SPORTS AFRICA INVESTMENT SUMMIT SAIS

# PRELIMINARY REPORT

## SPORTS AFRICA INVESTMENT SUMMIT 2025

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NATIONAL SPORTS COMMISSION FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF NIGERIA THE PRESIDENCY

SPORT NIGERIA

# A. OVERVIEW

The potentials of sports to drive future economic growth, social, community and youth development in Africa, has been beset by infrastructural issues, lack of funding, limited private sector participation, lack of understanding of economic potentials in the industry, the inability to aggregate the quantum of funds required to drive the industry as a business and even how the industry functions as a key driver of the economy.

It is for these reasons and in recognition of its unique attributes as both a social and economic platform, that it is imperative for Nigeria and Africa in general to focus attention on creating the enabling environment to attract the required investments and strategies to propel sports as a business and economic driver in the continent.

The social and economic impact of sports is part of the critical outcomes of repositioning the industry from a purely participatory perspective to a business-oriented industry in Africa. Relationships and innovation among stakeholders across the entire value-chain would be required to develop the strategies that can ensure a significant boost to manufacturing, intra-Africa trade, content and media development among other outcomes, with a focus on value-added production of sports goods and services, investment, and infrastructure development.

Clearly, a key component that would also be required to deliver on these objectives is constant engagement among stakeholders in the sports ecosystem.

The Sports Africa Investment Summit™ (SAIS) was designed to provide the platform to engage, promote and maximise collaborations, with the goal of driving sustainable investment in Nigeria's and Africa's sports industry.

In line with the theme "Unleashing Africa's Potential: Investing in Sports Infrastructure for a Sustainable Future," SAIS was organised to enable the type of engagement among stakeholders that will examine strategies and partnerships to leverage global investment interest in sports initiatives that can catalyse mass participation in sports and outdoor activities.

Designed as an annual gathering of key players from across the ancillary sectors of the sports industry value chain, the Summit is an in-person participatory event in alignment with the vision to aggregate stakeholders, share information, and highlight investment opportunities. SAIS was designed to host at least 400 participants across the sports industry value chain in Nigeria in particular and Africa in general.

SAIS is organised with the collaboration of Sport Nigeria's Technical Advisory Partners who are drawn from different areas of professional services with cross cutting, cross sectoral linkages to the sports industry value chain, in recognition of the roles these sectors play in the development of a sustainable sports industry.

### Objectives of SAIS

The decision to organize the summit was based on the following key objectives:

- To engage, promote and maximise collaborations for sustainable investment in Africa's sports industry.
- Share intelligence and insight with investors, the private sector, national governments, policymakers, development partners, National and Continental Sports Federations, and other industry stakeholders to provide information and demonstrated competence that can guide the delivery of bankable sport projects that have social and commercial impact.
- Articulate and provide clear and concrete short- and medium-term investible projects, governance and institutional strategies required to unlock the identified potentials and deliver immediate ROI for investors in the industry.
- Facilitate market access to high value demand hubs (through partnerships).
- Advocacy for harmonized regulatory reform especially in relation to IP rights and incentives.

## B. THE 2025 SPORTS AFRICA INVESTMENT SUMMIT™

| Event Details | |
|---|---|
| **Date** | Monday 17th and Tuesday 18th February 2025 |
| **Venue** | Lagos Continental Hotel, 52A Kofo Abayomi Street, Victoria Island, Lagos, Nigeria |
| **Key Numbers** | **1** Project Agreement Signing Ceremony<br>**1** Fireside Chat<br>**2** Plenary Sessions<br>**2** Special Sessions and Project Presentations<br>**18** Breakout Sessions<br>**50+** Volunteers and Technical Personnel<br>**300+** Delegates from Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Senegal, South Africa, Canada, France, United Kingdom and USA |
| **Key Stakeholder Participation** | |
| Co-Host | National Sports Commission of Nigeria |
| Partners | Afreximbank<br>Bank of Industry<br>African Development Bank<br>The Presidency - Office of the Senior Special Assistant to the President on Grassroots Sports<br>UNESCO<br>United Nations Global Compact (Network Nigeria)<br>Nigeria Economic Summit Group<br>International Centre for Sport Security<br>Nigeria Governors' Forum<br>Government of Abia State<br>African Union 6th Region Global<br>N.E.S.H. Foundation |
| Technical Advisory Partners | **Legal Services** – Olaniwun Ajayi LP, Banwo & Ighodalo, Jackson, Etti & Edu, Delphi Law Advisory, Olisa Agbakoba Legal, Bola Ajibola & Co<br>**Financial Advisory** – KPMG<br>**Investment Advisory** – Gerrard Road Investment Partners,<br>**Strategy / Communication** – Shared Insights<br>**Project Development** – ISLE Ventures<br>**Research & Development** - National Institute of Social and Economic Research<br>**ESG / Sustainability** – Natural Eco Capital, Dupht Consults |
| Media / Content Partners | APO Group, Brila Media, Arise News, Vanguard Newspaper, EduTimes, Sport247, Pulse Sports, Esogo, Guardian Newspaper Nigeria |
| Exhibitor | ProStar Sports International |
| Travel Partner | The Business Cabin |

Delegate participation was aggregated from the following organisations and institutions:

- National Sports Commission
- Nigerian Federal Ministries, Departments and Agencies (Industry, Trade and Investment, Education, Health and Social Welfare; Communication and Digital Economy, Art, Culture, Tourism and Creative

Economy, Regional Development, Women Affairs; Youth Development, Immigration; Correctional Services, Nigeria Investment Promotion Commission NIPC, Customs, among others)
- State Governments – 4 States sent their Commissioners of Sports to attend as Delegates and panelists
- Development Finance Institutions (DFIs)
- Development agencies and Social Enterprise Organisations
- Investment Firms
- Banks and Financial Institutions
- Manufacturing Firms
- Sports Merchandising organisations
- Real Estate Developers
- Law firms
- Sports events organisers
- E-sports organisations
- Organised Private Sector

# C. SUMMIT SESSIONS

## Opening Ceremony / Plenary Session

### a. Welcome Address

Vice Chairman of Sport Nigeria LTD/GTE, Mr Yahaya Maikori welcomed special guests and delegates to the inaugural edition of the Sports Africa Investment Summit on behalf of the Chairman, Mr. Babatunde Folawiyo.

