

Olympics is our next goal

Following the outright success so far of South Africa's hosting of the Soccer World Cup, the International Olympics Committee (IOC) has backed a bid for a South African city to host the 2020 Summer Olympics. Cape Town is a front-runner. "Cape Town had a very credible bid in 1997 when they finished third behind Athens and Rome (for the 2004 Games)," said IOC Jacques Rogge. President Jacob Zuma said: "I'm sure we could do it." Rogge is to discuss the possibility of another SA bid for the Olympics at a meeting with Mr Zuma before the end of the World Cup, it was reported. "It's always good news to see that a country like South Africa wants to bid," said Rogge. "We're glad they're thinking about the Olympic Games. I will definitely take this up with him (Zuma) when I meet with him at the World Cup final. I think it's absolutely normal that they think about the future after the Fifa World Cup," Rogge said. International media and some countries balked when South Africa was revealed as the host of the World Cup, citing poor infrastructure, a high crime rate and social ills as hindrances. In the build-up to the tournament, British tabloids claimed roaming machete gangs, stray lions and even an earthquake would bring the World Cup to its knees. But besides the drone of the vuvuzela and the controversial Jabulani ball, SA has received rave reviews from visiting tourists and soccer squads. Zuma said on Tuesday that South Africa was up to the task and the chief executive of the Local Olympic Committee said momentum had been gathering for bringing the Olympics to African soil for the first time. "I would think the world has taken notice that we can put on a world class event," said SA Sports Council and Olympic Committee chief executive Tubby Reddy. After Bafana Bafana's 2-1 first-ever win over France on Tuesday, Zuma said: "We have got the facilities. Those who take decisions (about the hosting of major sports events) have seen how South Africa is. I'm sure we could do it." Said the President: "I will put it on the agenda because it is important to bring people from all over the world here. Sport is very important for us. It is now known that Africa is capable of hosting any serious tournament. That fact cannot be argued again. I think Africa will now have a much better image and people will relate better to the continent. Plus the economic spin-offs are huge."

South Africa had made a play for the 2004 Summer Olympics with Cape Town as a host city, but lost to Athens in 1997. Internal squabbles and apprehension over lack of infrastructure hindered the country's attempt. But World Cup Local Organising Committee chairman Danny Jordaan, who led Cape Town's failed bid for the 2004 Summer Olympics, told Independent Newspapers that South Africa had upped its international reputation by pulling off a successful World Cup so far. "By staging the 2010 World Cup, we've shown people what South Africans can do. I think that if there is a bid by SA it will be considered very, very seriously." Western Cape Premier Helen Zille said that although the Olympics would be another "grace event" like the World Cup, it would chiefly need to be of an economic benefit to the country. "The World Cup and the Olympics are grace events, and having said that, we would certainly need to do a business plan and a cost benefit analysis before giving a knee-jerk reaction. I want to be positive about it, but we would need to look at it first." Durban beat Hong Kong to host the 123rd International Olympic Committee Session next year, where the host city for the 2018 Winter Olympics will be announced. With the entire Olympic movement present at this meeting, local officials could not ask for a better opportunity to discreetly campaign for bringing the Games to South Africa and put out feelers for support of such a possible bid, which in itself is a multimillion dollar undertaking. Also counting in SA's favour is that it is in the same time zones as large parts of Europe. Events held locally in the evening could be seen in mid-afternoon times in North America, which would likely sit well with major TV broadcasters from the US who are the IOC's biggest source of revenue. Cape Town, Durban and Joburg are potential bid cities for South Africa. (Pretoria News online, also The Citizen, 20100624)

2010 SOCCER WORLD CUP IN SA

Ghana keeps Africa flag flying Ghana managed to keep the African flag flying at the World Cup on Wednesday as they scraped through to the second round and halted a string of failures by the continent's teams on home soil. The day after South Africa and Nigeria bowed out of the tournament, Algeria followed them to the exit door after losing to the United States in the dying seconds of their match on Wednesday. But the Black Stars of Ghana managed to prevent ignominy for Africa in the first tournament staged on the continent by limiting three-times world champions Germany to a 1-0 victory in Johannesburg's Soccer City. Australia beat Serbia 2-

