



SA: Ndebele: Keynote address by Minister of Transport the 4th annual 2010 National Communication Partnership conference, Sandton (17/08/2009)

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Chairperson of the 2010 National Communicators Partnership
Chairperson of the 2010 Local Organising Committee
Chief executive officer of Government Communications
Ambassadors and high commissioners present here today
Delegates to the 4th annual 2010 NCP conference
Members of the media ladies and gentlemen

The announcement by FIFA President Sepp Blatter five years ago that South Africa would host the 2010 FIFA World Cup was received with great jubilation across the African continent. Our people saw this as an opportunity for Africa to share with the rest world its vision for the future and to cultivate lasting partnerships that would ensure the realisation of our developmental agenda.

Ladies and gentlemen the 2010 FIFA World Cup presents us with the single most unique opportunity to unite our people. The event also provides us with a chance perhaps better than most, to kick-start our way out of the current economic recession.

We have been given a chance of a life-time to use this event as the basis of a lasting legacy beyond 2010. Very few, if any, of us in this hall today will ever see a Soccer World Cup hosted in South Africa in their life time. As I look around I am certain that anyone over 30 years of age will not see another such event short of a miracle from FIFA or some other divine intervention.

So what is our responsibility?

The Confederations Cup

From the experience of the Confederations Cup we now know what is required of us. This is no longer theory. We have lived it and we emerged on the other side in one piece. Our key responsibility is to get people to the stadium safely and on time. We also need to get the fans out of the stadium back home and to the hotels in safety. Without adequate transport there will be no fans in the stadium. Without fans inside the stadium there is no world cup.

We are 297 days away from the 2010 FIFA World Cup. FIFA President Sepp Blatter gave us 7.5 out of 10 but what is our own assessment of ourselves?

* From a football perspective Bafana Bafana performed beyond themselves. This is a crucial necessity going forward.

* From an organising point of view we have learnt specific lessons that we as the transport sector and the whole 2010 team can take home in preparation for next year.

We require tight coordination between provinces and national government, between host cities and the provinces. From the Confederations Cup, we found that the park and ride system, while useful, had its limitations. For 2010, we will, therefore, employ a combination of the modes of transport including rail and buses which are principally, mass movers. These will be supplemented by minibus taxis, which we believe are an integral part of the public transport system

The national Department of Transport's roll-out plan includes long distance services such as bus, rail and

aviation. It also includes centralised communication and information plans and signage guidelines, licensing and branding. Our plans must be tight because we know that an estimated 40 000 England fans travelled to Germany in 2006 and more than 100 000 were from Brazil. We expect close to 500 000 fans to descend on our shores for the world cup in 2010. This figure could be more when others travel not to see the soccer, but to see the country that hosts the soccer world cup.

On 4 December 2009 the FIFA final draw will tell us where the qualified countries will play. We will have a better sense of where the big crowds will be according to the estimated fan base. This means we must be able to deal with the practical implications of having Brazil play England in Polokwane or Nelspruit. In such a case our entire systems must be able to respond including transport into and out of these areas, and accommodation. If we plan inadequately for this situation we might end up with a disaster.

For this reason we call for tighter management of the command and control at the world cup. We strongly believe there must be one person who through delegated authority in the host cities runs the entire transport system. Similar approaches could be employed in other sectors. The buck must stop with one centre that uses a benevolent dictatorship to deal with problems.

We can do it

We have no doubt that we can do it. We are certain to host a successful FIFA World Cup in 2010. Our experience in hosting major international sporting events was always going to put us in good stead. Only a year into our democracy, South Africa hosted and won the 1995 Rugby World Cup. The following year we added another feather to our hat by staging a successful African Cup of Nations, which our national football team won.

In 2002 South Africa hosted the United Nations World Summit on Sustainable Development followed by the Cricket World Cup in 2003. All these milestones were enabled by a stable democracy and a fledging economy. Our country has since held four democratic general elections that were all declared free and fair. We have witnessed a culture of smooth transition of power even at times when others feared the worst could happen.

Ladies and gentlemen, these achievements mirror the characteristics of a determined and winning nation. For many South Africans, 2010 has become the point in which the future will meet the present. It has become a point of reference about where we are headed as a nation and a definition of our future. At the end of the final match in July 2010 we will proclaim that we are not fearful of our limitations, but by the same token we know that our capacity to deliver major projects places us among the best in the world.

