



**SAVE GHANA
FOOTBALL**



THE SPEAKER OF PARLIAMENT

**PETITION BY THE FIX GHANA FOOTBALL GROUP PRESENTED TO THE SPEAKER OF
PARLIAMENT ON WEDNESDAY, 14TH FEBRUARY, 2024.**

INTRODUCTION

Football is the passion, the driver and the fan belt that binds the nation together with a common goal and interest. Football over the years has been arguably the biggest advertising brand for Ghana on the international stage. The exploits of the Black Starlets at the 1993 World Cup in Japan, in Ecuador in 1995, the Black Meteors' bronze feat at the 1996 Atlanta Olympic Games; the continent's first medal in football at the global showcase plus the Black Stars' maiden World Cup appearance in Germany 2006 and the subsequent exploits in South Africa are a few examples of how football has sold the nation in times past.

Indeed, when the bookmakers refer to Ghana a favorite before every tournament and Ghana is referred to as powerhouse of football, it is without a doubt on the basis of past glories. Ghana football today is facing a dark spell in its history, an unprecedented moment that has brought global embarrassment to the brand that used to make all of us, home and abroad mighty proud.

The clarion call is that we have a unique opportunity as a nation to make changes to our current structure that runs our football in our quest to whip the game back to where it belongs. As stakeholders of the beautiful game, it behooves on us to bring to the fore, some of the challenges, share our ideas and call for an overhaul of the current practice of football administration and management in our collective interest to enjoy our football again and most importantly, tap into the global beneficial football ecosystem that also has a huge potential to address unemployment.

Foregoing, we submit to the Ghana government and the lawful representatives of the people of Ghana, a 15-point petition regarding the administration of Ghana Football; Juvenile Leagues, the Division Two League, Division One League, Ghana Premier League, and the National football teams, particularly the Black Stars.

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The current state of Ghana football is summed in Ghana Premier League, moving from being one of the foremost national leagues on the continent to becoming one of the poorest domestic competitions in recent years with players moving to Tanzania, Kenya, Ethiopia, Iraq etc. due to poor playing conditions, meager salaries, mismanagement and lack of investment.

At the National team level, the Youth National Teams (U-17, U-20, U-23) which used to serve as the bedrock of Ghana Football, has over the years failed to lit at major tournaments. The situation is no different at the Women's side, with the Black Queens, the first senior football team to qualify for the world cup, now missing out on qualification since 2007.

The women's game has gain some level of goodwill in the last few years, however there are fundamental problems that need to be fixed in order to prevent the issues of;

Lack of proper remuneration for female footballers and clubs.

Hassacas ladies represented Ghana in Women's champions league, and finish second, so the impression is that they will go again and try and win it, they didn't qualify last year because they had transfer almost all their key players in bid to raise funds to keep the club flouting.

Female footballers are basically on nothing as salary with the exodus that has contributed to the downfall of the men's league is happening in the women's league.

Under the supervision of the leadership of the GFA, our Ghana U17 female team Black maidens got a ban for 2 years for fielding two unqualified players during the qualifying series, we believe under no circumstances should this be allowed go unpunished.

We call on the necessary authority to take this matter up and punish whoever brought this shame and agony to the kids involve.

The team has also fallen off the pecking order in terms of African football and been overtaken by Morocco, Zambia, Cameroon, Mali, Equatorial Guinea, South Africa among others. Recently, the Women U-17 was rather embarrassingly banned for age cheating.

The Black Stars, the Senior National Team, were eliminated at the Group Stage of the 2021 African Cup of Nations in Cameroon, marking the worst ever outing by the team in African Cup History. The team was also eliminated at the group stage of the World Cup in Qatar 2022 and also at the group stage again at the just ended AFCON 2023 hosted by Ivory Coast.

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The recent poor showing is manifested in its current lowest ranking on the FIFA National Team ratings in 20 years.

The above-enumerated points cannot be mere coincidence and therefore lay credence to the alarming rate at which Ghana football is sinking.

To address these deep-seated challenges, it is a truism that it would require a political will and support of the Legislature to fashion out a policy to deliberately develop our game and tap into the huge global football economy. Subsequently, we present to Government and other Institutions and Agencies and Key Stakeholders responsible for the promotion and development of Football in the country, the following points outline our petition:

1. DEVELOP A NATIONAL FOOTBALL POLICY:

This policy if properly developed, with proper consultation and inputs will serve as a direct guiding principle or the fulcrum around which our football will revolve.

2. INSTITUTE A COMMISSION OF ENQUIRY:

A Commission of enquiries and investigations, akin to the Dzamefe Commission, must be established to probe the factors contributing to the poor performances of the National Teams, including administrative, coaching, and player-related issues. Specific terms of reference must be provided, and a Government white paper issued accordingly.

3. ACCOUNTABILITY:

There is a pressing need for accountability for individuals and entities responsible for the disbursement and utilization of the \$10.5m prize money received from our World Cup participation in Qatar 2022, the \$8.5 million budget in Ivory Coast. This we believe will guide us in future tournaments and our participation.