Mr. Maikori stressed the importance of the summit in addressing the potentials of sports to contribute to the economic development of Africa and wished the delegates a fruitful two days of deliberations.



Sport Nigeria Vice Chairman, Yahaya Maikori welcoming guests to the Sports Africa Investment Summit (SAIS) 2025

### b. Goodwill Messages

Goodwill messages were delivered by the following eminent personalities:

- HRM Igwe Nnaemeka Alfred Achebe CFR, Obi of Onitsha
- Ambassador Christophe Bazivamo, High Commissioner of Rwanda to Nigeria
- Mr. Xavier Muron, Country Director (Nigeria), Agence France de Developpment (AFD)
- Ms. Nneka Ifeoma Okafor, UNESCO (Nigeria)



HRH, Igwe Nnaemeka Alfred Achebe, the Obi of Onitsha

### c. Keynote Address

The Keynote address was delivered by **Mallam Shehu Dikko, Chairman of the National Sports Commission of Nigeria**. His address focused on ***Sports as Catalyst for Africa towards 2063***, using Nigeria as the example of what was required to industralise sports in Africa and build a true sports economy capable of delivering 2-3% contribution to GDP, provide employment of between 3-5 Million jobs in 10 years and deliver a market for goods and services of between 80-100 Million, which if pro-rated for Africa works out to between 15-25 million jobs and a market of between 300-500million across the continent.

Mallam Dikko emphasised the importance of reform as a key element of delivering the social and economic benefits of sports with the reforms based on instituting the right legal, administrative, management and governance structures for the regulators of sports. His presentation also highlighted the desirability of effective collaborations among stakeholders so that opportunities for talent discovery, management and exposure can be achieved in a seamless and sustainable pathway. According to him, the need to utilise collaborations as a tool for implementing strategies informed the decision to partner with Sport Nigeria to co-host the Sports Africa Investment Summit. And that the National Sports Commission looks forward to such collaborations to drive the implementation of the industralisation of sports in Nigeria as a pilot for what Africa can do with sports on the continent.



Amb. Christophe Bazivamo, High Commissioner of Rwanda to Nigeria



Mr. Xavier Muron, Country Manager, Agence Francaise de Developpement



National Sports Commission Chairman, Mallam Shehu Dikko

Mallam Dikko concluded by emphasising that Nigeria is ready, willing and able to lead the industralisation of sports across the continent and looks forward to future engagements to drive the Sports Industralisation Agenda in Africa so that sports can contribute positively to the Africa 2063 Agenda.

### d. "Setting the Agenda" Presentation

A short presentation on how we arrived at the agenda for the summit was delivered by Ms. Nkechi Obi, CEO of Sport Nigeria LTD/GTE. The pathway focused on the main challenge in progressing from potential of sports to actual delivery of results being in the development of strategies that can deliver on the potential and the execution of these strategies.


CEO Sport Nigeria LTD, Ms. Nkechi Obi, setting the agenda

The second issue highlighted in the presentation was the delivery of expected outcomes for sports as a contributor to the socio-economic development of the continent, highlighting that this must come from the implementation of connected, collaborative strategies that are scalable, sustainable and measurable. Thirdly, an alignment with the global sports development strategies which are essentially built on three main pillars formed the basis on which the agenda and plenary sessions of the Summit were developed.

The 3 main Pillars are as follows:

- **Market development** to drive demand
- **Products development** to service the demand
- **Funding and financing** the market and product development activities.

## Plenary Sessions

The Summit Plenary issues were selected based on the contribution of sports to the realisation of the **United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)** which include **SDGs 3, 4, 5, 8, 11, 16, 17**, the **2022-2026 National Sports Industry Policy of Nigeria** and the **African Union (AU) Commission's Policy Framework for the Sustainable Development of Sports in Africa**.

The Session discussions revolved around strategies for the contribution of sports to development in Africa through:

- **Inclusivity, Impact and Sustainability in Sports** – Emphasizing social impact and market development strategies for demand for sports goods and services.
- **Sports for Development and Sports Development: Governance, Administration and Management – Leveraging the Sports Value Chain for Economic Growth** – Emphasising reform-based strategies for sustainable sports development.
- **Where's the Money? Funding and Investment to Catalyse Industralisation of Sports Business** – Emphasising funding and investment models for delivering sports development strategies.



Mrs. Rakiya Dhikru-Yagboyaju, moderating the fireside chat with Dr. Robin Petersen, CEO SPN Africa and former South African Football Association (SAFA) President

## Closing Address

The keynote address titled ***Reform as the foundation for investment into Sports*** was delivered by **Mr. Bolaji Balogun, Chief Executive Officer, Chapel Hill Denham** who was represented by Mr. Lanre Buluro, Managing Director, Investment Banking, Chapel Hill Denham.

