



# **WORLD CUP 2026 HOST NATIONS**



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BEYOND THE PITCH ENGAGEMENT

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A Flagship Sports Diplomacy & Networking Initiative  
of the  
National Sports Authority (NSA)

**GHANA**

**USA**



**MEXICO**

**CANADA**





## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

FIFA World Cup 2026 Host Nations Expo - Beyond The Pitch Engagement is a flagship activation of the National Sports Authority (NSA), designed as the inaugural showcase under Ghana's broader Sports for Diplomacy & Networking Initiative.

Timed to coincide with the global lead-up to the 2026 FIFA World Cup, the Expo invites the Embassies of Mexico, Canada, and the United States; the tournament's co-host nations; to each lead a dedicated cultural and sporting showcase over three consecutive Fridays in Accra.

Each Friday will feature one country as a co-host, with youth-centered sports activities, cultural exhibitions, educational opportunities, and public diplomacy engagements. Beyond the Expo, the NSA intends to institutionalize sports diplomacy as a long-term strategic pillar for bilateral and multi-lateral cooperation, technical assistance, and youth empowerment.

## STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

- Celebrate Ghana's diplomatic relationships with 2026 FIFA World Cup host nations
- Promote youth empowerment and educational opportunity through sports
- Strengthen bilateral and multilateral partnerships using cultural exchange and diplomacy
- Advance SDG-aligned human development outcomes via sport-based engagement
- Serve as the pilot platform for the broader Sports for Diplomacy & Networking Initiative under NSA
- Foster peacebuilding and cross-cultural understanding



## **PROGRAMME JUSTIFICATION**

Sport is one of the world's most universal cultural assets. It transcends language, borders, and politics — making it a powerful tool for diplomacy, development, and soft power.

In an era of global collaboration, sport offers a platform for advancing shared values such as inclusion, cooperation, and innovation. For Ghana, a youthful nation with a rich sporting culture and growing global ties, this Expo is a timely opportunity to leverage international partnerships and foster people-to-people engagement.

It also positions Ghana as a diplomatic convener in Africa ahead of the 2026 FIFA World Cup.

### **HOST COUNTRY FORMAT: “3 FRIDAYS – 3 NATIONS – 3 THEMES”**

Each Friday is led by one of the 2026 FIFA World Cup host nations, supported by the NSA.



## WEEK 1 – MEXICO FRIDAY



**Date:** To be confirmed

**Theme:** Latin American - African Connection through Sport & Culture

### Highlights:

- Mexican food, music, and cultural exhibitions – Taste of Mexico
- Panel discussion: “Latino-African Youth & Sports Business Diplomacy”
- Guest embassies: Latin America, Brazil, Spain, ECOWAS states
- Visuals & storytelling: Mexican sports cinema





## WEEK 2 – CANADA FRIDAY



**Date:** One week after Mexico Friday

**Theme:** Inclusion, Education & Empowerment through Sport

**Highlights:**

- Indigenous Canadian cultural displays
- Women in Sports Empowerment Forum
- Study in Canada information booths
- Youth sports tournaments and games
- Guest embassies: UK, Australia, Netherlands, Commonwealth missions





## WEEK 3 – USA FRIDAY



**Date:** One week after Canada Friday

**Theme:** Sport for Development, Opportunity & Influence

**Highlights:**

- USA-themed sports and pop culture zone
- Esports + FIFA gaming challenge
- Panel: “Sport as a Catalyst for Development”
- Fulbright and U.S. scholarship desks
- Guest embassies: African Union states, Asia-Pacific, UN agencies



## **ADDITIONAL CROSS-FRIDAY FEATURES**

- Embassy Pop-Up Villages (cuisine, education, tourism, innovation)
- Youth Sports Clinics and Skills Sessions
- Inter-embassy cultural performances
- Media and public engagement zones

## **IMPLEMENTATION & PARTNERS**

- **Lead Host:** National Sports Authority (NSA)
- **Strategic Partners:** Embassies of Mexico, Canada, and the USA
- **Supporting Ministries and Agencies:**
  - Ministry of Sports and Recreation
  - Ministry of Foreign Affairs
  - Ministry of Trade, Agribusiness and Industries
  - Ghana Education Service
  - Ghana Tourism Authority
  - The Black Star Experience
  - Office of Diaspora Affairs

### **Technical Partners:**

- Ghana Police Service / National Security
- Partner Embassies Educational Desks

## **VENUE & TIMING**

- **Venue:** Accra Sports Stadium + Adjacent Grounds
- **Dates:** 3 Consecutive Fridays (Suggested: November 2025)
- **Duration:** 9:00 AM – 6:00 PM each Friday
- **Target Audience:** Ghanaian youth, students, embassies, sports stakeholders, development partners

## **EMBASSY ENGAGEMENT PATHWAY**

Beyond the Expo, embassies will be invited to sign non-binding SDI Framework Agreements with the NSA, outlining areas for collaboration such as:

- Technical training
- Equipment and logistics support
- Youth exchanges and scholarships
- Infrastructure feasibility studies
- Cultural diplomacy initiatives

Embassies may also be featured in an annual “Embassy-in-Focus” series under SDI.

## **LONG-TERM VISION: FROM EXPO TO SDI LEGACY**

The Host Nations Expo is the pilot activation of the Sports for Diplomacy Initiative (SDI) which will be developed into a full national programme. Long-term goals include:

- Establishing an SDI Fund (pooled donor, embassy, and CSR support)
- Annual SDI Stakeholder Summits and Diplomatic Games
- Permanent SDI Secretariat embedded within NSA
- Integration into Ghana’s National Sports Development Plan
- Positioning Ghana as a continental leader in sports diplomacy and development

## **EXPECTED OUTCOMES**

- Strengthened diplomatic ties with 2026 host nations and others
- Direct youth access to international opportunities (education, sport, culture)
- National visibility for NSA and sports diplomacy
- Tangible outputs (MoUs, training partnerships, SDI project leads)
- Proof-of-concept for Ghana's leadership in global sports diplomacy

## **CLOSING STATEMENT**

The FIFA World Cup 2026 Host Nations Expo represents a bold step toward redefining how Ghana leverages sport for diplomacy and development. By uniting embassies, youth, and the public across sport and culture, the NSA is pioneering a powerful model of engagement for 2026 and beyond.

We invite embassies, institutions, development agencies, and corporate allies to walk this road with us, towards deeper cooperation, greater inclusion, and lasting legacy.