4. DISSOLUTION OF SEARCH COMMITTEE'S REPORT ON THE APPOINTMENT OF A NEW BLACK STAR COACH:

After three successive failed major tournament campaigns in three years, it is evident that Ghana's football problems go beyond the appointment of coaches. The search committee tasked to look for a new coach for the Black Stars report must be discarded immediately, pending the review of the technical report, investigation into the issues that calumniated the horror show, management of the team, personnel, medical reports and challenges that bedeviled the team.

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5. DISBANDMENT OF MANAGEMENT COMMITTEES:

The National Teams Management Committees have become an avenue for rewarding members of the GFA and their assigns with promises of travel and allowance. Thus, there are no criteria for selection members for these management committees. Besides, the competencies of some of the members are highly questionable. We recommend that, due to the palpable ineffectiveness of the management committees, the practice must be scrubbed. In its place, we propose the establishment of a 'National Teams Board' that will be responsible for the management of all national teams. This board must be a three-member board with a National Teams Coordinator as member. This would reduce the number of committees and build a robust system of governance for all the national teams. The National Teams Board would directly work hand in hand with the various back-room staff to uphold the highest standards required of the Ghanaian football.

6. LACK OF PLAYER DEVELOPMENT:

The development of Juvenile Football is the bedrock of success for all football nations. Over the years, Ghana has chalked remarkable success at juvenile and youth competitions at the continental and global level. The transition of these successes to significant achievements at the senior level however remains nonexistent. Talents unearthed at juvenile level unfortunately falloff without a deliberate succession plan to integrate them into the various age groups.

Since 2017, no National Male Team at the youth level or developmental stage of football has qualified for the World Cup. This has greatly hindered Ghana's football developmental process. There is evidence of conflict-of-interest situations in the call of youth players with members of the current GFA administrations favoring players playing for clubs owned by these administrators and or clubs associated with the leadership. The resultant effect in the long run is the various teams no show at the global stage and depleted Black Stars.

7. STRUCTURAL REFORMS:

Structural reforms must be introduced at the GFA to ensure transparency, accountability, and good corporate governance, thereby improving financial management and enhancing professionalism in football administration. We recommend that, effective immediately, the Government order the agency responsible for sports in Ghana, the Ministry or National Sports Authority (NSA) to sign the FIFA Standard Corporation Agreement to ensure that government can get involved in the organization, technical direction, administration and the financing of football without the usual FIFA interference rhetoric.

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8. NATIONAL TEAM FUNDING:

It is public knowledge, the level of financial investment the Government of Ghana makes into the National Teams. We are however of the view that, the mode of investment is wrong. Substantial sums of tax payers' monies only go into the Black Stars' friendly games, tournaments at the expense of other National teams and sectors of the sport. It is quite astonishing the manner in which several Sports Ministers continue to approve unconscionable budgets prepared by the GFA for the Black Stars campaigns without proper scrutiny.

We suggest that, the GFA Collaborates with the National Sports Authority in the preparation of tournament or game budgets, as the NSA is the body mandated by Law, to undertake such exercise.

9. INVEST IN GRASS-ROOT DEVELOPMENT:

Government must invest massively in school sports, technical development, infrastructure and grass-root football.

10. DOMESTIC COMPETITION:

The success of every Football Federation is measured by the strength of its domestic competitions. The Ghana Premier League and other competitions are in a very deplorable state. When organized well, it has the propensity of boosting the local economy with activities each week while offering employment opportunities to thousands of Ghanaians. As a matter of urgency, the government must endeavor to invest in the local league, through infrastructure development and also engage state and parasternal agencies to sponsor the leagues. An agreement should be reached between organizers of the league, club owners and the such state agencies to have an oversight role in the use of these monies to ensure transparency at all levels. Adequate provision of infrastructure is crucial for football development in Ghana. The government should invest in the construction and maintenance of modern football infrastructure to support national teams and domestic leagues.

11. ESTABLISHMENT OF A NATIONAL TRAINING COMPLEX:

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12. ACCOUNTABILITY:

The GFA manages the national team in trust of Ghanaians. For accountability and transparency purposes we are calling for an extensive investigation into all the monies (FIFA & CAF and sponsorships) that have come to the GFA in the last five years. We are aware that MTN sponsored the Black Stars \$2 million for two years when we qualified for the 2022 World Cup. Mara, Tecno Mobile, Puma, Flora Tissue, Zeepay, Chery Cars is part of Tanink Ghana Limited etc are some sponsors that came on board to sponsor the Black Stars during the World Cup in Qatar.

13. NATIONAL TEAM COACHES SALARY CHALLENGE:

All national team coaches must be provided with contract and be paid just as the Black Stars' coach to cure the issues of bribery heavily associated with the management of the other national teams.

14. STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT:

Government to lead stakeholder engagements involving football clubs, fans, players, journalists, and civil society institutions to chart the way forward

15. REDUCTION OF TAX ON FOOTBALL-RELATED EVENTS:

Parliament to as a matter of urgency, consider reducing the 17 percent tax on football events to 3 percent as done for the creative arts.

Sincerely,

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