## Plenary Session One

Inclusivity, Impact And Sustainability In Sports

| Activity | Topic | Moderator | Panelist(s) | Key Highlights / Recommendations |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Breakout Session 1 | **SDGs through Sports:** The Social and Community Impact of Sports | Mrs. Toyosi Alabi **Partner, Olaniwun Ajayi** | 1. Ms. Naomi Nwokolo – CEO/ ED, United Nations Global Compact<br>2. Ms. Nneka Okafor, UNESCO<br>3. Mr. Ade Adefeko - Director Corporate & Regulatory Affairs Olam Agri | ✦ Grassroots participation through the reintroduction of Sports Days in schools.<br>✦ Government policies to mandate fitness, wellness, and sports in workplaces.<br>✦ A comprehensive sports sector assessment should be conducted to identify gaps in infrastructure, funding, human resources, and governance.<br>✦ Intentional inclusion of sports jobs in government employment policies. |
| Breakout Session 2 | **The Mass Participation Strategy** – Harnessing the power of Sports for Community Development | Mr. Nkem Ogbuaku **CEO, Shared Insights Ltd** | 1. Dr. Seriki Muritala, **Representative, Minister of Youth Development**<br>2. Mr. Oladapo Akande – **CEO/ Editor in Chief, EduTimes**<br>3. Prof. Yetunde Aluko **– Head of Social Policy Development (Representative, DG NISER)**<br>4. Dr Ikenna Nwosu – **THECCS PC Facilitator, NESG** | ✦ The development of a vibrant sports industry depends largely on the availability of modern and well-maintained infrastructure.<br>✦ Strict enforcement of laws against hooliganism and violence.<br>✦ Ensuring safety and accessibility will encourage more people to engage in sporting activities.<br>✦ Special initiatives should be introduced to engage marginalized groups, including women, children, and people with disabilities, to increase participation in sports. |
| Breakout Session 3 | **Bridging the Capacity Gap in the sports industry** | Mrs. Beverly Agbakoba-Onyejianya **Partner, Olisa Agbakoba Legal** | 1. Mr. Desmond Chiji – **General Delegate, La Liga Nigeria/ Ghana**<br>2. Mr. Emeka Enyadike – **ED, Sports Network Africa**<br>3. Hon. Mrs. Agnes Atsu – **Commissioner for Sports, Cross River State** | ✦ Address capacity gaps through specialized sports-related academic programs in tertiary institutions to boost trained professionals.<br>✦ Provide incentives such as tax incentives for sports sponsorships and investments to encourage businesses to commit financial resources to sports development.<br>✦ Reform the administrative operations of sports federations and governing bodies to operate according to global best practices of today's world. Also encourage more women in leadership roles and decision-making processes.<br>✦ Boost Funding of sports clubs and federations beyond the inadequate government funding, which is often inconsistently allocated. |
| Breakout Session 4 | **The ESG Strategy for Sports Industry Development in Africa** | Ms. Khadija M-Williams **Founder, Sustainacious Co.** | 1. Mr. Olaniyi Yusuf **– Chairman, NESG**<br>2. Mr. Taiwo Adeshina **- Partner, Jackson Etti & Edu**<br>3. Dr. Eugene Itua **– CEO, Eco Capital** | ✦ Foster partnerships with global ESG-focused organizations to facilitate knowledge transfer and capacity building.<br>✦ Develop tailored ESG funding models, including grants, sponsorships, and impact investments, to support sports organizations. |

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| | | | 4. | Ms. Maureen Rosita Ojong Ebob-Besong, **Sport Diplomacy and International Development Expert** | ✦ Provide technical assistance and advisory services to sports entities on cost-effective ways to integrate ESG principles.<br>✦ Advocate for the development and enforcement of clear ESG policies and regulations specific to the sports industry. |
| Breakout Session 5 | **Developing a Sustainable and Inclusive Sport Sector in an Environment of Safety, Security and Integrity** | Ms. Temilade Denton **Director, Gerrard Road Investment Partners** | 1.<br>2.<br>3. | Dr. Massimiliano Montanari **– CEO, ICSS**<br>Prince Adeboye Adeyinka **– SSA on Grassroot Sports Development**<br>Sir Nwaobilor Ananaba **- Abia State Commissioner for Sports and Youth Development** | ✦ The integrity of sports organizations at local, national, and international levels is being questioned due to concerns surrounding governance, transparency, and ethical leadership.<br>✦ Exploitation of young athletes, including trafficking, labor violations, and abuse, remains a serious concern, especially in Africa, where vulnerable young talents are often manipulated by unscrupulous agents.<br>✦ There are also issues of physical and sexual abuse in sports, particularly targeting minors and female athletes, which necessitates stronger protective measures and enforcement mechanisms.<br>✦ Maximising the use of sport to prevent violent extremism, thereby enabling contributions to the development of policies, legislation and structures and capacities to protect sport from violence and from other security threats |
| Breakout Session 6 | **A Seat at the Table** - Gender and Social Inclusivity in Sports | Ms. Debbie Izamoje **CEO, Brila Media** | 1.<br>2.<br>3.<br>4. | Hajia Aisha Abubakar<br>Mrs. Beverly Agbakoba-Onyejianya **- Partner, Olisa Agbakoba Legal**<br>Ms. Nneka Okafor, **UNESCO**<br>Hon. Mrs. Agnes Atsu **– Commissioner for Sports, Cross River State** | ✦ Strong policy frameworks supporting gender inclusivity in sports should be developed and instituted<br>✦ Address male-dominated leadership in sports organisations that limit female representation.<br>✦ Redress the unequal funding between male and female teams, to improve financial instability for female athletes.<br>✦ Improve on data collection and statistics to support investment in women's sports.<br>✦ Address the limited access to training facilities and quality coaching for girls by ensuring safe spaces for women and girls to play sports. |



Moderator: Mrs. Toyosi Alabi; Partner, Olaniwun Ajayi, Ms. Nneka Okafor; UNESCO and Mr. Ade Adefeko; Director Corporate & Regulatory Affairs Olam Agri


Moderator: Mr. Nkem Ogbuaku; CEO Shared Insights Ltd, Mr. Oladapo Akande; CEO/Editor in Chief, EduTimes and Prof. Yetunde Aluko; Head of Social Policy Development (Representative, DG NISER)



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Sir Nwaobilor Ananaba; Abia State Commissioner for Sports and Youth Development and J.N. Green-Amakwe; S.A., Investment Promotions, Abia State



Moderator: Ms. Khadija M-Williams; Founder, Sustainacious Co., Mr. Olaniyi Yusuf; Chairman, NESG, Mr. Taiwo Adeshina; Partner, Jackson Etti & Edu, Dr. Eugene Itua; CEO, Eco Capital, Ms. Maureen Rosita Ojong Ebob-Besong; Sport Diplomacy and International Development Expert