The theme for this conference, which is: 'Africa's time has come: A winning team achieving the extraordinary', speaks of our profound and unshakable resolve to ever rally behind national projects with a view to ensuring their success. Our success in 2010 must enable our children to say with more than just pride that: "we need to emulate those who came before us for they were fully committed to building our nation".

In recent months we hosted the lucrative Indian Premier League (IPL) cricket tournament. By all accounts we did an outstanding job. The real success story of South Africa's hosting of the IPL tournament was the timeframe within which we had to prepare ourselves. The decision to move the IPL to South Africa was taken on 24 March 2009 and the tournament was to begin on 18 April, a mere 24 days later.

In less than a month we were able to organise a tournament of 59 matches played in six venues across the country, all of which were broadcast to coincide with prime time for Indian television audiences. The Confederations Cup was a resounding success. We celebrate our successes emerging from the Confederations Cup also noting the challenges we faced as outlined above.

The organisers of the 2010 FIFA World Cup have received a lot of feedback since the 2009 Confederations Cup ended. The feedback commends the excellent job well done but also points to areas that require intervention and improvement such as security and transport.

Safety and security

The safety of our people and our visitors is non-negotiable. For the past five years the issue of security was perhaps the most consistently voiced issue by the international community. While some of it could be attributed to a fear of the unknown, such concerns must be attended to.

Our law enforcement agencies have proven their might to create secure environments during the Confederations Cup and past major events hosted by our country. They will continue to improve on their capacity to deal with incidents of crime and will be ready to neutralise any potential threat.

As outlined earlier we believe taxis are an integral part of our public transport system. They will form part

of 2010 FIFA World Cup. We will ensure that the negotiations with the minibus taxi industry continue and are concluded so that the bus rapid transit system can be implemented without delay.

Working together as partners we will be able to address all the shortcomings we experienced during the Confederations Cup. To achieve such a result, the country and the continent will need to pull together. The government cannot do it alone. Neither can the Local Organising Committee.

2010 and national unity

The 2010 FIFA World Cup offers an opportunity for the igniting of passion and national pride amongst South Africans. It calls for the unity of our people regardless of colour or creed because indeed working together we can do more.

Recent research indicates a major shift in confidence among South Africans with regards to our ability to pull off a successful World Cup. During the first quarter of 2009 a FIFA commissioned survey revealed that 88 percent of South Africans felt a sense of pride at being the first African country to host the world cup, while 77 percent predicted the tournament would be a success.

And again in May this year African Response's 2010 Barometer found that at least 89 percent of South Africans believe the world cup will benefit the country. It is this kind of optimism that will ensure a successful world cup that is distinctly African, a world cup that will demonstrate emphatically that the South African rainbow is alive and well.

What is needed now is to communicate the progress that is being made.

Communicators must more than ever before disseminate information about our readiness and how our communities can contribute towards making this event a great success. Institutions such as Government Communications and the International Marketing Council as well as industry marketers and communicators should intensify their initiatives to mobilise society behind this project.

Our people must know about the lasting benefits of the 2010 FIFA World Cup. In this regard we want to draw your attention to four aspects that will go a long way towards revitalising passion amongst our people to make maximum use of this once in a lifetime opportunity:

- * Firstly, we must empower our people with the necessary information about the event to prepare them to be better ambassadors of our messages.
- * Secondly, our people must learn the national anthem. The anthem is a symbol of pride and by knowing how to sing it in all the languages, people display, in a very visible manner, their commitment to a nation alive with possibility. We must accord our national anthem appropriate respect and decorum when it is sung. This means we stand to attention to what is the highest display of a united nation.
- * Thirdly, our people must take pride in flying the national flag and should take time to learn its colours and their meanings. The flag is a symbol of hope and an affirmation of our belief in a prosperous future.
- * Fourthly, our people must be the best hosts they can be. The essence of this must be our spirit of Ubuntu.

Let us rally behind the national team Bafana Bafana as we did in 1996 when we won the Africa Cup of Nations. We can do it, but: What a responsibility! What a privilege! What an opportunity! Africa's time has indeed come!

I thank you and wish you all well in your deliberations. Let us together work for a better country, a better continent and a better world!

Thank you.