

## **Background Information**

### **UNITED NATIONS GAMES**

#### **I. Introduction**

The United Nations Games are an annual New York–based sports diplomacy initiative bringing together Permanent Missions to the United Nations, the United Nations Secretariat, and organizations of the United Nations system. The Games serve as a unique platform for promoting unity, trust, mutual understanding, and physical well-being within the diplomatic community through the universal language of sport.

Launched in 2024 at the initiative of Turkmenistan, the United Nations Games were conceived as a practical contribution to the global agenda on sport for development and peace. The initiative builds on long-standing United Nations recognition of the role of sport in fostering tolerance, dialogue among cultures, social inclusion, and peaceful coexistence among peoples and nations.

The United Nations Games are convened annually in New York and are organized on the basis of voluntary participation and voluntary contributions, reflecting the collective ownership of the initiative by Member States and the broader United Nations community.

#### **II. Normative Framework and United Nations Mandate**

The United Nations Games are endorsed by the General Assembly through resolution [78/325](#), adopted on 6 September 2024, which recognizes the potential of the Games to serve as a sports diplomacy platform for cultivating sport culture and promoting sport as a tool for development and peace. The resolution calls for the annual convening of the Games in venues accessible to representatives of all Member States, members of specialized agencies, and observers of the General Assembly.

The initiative is firmly anchored in the broader United Nations normative framework on sport for development and peace, including relevant General Assembly resolutions that emphasize the contribution of sport to education, health, gender equality, social inclusion, and the promotion of an atmosphere of tolerance and understanding among peoples and nations. The United Nations Games are also closely associated with the observance of the International Day of Sport for Development and Peace, celebrated annually on 6 April.

### III. Objectives and Guiding Principles

The primary objective of the United Nations Games is to strengthen unity, trust, and mutual understanding within the New York–based diplomatic and United Nations community by using sport as a bridge for dialogue and cooperation. Through friendly competition and shared experiences, the Games promote interpersonal connections that complement formal diplomatic engagement.

The Games are guided by the principles of inclusiveness, fairness, respect, and solidarity. Participation is open to diplomats, United Nations staff, and, where appropriate, family members, including children and youth, reflecting the inclusive and community-building character of the initiative. Particular attention is given to gender balance, accessibility, and the encouragement of broad participation across regions and organizational affiliations.

### IV. Structure and Organization

The United Nations Games are organized by an Organizing Committee composed of representatives from different regional groups, ensuring geographical balance and inclusive governance. The Committee works in close cooperation with relevant departments of the United Nations Secretariat, in particular the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, as well as with participating Missions and organizations.

The Games typically feature a diverse set of sports disciplines, combining team and individual sports, as well as competitive and non-competitive activities. This diversity allows for wide participation regardless of age, background, or level of athletic experience, reinforcing the emphasis on participation, camaraderie, and shared values rather than solely on competition.

All costs associated with the organization of the Games are covered through voluntary contributions, sponsorships, and in-kind support, in accordance with United Nations rules and regulations.

#### *V. Experience of the 2024 and 2025 Editions*

The inaugural United Nations Games, held from April to May 2024, demonstrated strong interest and engagement from the United Nations community, with participation from a large number of Permanent Missions, United Nations entities, and staff members. The success of the inaugural edition laid the foundation for the institutionalization of the Games as an annual event.

The second edition, the United Nations Games 2025, further expanded in scale and participation, taking place during the International Year of Peace and Trust and in the year marking the 80th anniversary of the United Nations. The Games attracted hundreds of athletes from over one hundred countries and organizations, underscoring the growing recognition of the initiative as a meaningful platform for sports diplomacy.

Support from Member States, including through active participation, sponsorship, and organizational contributions, played a decisive role in the success of these editions and demonstrated the collective commitment of the international community to the values underpinning the Games.

#### *VI. United Nations Games 2026*

The United Nations Games 2026 are planned to take place in New York in May–June 2026. Building on the experience and lessons learned

from previous editions, the 2026 Games aim to further strengthen participation, enhance organizational efficiency, and deepen the impact of the initiative as a platform for unity and mutual understanding.

The upcoming edition will continue to emphasize inclusiveness, broad regional representation, and close cooperation among Permanent Missions, the United Nations Secretariat, and United Nations system organizations. Member States and relevant stakeholders are encouraged to support the Games through participation, voluntary contributions, and other forms of engagement.

## *VII. Conclusion*

The United Nations Games represent a practical and visible expression of the United Nations' commitment to promoting peace, trust, and cooperation through sport. By bringing together diplomats, United Nations staff, and their families in an informal and inclusive setting, the Games complement traditional diplomacy and help build the human connections that underpin effective multilateral cooperation.

As the initiative continues to evolve, sustained engagement and support from Member States will remain essential to ensuring that the United Nations Games grow as a shared platform reflecting the diversity, solidarity, and common purpose of the United Nations community.