## Plenary Session Two

Sports for Development and Sports Development: Governance, Administration and Management - Leveraging the Sports Value Chain for Economic Growth

| Activity | Topic | Moderator | Panelist(s) | Key Highlights / Recommendations |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Fireside Chat | **Football As the Tide That Raises All Boats** - Aligning Continental And National Roles For Sports Industry Development | Mrs. Rakiya Dhikru-Yagboyaju | 1. Dr. Robin Petersen **– CEO, SPN Africa** | ✦ The governance of sports, particularly football, often suffers from significant power imbalances. Decision-making authority is often concentrated among a small group of individuals or organizations, leaving grassroots stakeholders, athletes, and community leaders with little to no influence.<br>✦ Political interference in sports governance weakens the effectiveness of sports federations and associations.<br>✦ Football, which has the potential to be a tool for social and economic development, lacks the financial support needed to develop infrastructure, train athletes, and establish structured youth programmes.<br>✦ Solutions should address the power imbalance, financial inadequacy and political interference through a systemic reform of football administration and management to ensure the benefits of the sport are felt at every level of the game – professional and amateur |
| Breakout Session 1 | **Maximizing the Cross-sectoral, Cross-cutting Nature of Sports** | Ms. Kodichinma Anigbogu **Senior Associate, Jackson, Etti & Edu** | 1. Mr Xavier Muron **– Country Director, AFD**<br>2. Dr Tayo Aduloju **– CEO, NESG**<br>3. Mr. Tola Adeyemi **– Managing Director, KPMG** | ✦ Sports is often viewed primarily as a recreational activity rather than a viable economic sector, leading to limited investment and policy prioritization.<br>✦ The sports sector in Africa often operates in isolation, lacking synergies with other industries such as education, tourism, and technology, which limits growth opportunities.<br>✦ Many sports facilities in Africa are only used for high-profile events, remaining idle for most of the year and failing to serve local communities.<br>✦ Maintaining sports facilities in Africa is expensive, yet many do not generate sufficient revenue to cover their operational costs.<br>✦ Solutions include a well-designed calendar of sports events that provides details to enable stakeholders within the ecosystem leverage the events to deliver social and economic benefits. Additionally, the sustainable deployment of sports infrastructure that provides opportunities for experiencing sports, should be a key strategy in maximizing the opportunities that sports deliver for growth and development across the continent. |
| Breakout Session 2 | **Facilities, Stadiums and Arenas** - The Sports Infrastructure Strategy for Industry Development | Mr. Akin Ajibola **Partner, Bola Ajibola & Co.** | 1. Mr. Obi Asika – DG National Council for Arts & Culture<br>2. Mr. Adeniyi Olukoya – Senior Relationship Manager, Client Relations, African Export-Import Bank (Afreximbank) | ✦ Sports infrastructure projects often require significant financial investments, which can be challenging to secure.<br>✦ There is often a gap in making sports facilities accessible to all members of the community, including women and those with disabilities.<br>✦ Ensuring that sports facilities are built and operated sustainably is a growing concern. |

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| | | | 3. Barr. Uche George-Egbe – National Sports Commission<br>4. Sir Nwaobilor Ananaba – Abia State Commissioner for Sports<br>5. J.N. Green-Amakwe - S.A., Investment Promotions, Abia State<br>6. Mr. Elo Adhekpukoli – Senior Associate, Udo Udoma & Belo Osagie | ✦ Balancing the use of sports facilities between elite events and community activities is essential. Ensuring that the local community benefits from these infrastructures is an ongoing issue.<br>✦ The long-term maintenance and operational costs of sports facilities are often underestimated.<br>✦ Solutions to the infrastructure gap issues should address the concerns raised in this panel. |
| Breakout Session 3 | The Complementary Roles of National and Continental Agencies in Sports Development | Mrs. Chisom Mbonu-Ezeoke Presenter & Producer, SuperSport | 1. Mr. Seyi Olofinjana – Chelsea FC<br>2. Mallam Shehu Dikko – Chairman, National Sports Commission<br>3. Mr. Bukola Olopade – DG, National Sports Commission | Strategies for synergy between Continental and National Federations should be focused on addressing the following issues which have been recurring consistently and have ensured that sports has under delivered on its potentials in Africa:<br>✦ Lack of a clear and consistent vision for sports development in Africa.<br>✦ Need for corporate governance in sports administration to ensure transparency and accountability.<br>✦ Absence of diversity in governance, including gender, age, and expertise representation.<br>✦ Lack of coordination among national and continental sports agencies.<br>✦ Lack of data-driven decision-making, with many sports organisations failing to track and analyse performance.<br>✦ Over-reliance on government funding, which limits sustainability and independence.<br>✦ Inability to leverage the potentials of the entire value chain of sports, focusing only on the talent development and participatory side. |
| Breakout Session 4 | Bridging the Capacity Gaps in Corporate Governance, Administration and Management of NSFs | Ms. Ada Aguocha Senior Associate, Banwo & Ighodalo | 1. Mr. Seyi Olofinjana – Chelsea FC<br>2. Mr. Bukola Olopade – DG, National Sports Commission<br>3. Chief Chijioke Okoli, SAN – Founder, Delphi Law Advisory | ✦ There is a significant gap in leadership training programs aimed at grooming the next generation of sports administrators.<br>✦ Explore effective management practices tailored to the unique needs of national sport federations.<br>✦ Emphasize the importance of transparency and accountability in the governance and management of sport federations.<br>✦ Provide a platform for collaboration, networking, and knowledge sharing among national sport federations to foster mutual learning and improvement.<br>✦ Over-reliance on government funding limits innovation. The development of sustainable financial models for sports administration and management is of critical essence to address this issue. |
| Breakout Session 5 | Entertainment, The Nexus of Information Technology, Sports and Media – Making it work for Sports | Ms. Nkechi Obi CEO, Sport Nigeria LTD/GTE | 1. Mr. Obi Asika – DG National Council for Arts & Culture<br>2. Mr. Maxwell Kalu – AWFC<br>3. Prof. Angeli Gianchandani – Brand Marketing & Faculty Member, New York University | ✦ Africa's media heavily consumes and promotes international sports and entertainment content, often relegating indigenous productions to the background.<br>✦ The African media has not effectively harnessed storytelling as a tool to promote its sports and entertainment industries. |

