholar, events specialists and results driven marketing professional with over 20 years in the industry. Based in Atlanta, Georgia (USA), Mr. Uyoe has provided strategic consulting services for global sports organizations such as the International Olympic Committee (IOC) and has served in advisory capacity for sport documentaries. With proven leadership experience in business development, media relations, sports sponsorships and communication strategy, Mr. Uyoe has written extensively about sports marketing, sport finance and sport development in emerging economies. In the Sub Saharan Africa region alone, Mr. Uyoe has partnered with the IOC to develop strategic marketing programs in training senior executives of National Sports Federations and Olympic Committees in Kenya, Rwanda, Nigeria, Malawi, Zambia, and Zimbabwe. He is renowned for his excellence, deep knowledge, and due diligence, with an exceptional understanding of sports in Africa.

**Prof. Ikaweba Bunting**

**Director MwalimuNyerere Foundation; Dar Es Salaam Tanzania**

Professor Ikaweba Bunting is the Director of Department of Unity for the MwalimuNyerere Foundation in Tanzania. In that capacity he is the Coordinator for the Secretariat of the Tanzanian National Taskforce for the UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women Peace and Security. Dr. Ikaweba was appointed Acting Secretary General of the Global Pan African Movement and the East African Regional Member of International Organizing Committee of 8thPan African Congress. Professor Bunting attended the 6th Pan African Congress in 1974 as an observer; and the 7th Pan African Congress in 1994 as a representative of the Tanzanian delegation. Dr. Bunting was a member of the Policy and Advocacy Committee of the Faculty Association of California Community Colleges in the state of California USA. He has also been as a Senior Consultant for the United Nations and various international Non-Governmental Organizations. Raised in Compton CA, Professor Ikaweba immigrated to Tanzania in 1974 where he became a Tanzanian citizen. He worked for the Tanzanian Film Company under the Ministry of Information and Culture and is a past CEO and Festival Director of Zanzibar International Film Festival.He recently retired from teaching and is currently the Director of Department of Unity in The MwalimuNyerere Foundation in Tanzania, East Africa.

**Mr. Ron Davies**

**International facilitator,consultant and administrator**

Ron W. Davis is an accomplished international facilitator, consultant and administrator and is recognized worldwide as a distinguished and successful track and field coach. Since February 2014, Davis has worked as the lead American international facilitator-consultant to Conseng, Inc. of Mozambique and South Africa, and teaching in North Dakota until he was invited back to Tanzania by his former outstanding athlete Mr. Filbert Bayi.  MrBayi was former world record holder in the 1500 meters and Mile. Davis coached him to win Tanzania first Olympic Games Medal that has been the only medals, Nyambui won a Silver Medal after Bayi won, they are the only two medals - Silver, Tanzania has won at the Olympic Games since the 1980 Olympic Games in Moscow.  Davis and Bayi have developed what they called "2020 and Beyond Program" at the Filbert Bayi School in Kibaha, Tanzania.  The program objective is strengthening the next generation of highly trained, technical sound cohort of future young athletes and producing future National Athletes to represent Tanzania. The program plans is to develop the youth to strive for sports and academic greatness.  Also, the program mission is to develop the young athletes to evolve into highly admired leaders for socioeconomic transformation for their professional careers success are the program's mission with role models Filbert Bayi and Ron Davis.