



– The Youth Forum on the role of young people in the upcoming 13th African Games concluded in Accra today. The two-day event was organized by the UN Alliance of Civilizations (UNAOC) and the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT), within the framework of the United Nations Global Programme on Security of Major Sporting Events and Promotion of Sport and its Values as a Tool to Prevent Violent Extremism (“Global Sports Programme”), in collaboration with the African Union Sports Council (AUSC) and the 13th African Games Local Organising Committee (LOC).

The Forum gathered 20 youth leaders from across Africa, as well as officials and representatives from United Nations entities, the AUSC, the 13th African Games LOC, the African Union Youth Division, as well as the Ghanaian National Peace Council, and the Ministry of Youth and Sports of Ghana, to discuss the power of sports and major sporting events to prevent violent extremism.

In his opening remarks,

underlined that youth is Africa’s most valuable resource, and as such they must not only be factored in, but able to actively participate in policy decisions. Similarly,

, highlighted that the African Games represent a unique opportunity to foster greater youth participation, since they have been historically excluded from the policymaking realm, despite their great contribution to peace and sports.

During the two-day forum, participants exchanged views on how specific aspects of the 13th African Games in 2024 can be leveraged to promote peace and counteract the appeal of violent extremism on the continent. They also discussed the added value of including young people in the organization and delivery of major sporting events and PVE-related activities, and how policymakers can actively seek out and incorporate the diverse experiences and insights of young individuals in their decision-making processes.

Addressing the importance of youth-led campaigns to prevent violent extremism through sport, using the #MoreThanAGame campaign as a reference, the participants explored key takeaways for future campaigns.

The event served as a platform to amplify the voices of young people, acknowledging that the current youth generation is considered the largest in history, and that their diverse perspectives can significantly contribute to promoting peace and address the root causes of violent extremism conducive to terrorism. The 20 youth participants at the Forum were selected through a public application process launched in September 2023, which received over 400 submissions. The finalists were selected based on their experience and involvement in major sporting events, decision-making, and/or sport for preventing violent extremism initiatives, as well as the potential future impact of their participation in their communities.

The Youth Forum was the fifth youth-focused event, following the 2021 Online Youth Consultation on Preventing Violent Extremism through Sport; the MENA Youth Forum on Preventing Violent Extremism (PVE) through Sport (2022) in Rabat, Morocco; the Global Youth Forum on PVE through Sport in Fez, Morocco (2022); and the ASEAN-UN Regional Youth Forum on Preventing Violent Extremism through Sport in Bangkok, Thailand (2022). As a result of these initiatives, the UN Global Sports Programme developed a compilation of Policy Recommendations from a Youth Perspective which are currently being consulted on 2022) in