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| | | | 4. | Ms. Anita Ibru – **Chief Strategy Officer (Global), Guardian Nigeria** | ✦ The absence of a robust digital strategy has limited the growth of Nigerian sports and entertainment content.<br>✦ Monetizing sports in Africa requires a strategic shift from reliance on ticket sales and government funding to innovative revenue streams.<br>✦ The recent increase of Afreximbank's Creative Industries Fund to $3 billion is a strong indication that investment in Africa's soft power sectors is growing. However, sports still require targeted funding to unlock their full potential.<br>✦ Strategies that tie sports inti the emerging creative sector nexus of entertainment and media should be explored, especially the development of events and properties tied to traditional sports that already have an indigenous audience which can be grown using new media strategies. |
| Breakout Session 6 | **National Sports Federations as "Business Drivers" of their Sport** - Alignment of interests to facilitate collaborations and partnerships between the private sector and federations. | Ms. Vanessa Obi **Associate, Banwo & Ighodalo** | 1.<br>2.<br>3. | Mr. Adeyinka Samuel **– President, Nigeria Fencing Federation**<br>Mr. Lanre Ogunjobi **– National Sports Commission**<br>Mr. Azeez Ladipo **– GM, Nigeria Rugby Football Federation** | ✦ Many National Sports Federations (NSFs) face significant financial challenges, with a lack of clear strategies for securing stable funding.<br>✦ Governance issues within NSFs, such as poor leadership and lack of transparency, undermine their credibility and make them less appealing to potential investors and corporate partners, hindering the growth and development of sports.<br>✦ NSFs currently lack effective marketing, branding, and communication strategies, limiting their ability to engage corporate organizations, attract investment, and foster stronger relationships with fans.<br>✦ NSFs are not fully capitalizing on the economic potential of their sports, failing to develop their sports as viable markets for goods and services.<br>✦ There is often a disconnect between the goals of NSFs and the private sector, making it difficult to forge effective partnerships.<br>✦ The strategies to address these challenges should include a complete reform of federations that enables them to fully position their federation as the business units of their sport. |



Moderator: Ms. Kodichinma Anigbogu; Senior Associate, Jackson, Etti & Edu, Mr Xavier Muron; Country Director, AFD, Dr Tayo Aduloju; CEO, NESG and Mr. Tola Adeyemi; Managing Director, KPMG



Moderator: Ms. Ada Aguocha; Senior Associate, Banwo & Ighodalo, Mr. Seyi Olofinjana; Chelsea FC, Mr. Bukola Olopade; DG, National Sports Commission and Chief Chijioke Okoli, SAN; Founder, Delphi Law Advisory



Moderator: Ms. Vanessa Obi; Associate, Banwo & Ighodalo, Mr. Adeyinka Samuel; President, Nigeria Fencing Federation, Mr. Lanre Ogunjobi; National Sports Commission and Mr. Azeez Ladipo; GM, Nigeria Rugby Football Federation



Moderator: Mrs. Chisom Mbonu-Ezeoke; Presenter & Producer, SuperSport, Mr. Seyi Olofinjana; Chelsea FC, Mallam Shehu Dikko; Chairman, National Sports Commission and Mr. Bukola Olopade; DG, National Sports Commission



Moderator: Ms. Nkechi Obi; CEO, Sport Nigeria LTD/GTE, Mr. Obi Asika; DG National Council for Arts & Culture, Mr. Maxwell Kalu; Founder, AWFC, Prof. Angeli Gianchandani; Brand Marketing & Faculty Member, New York University and Ms. Anita Ibru; Chief Strategy Officer (Global), Guardian Nigeria




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Moderator: Mr. Akin Ajibola; Partner, Bola Ajibola & Co., Mr. Obi Asika; DG National Council for Arts & Culture, Mr. Adeniyi Olukoya; Senior Relationship Manager, Client Relations, African Export-Import Bank (Afreximbank), Barr. Uche George-Egbe; National Sports Commission, Sir Nwaobilor Ananaba; Abia State Commissioner for Sports, J.N. Green-Amakwe; S.A., Investment Promotions, Abia State and Mr. Elo Adhekpukoli; Senior Associate, Udo Udoma & Belo Osagie

## Plenary Session Three

Where's the Money? Funding and Investment to catalyse industralisation of Sports

| Activity | Topic | Moderator | Panelist(s) | Key Highlights / Recommendations |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Breakout Session 1 | Accelerating Industrialization through Sports Development and Investments | Mrs. Beverly Agbakoba-Onyejianya Partner, Olisa Agbakoba Legal | 1. Mr. Ifeanyi Oputa – NASSI<br>2. Mr. Chijioke Chinedum – Chairman, Abia State Investment Office<br>3. Mr. Adedamilola Adedotun – Head of Strategy, Temple Management Company | ✦ One of the major barriers to the growth of MSMEs in Nigeria's sports and creative industries is the difficulty in accessing affordable financing.<br>✦ Many MSMEs struggle to integrate technology into their operations due to financial constraints, lack of technical skills, and limited access to digital tools.<br>✦ Nigeria's industrial limitations severely impact the ability of local sportswear manufacturers to produce quality gear and equipment at competitive prices.<br>✦ Investors should be provided with incentives to take over underutilized or dilapidated sporting facilities and remodel them into modern, revenue-generating centers.<br>✦ State governments should prioritize infrastructure projects that support the development of sports facilities, training centers, and recreational hubs.<br>✦ Technology is a key driver of modern sports industries, improving fan engagement, ticketing, merchandising, and content consumption.<br>✦ Stronger local league systems is essential for building a thriving sports industry. |
| Breakout Session 2 | Professional Sports - Creating Markets through Leagues, Clubs and Events. | Mr. John Opubor CEO, Gerrard Road Investment Partners | 1. Mr. Desmond Chiji – General Delegate, La Liga<br>2. Mr. Seyi Olofinjana – Chelsea FC<br>3. Mr. Maxwell Kalu – AWFC<br>4. Ms. Gbemisola Abudu – Vice President, NBA Africa | ✦ While football remains dominant in Africa, other sports struggle to gain traction due to structural, financial, and cultural barriers.<br>✦ A major challenge in African sports development is the weak relationship between local federations and global sports leagues.<br>✦ To attract audiences and investors, leagues in Africa must improve their overall product and marketing strategies.<br>✦ A thriving sports industry requires an interconnected ecosystem that supports talent development, financing, and commercialization.<br>✦ Modern sports facilities are essential for attracting fans, sponsors, and investors as poor infrastructure diminishes the matchday experience and discourages sponsorships. |
| Breakout Session 3 | The 6th Region – Harnessing the power of Diaspora Investment to industrialize sports in Africa. | Mr. Telema Davies Coordinating Secretary, Sport Nigeria LTD/GTE | 1. Ambassador Afolabi Oke – AU6RG<br>2. Mr. Ade Adefeko - Director Corporate & Regulatory Affairs Olam Agri<br>3. Mr. Joel Popoola – Chair, UK Institute of Directors (IoD) Africa Group<br>4. Mr. Tosin Osunkoya – Co-Managing Partner/ED/ Head Investment, Comercio Partners | ✦ The African diaspora presents a significant source of investment in the sports industry, but barriers prevent engagement.<br>✦ Investors need clear, profitable opportunities in African sports, but structured projects are lacking.<br>✦ Using Nigeria as an example, different states in Nigeria have unique strengths that can be leveraged to develop various aspects of the sports industry value chain and these should be explored. |

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| | | | | | ✦ Many African athletes migrate to Europe or North America due to better opportunities, leading to a talent drain.<br>✦ Ghana's "Year of Return" campaign in 2019 generated millions in investments from the African diaspora. This can be replicated in the sports industry, with Nigeria serving as a pilot to attract the investment that can then be redirected to other sports projects across Africa<br>✦ Commercial sports hubs can be created across the country for returning diaspora members to live, work, and invest in various areas of the sports industry value chain. |
| Breakout Session 4 | Incentivizing investment in Sports in Africa | Mr. Adedapo Adedotun **Director, Brill Business Solutions** | 1. Mr. Emeka Enyadike - **ED, Sports Network Africa**<br>2. Mr. Akin Ajibola – **Partner, Bola Ajibola & Co**<br>3. Dr. Ikenna Nwosu - **THECCS PC Facilitator, NESG** | | Solutions for incentivizing investment in sports in Africa should also address the issue raised by panelists, which include:<br>✦ Inconsistent government policies, including taxation, land acquisition issues, and complex regulatory frameworks, hinder investment in sports.<br>✦ Significant lack of accessible financing options for sports projects, including loans, grants, and private equity investment.<br>✦ High interest rates and stringent loan requirements make it difficult for small and medium-sized sports enterprises to scale.<br>✦ Many sports administrators lack an understanding of the sports industry value chain, limiting their ability to attract private sector investment.<br>✦ Supporting school sports programmes, mentorship initiatives, and media campaigns that highlight successful athletes will help reshape cultural attitudes toward sports. |
| Breakout Session 5 | Leveraging Technology to Revolutionize African Sports Investment | Mr. Leslie Koroma **CEO, Africa Sports Ventures Group** | 1. Mr. Yahaya Maikori **– President, Nigeria E-Sports Federation**<br>2. Mr. Olufemi Abioye **– Founder, Sports Meet Tech** | | ✦ Access to technology and internet connectivity varies across Africa, posing challenges in ensuring equal opportunities for sports investors and athletes to benefit from technological advancements.<br>✦ Concerns around data privacy and cybersecurity are significant barriers to the adoption of technology in sports investment.<br>✦ The regulatory landscape for technology and investment in African sports may be complex and evolving. Clarifying regulatory frameworks and standards is essential for fostering a conducive environment for technological innovation.<br>✦ Support the development of African sports-themed digital games and broadcasting platforms.<br>✦ Integrate sports technology training into educational curricula. |
| Breakout Session 6 | Funding the Sports Industrialization agenda – Developing the Right Investment Models | Mr. Dave Fowler **Director, ISLE Ventures** | 1. Mr. John Opubor – **CEO, Gerrard Road Investment Partners**<br>2. Mr. Nkem Ogbuaku – **CEO, Shared Insights Ltd** | | ✦ Weak governance structures, making it hard to create accountability and transparency in sports funding.<br>✦ Lack of collaboration between national agencies and private sector investors, reducing funding opportunities. |

- Limited access to diverse funding models, restricting investment in sports infrastructure and development.
- Encourage a blended financing approach, combining public funding, private investment, and international support.
- Increase the availability of venture capital and risk-based equity investment in sports.
- Reduce reliance on traditional debt financing, which may not be suitable for all sports businesses.
- Ensure safe and efficient transportation systems around sports venues to enhance accessibility.
- Improve data collection and analytics to measure the economic impact of sports investments.



Moderator: Mrs. Beverly Agbakoba-Onyejianya; Partner, Olisa Agbakoba Legal, Mr. Ifeanyi Oputa; Director General, NASSI, Mr. Chijioke Chinedum; Chairman, Abia State Investment Office and Mr. Adedamilola Adedotun; Head of Strategy, Temple Management Company


Moderator: Mr. John Opubor; CEO, Gerrard Road Investment Partners, Mr. Desmond Chiji; General Delegate, La Liga, Mr. Seyi Olofinjana; Chelsea FC, Mr. Maxwell Kalu; AWFC and Ms. Gbemisola Abudu; Vice President, NBA Africa


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Moderator: Mr. Dave Fowler; Director, ISLE Ventures, Mr. Nkem Ogbuaku; CEO, Shared Insights Ltd and Mr. John Opubor; CEO, Gerrard Road Investment Partners



Moderator: Mr. Adedapo Adedotun; Director, Brill Business Solutions, Mr. Emeka Enyadike; ED, Sports Network Africa, Mr. Akin Ajibola; Partner, Bola Ajibola & Co and Dr. Ikenna Nwosu; THECCS PC Facilitator, NESG



Moderator: Mr. Leslie Koroma; CEO, Africa Sports Ventures Group, Mr. Yahaya Maikori; President, Nigeria E-Sports Federation and Mr. Olufemi Abioye; Founder, Sports Meet Tech

## D. SPECIAL SESSIONS AT SAIS

### **Special Session 1 –** Presentation Of The Abia State Sports Special Economic Zone (1st In Africa)

- While the **Sports Africa Investment Summit™** provided the platform for aggregating stakeholders across the public, private and development sectors to share knowledge and foster collaborations on strategies towards the evolution of sports as an industrial and commercial sector, the Summit delivered a historic moment in its first edition.



- A special session for the signing of the **Technical and Collaboration Agreement** between the Government of Abia State and Sport Nigeria LTD/GTE for the establishment of the first-of-its-kind **Sports Special Economic Zone (SSEZ)** in Sub-Saharan Africa underscored the readiness establish a blueprint for Africa's sports industrialization and attract global investors.
- The Abia State Sports Special Economic Zone (SSEZ) project, promoted by Sport Nigeria LTD/GTE, is a transformative initiative aimed at delivering on the industrial potentials of sports and positioning Abia State as the premier hub for sports goods manufacturing in Nigeria and West Africa. A fully integrated sports manufacturing hub, the SSEZ is designed to produce, innovate, and distribute innovative sports apparel, footwear, products and equipment regionally and globally. The SSEZ will also include community sports facilities to promote mass participation and Arenas to promote events and sports tourism.
- Situated on **500Ha (Five hundred hectares) of prime land** in the Greater Aba Industrial Area, the SSEZ is expected to attract an estimated annual investment of $100 million over a projected period of 15-20 years, based on the implementation model of the "Live, Work, and Play" strategy.
- The project aligns with the **Nigeria Industrial Revolution Plan (NIRP)** and the **Africa Continental Free Trade Agreement (AfCFTA)**, and leverages Abia's rich history of entrepreneurship and manufacturing particularly in Aba, a city renowned for its skilled artisans and small-scale manufacturing industries, by leveraging Aba's reputation as a manufacturing hub for footwear, apparel, and textile products.
- SSEZ initiative seeks to enhance industrial capacity, attract investment, and foster economic development through the creation of a sports-focused industrial hub. **Key identified benefits** of the SSEZ include:
  - i. **Economic Growth:** Attract an increase in investments into the manufacturing sector, create jobs for skilled and unskilled workers, and increase export earnings.
  - ii. **Improvement in Workforce Capacity:** Increase in skills training and productivity, technology transfer, enhancing employability, worker productivity, and global competitiveness.
  - iii. **Infrastructure Development:** Drive investment into sports facilities improvements in transportation and utilities, benefiting the SSEZ and surrounding communities.
  - iv. **Alignment with National Goals:** The SSEZ supports Nigeria's Industrial Revolution Plan by fostering export-oriented manufacturing and job creation, contributing to national economic development.



- The signing ceremony was held following presentations on the SSEZ by Mr. Chinedum Chijioke, Chairman, Abia State Investment Office and Mr. John Opubor, CEO, Gerrard Road Investment Partners and Project Team Lead of the Sport Nigeria Team for the SSEZ.
- Signing on behalf of Sport Nigeria were Mr. Ade Adefeko (representing Sport Nigeria Chairman) Mr. Yahaya Maikori, Vice Chairman and Ms. Nkechi Obi, CEO of Sport Nigeria. Abia State had Hon Nwaobilor Ananaba, Commissioner for Sports and Youth Development and Mr. Chinedum Chijioke, Chairman, Abia State Investment Office who signed the agreement on behalf of the State.
- Witnesses to the signing included HRM Igwe Alfred Achebe, CFR, Obi of Onitsha, Mallam Shehu Dikko, Chairman, National Sports Commission, Mr Bukola Olopade, Director General, National Sports Commission, Mr. Francis Orbih, Mr. Obi Asika and Mr. Tosin Osunkoya, Board Members of Sport Nigeria, as well as a host of other special guests present.

## Special Session 2 – Presentation Of Spaces For Sports™ (S4S) Project

- A **Special Session** was delivered to showcase Sport Nigeria's flagship social impact project, **Spaces for Sports™. (S4S)**
- The **Spaces for Sports™** initiative is a private sector-led, sub-national approach to provide and support the infrastructure for sports at community level, with a view to bridging the considerable gap in community-based sports infrastructure necessary for promoting mass participation in sports and deliver increased demand for sports goods and services.
- It is expected that in due course, S4S will be replicated across Africa to provide the community based facilities that can propel an increase in mass participation in sports and deliver social impact, while increasing demand for sports goods and services.
- S4S is a market demand creating strategy for a government-led and private sector driven **community-based sports industry** to create demand for sports goods and services through mass participation in Nigeria and deliver socioeconomic benefits in communities across the country.



- Nigeria requires 7,000+ community facilities to service an estimated market of 100million potential active sports participants. **Over a 10-year period, the S4S initiative proposes to close this gap by developing up to 3,000 community-based cluster facilities across the country.**
- An estimated gap of **50,000 community facilities** exists across Africa. It is believed that S4S can serve as a strategy for closing this gap based on the success of the Nigerian Pilot.

- With ancillary social and community development attributes, S4S is positioned to help address the sports infrastructure deficit in Nigeria and across Africa in communities at sub-national level. S4S will deliver a direct link between investment in sports and the expected outcomes of the sports industrialisation agenda through by deploying the project in pilot phases
- S4S priorities include the following objectives:
  i. **Deliver infrastructure:** lack of access to quality infrastructure particularly in urban areas, is a huge constraint to grassroots sports development and participation. S4S will drive increased participation in sports among the young population.
  ii. **Create jobs:** S4S will generate employment opportunities across the country that is both sustainable and viable; from construction to maintenance, from trainers to security in communities.
  iii. **Foster healthy outdoor activities:** More children and young adults involved with various sporting activities outdoors will help to build confidence, rounded characters, and emotional intelligence.






  iv. **Improve education:** By getting more children into school through sports, S4S benefits not just human capacity development, but the quality of the process, with physical activity improving cognitive functions and academic achievement.
  v. **Protection of young people:** S4S beneficiaries are productively engaged in personal development initiatives keeping them away from anti-social behaviour, and in some instances, helping to reform deviants, preventing young people from becoming security risks to themselves and to their communities.
  vi. **Wealth creation:** With S4S, a key area of impact is the economy. A national spread and commercial optimization will contribute significantly (no less than 2%) to the economy of Nigeria annually and the S4S project can aid organic growth at the grassroots.
  vii. **Enhanced development of individual states:** S4S provides a coordinated and structured approach to facilitate community and social development across states of the federation. The existence of a peer review mechanism stimulates comparative and competitive advantages among sub-nationals that directs investment towards sustainable growth and development.

# E. SPECIAL APPRECIATION

Sport Nigeria we would like to offer special appreciation to the following individuals and groups for their interest and participation at the ***Sports Africa Investment Summit™*** **2025** edition:

- **Mallam Shehu Dikko (Chairman, National Sports Commission)** – The readiness of the NSC to partner and co-host the Summit despite initial challenges in relation to the postponement of the event in 2024, is deeply appreciated. The commitment to our shared goals is truly valued, and we look forward to continuing our successful partnership.
- **Mr. Bukola Olopade (Director-General, National Sports Commission)** – The dedication to our shared vision is inspiring and a testament to his passion and belief in sports as a contributor to the economy.
- **Abia State Government** – Our gratitude to **His Excellency, Dr. Alex Chioma Otti, Executive Governor of Abia State** and members of the State Executive Council with particular mention of **Mr. Chinenye Mba-Uzoukwu, Principal Secretary to the Governor & Chief Strategy Officer of the Abia State Government** and **Sir Nwaobilor Ananaba, Honourable Commissioner for Sports and Youth Development** for their trust, tireless efforts and commitment to the collaboration agreement on the SSEZ and ensuring the participation of Abia State at the event.
- **His Royal Majesty Igwe Nnaemeka Alfred Achebe CFR, The Obi of Onitsha** – Igwe's energy and enthusiasm were palpable and his presence at SAIS was inspiring and a testament to his dedication and passion for the transformation of sports as an active contributor to the Nigerian economy in particular and Africa's economy in general, especially given its ability to deliver socioeconomic benefits to the youth, communities improve productivity and quality of life.
- **Event Partners** – Listed earlier, our sincerest appreciation for your partnership and contributions to the success of the Summit. We look forward to collaborating further with you and your support to deliver socioeconomic benefits through the industrialization of the sports sector.
- **Technical Advisory Partners (TAPs)** – The TAPs have been a game changer and a cornerstone of our strategy for the repositioning of sports and the recognition of the input of professionals from the ancillary sectors of the sports industry value chain. Of special mention must be the dedication and collaborative spirit of the TAPS in the delivery of innovative solutions and strategies to facilitate a coordinated and structured approach for the realization of the industralisation of sports.
- **Masters of Ceremonies** – Our deep appreciation to **Dr. Henry Nzekwu, Ms. Morenike 'Reni' Somoye** and **Mr. Adedeji Odulesi** for their enthusiastic dynamism and collective expertise in ensuring the unified coordination of the programme of event.
- **Resource Persons (Panellists and Moderators)** – The Summit would not have been possible without the attendance and participation of the small army of resource persons whose contributions to the discussions and activities were invaluable. Their willingness to share their expertise and experiences with attendees was truly inspiring, contributing immensely to make the event a resounding success.
- **Delegates and invited participants** – It was thrilling to see 400+ people from within and outside Africa come together as delegates or invited guests and participate in this inaugural edition of SAIS. Their involvement helped create a dynamic and engaging atmosphere that fostered meaningful connections and sparked new collaborations, partnerships and ideas. We look forward to welcoming our delegates as returnees at future editions of the Sports Africa Investment Summit™, to share ideas and improve on the capacity to develop sports as a business in Nigeria and Africa in general.
- **General Planning Committee** – Our heartfelt appreciation goes to the A-Team who together with the volunteer team of rapporteurs and administrative personnel rolled out its playbook to deliver an experiential event in style. The period of planning and executing the Summit was not without its hurdles, but the team remained focused on ensuring that the objectives of the event were realised, and the outcome was successful in a near seamless fashion. Reference must be made to the following:



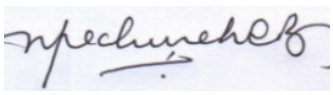

1. **Ms. Nkechi Obi –** Chief Executive Officer, Sport Nigeria LTD/GTE
2. **Mr. Telema Davies –** Summit Director
3. **Mr. Emmanuel Oladunjoye**
4. **Mr. Chuka Obi**
5. **Ms. Shirley Onwumeh**
6. **Mr. Oladotun Afolabi**
7. **Miss Ezinne Ezechukwu**
8. **Mr. Jude Elegbede**
9. **Mr. Nehita Odigie**
10. **Mr. Zino Omomadia**
11. **Mr. Mela Claude-Ake**
12. **Mr. Adedamilola Adedotun**
13. **Mr. Tonte Davies**
14. **Dr. Ikenna Nwosu**
15. **Mrs. Oyinlola Davies –** Event Coordinator

- **Sport Nigeria Board and Advisory Council** – Our final appreciation goes to our Chairman, Mr. Babatunde Folawiyo, Vice Chairman, Mr. Yahaya Maikori and our esteemed Board and Advisory Council members for their enduring commitment, time, trust, contributions, guidance and presence throughout the infant steps of the growth of an organisation focused on redefining engagements in sports so we can redefine the business of sports within Nigeria and Africa.

We look forward to presenting the Final Report on the Inaugural Sports Africa Investment Summit and welcoming delegates, guests, speakers, resource persons and well-wishers to SAIS 2026. Please visit our website and social media platforms on LinkedIn, Instagram, X and Facebook for regular updates regarding preparations for the 2026 edition of SAIS

Thank you very much for your kind attention

**FOR : SPORT NIGERIA LTD/GTE / SPORTS AFRICA INVESTMENT SUMMIT**



**Nkechi Obi**
Chief Executive Officer



**Telema Davies**
Summit Director

# APPENDIX

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