1 in the other Group D game, a result which enabled Ghana to take second place in Group D and thus line up a showdown with the United States. With Ivory Coast requiring an avalanche of goals in their final match [on Friday] to stay in contention, the continent's only realistic hope had lain with Ghana. Failure would have meant Africa had no representatives in the second round for the first time since 1982. A record six teams from the continent took part this time in what is the first tournament to be held on African soil. South African President Jacob Zuma, who met the team in the dressing room after the match with France, said they had done the country proud. "It would have been great to have Bafana Bafana progress to the next stage, but their exit doesn't mean the end of the tournament," said Zuma. "Government urges South Africans to continue playing an active role in the country's hosting of the historic 2010 FIFA World Cup. After all, this is still our World Cup." Danny Jordaan, the chief local organiser, said he did not believe South Africa's exit would turn the tournament into a damp squib. "This is still South Africa's World Cup. We are not going home, the World Cup is happening in our home," he said. "I remain confident that South Africans will continue to be fantastic hosts for the next two and a half weeks." FIFA meanwhile announced more tickets had become available for the tournament's second round following the elimination of teams such as South Africa and France. About 4,000 tickets will be resold for the first round of 16 match, between Uruguay and South Korea on Saturday in Port Elizabeth, said spokesman Pekka Odriozola. Another 1,000 tickets will be sold for Sunday's match between Argentina and Mexico in Johannesburg's Soccer City. (News24.com 20100623)

Bill Clinton at US-Algeria match Former US President Bill Clinton was to cheer his country's soccer team on Wednesday when it takes on Algeria in Pretoria. "I'll be cheering for the US," Clinton told journalists during a courtesy visit to President Jacob Zuma ahead of the 4pm game he'd be attending. The US had two points and had to win the match to stay in the tournament. President Barack Obama had indicated he would attend the World Cup final if the US was in it. Clinton said he was bitten by the World Cup bug after watching the last two matches. "The great thing about soccer is that it is unpredictable and is also about how good the defence is," he said. Commending South Africa on hosting an excellent World Cup, he said he had watched most matches on television. Zuma was happy Clinton was in South Africa to encourage the US, a team which had surprised many. "This team was regarded as the underdogs, but they came from behind" Zuma said the presence of Clinton and other high-profile people added value to the tournament. Speaking about Bafana Bafana's performance, Zuma said the team had bowed out with grace and had shown character. "It is good to go out winning than losing," he said after Bafana Bafana beat France 2-1 on Tuesday, which wasn't enough to send the team into round two. Zuma emphasised it was South Africa's third time in a tournament of this magnitude, and that they had registered their presence. "They've arrived and we are proud as a nation." He indicated the country and the continent were winners and had more to celebrate for hosting the event (Sapa online, also The Citizen & News24, 20100623)

England, US wins boost SA - South Africa and the World Cup look set for a major boost after both England and the US qualified for the second round yesterday. Both countries have two of the largest contingents of supporters currently in SA – and their progress will lead to thousands more visitors and millions of extra rands. According to figures from Visa, the first week of the World Cup matches has seen an initial boost to the South African economy. Spending by international visitors in South Africa on Visa-branded payment cards exceeded R974 million. Visa recorded about 900 000 transactions from 1 to 20 June, an average of about 45 000 a day. Visa spending data indicates that the UK, followed by the US, have been the strongest contributors to tourism spending data. Other operators report similar success. Tourism Enterprise Partnership (TEP), a small-business development agency focused on tourism businesses in SA, has created a "Hidden Treasures" tour which offers visitors the chance to visit unique local destinations. TEP CEO Siva Pillay said they could speak for their 80 England fans, who made it clear that they were enjoying the tour so much that 70% of them would stay even if England did not progress. "They are on a budget tour and it works out to about R25 000 per person with transport and accommodation. They will each probably spend an additional R10 000 to R15 000 on meals and activities," said Pillay. Meanwhile, SA Tourism said the 2010 World Cup was expected to bring in an estimated R27 billion. SA Tourism's Roshene Singh said Johannesburg currently had about 85% occupancy, while Durban and Cape Town boasted between 60% and 70% each. SA Chamber of Commerce CEO, Neren Rau, said fans of nations with strong soccer cultures and economies were more likely to visit South Africa as their teams

completed each stage. "We are likely to see the mid to the lower end of the market earners coming in as their country progresses. Just the sheer volume of fans who are likely to spend a lot on food and beverages will help the economy but we don't expect anything dramatic," he said
(The Citizen online, 20100624)

600 000 at Cape Town Cup events Cumulative attendance figures at Cape Town's official soccer World Cup events have topped the half million mark, the city said on Wednesday. It said a total of 600 000 fans had watched the tournament at Cape Town Stadium, the fan fest on the Grand Parade, and the four fan jols across the metro. Spectator numbers for the four games at the stadium totalled 255 000. The fan fest had hosted more than 234 000 people, while some 104 000 had watched the games at fan jols.
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Soccer greats lend weight to 1Goal - Soccer was a strong mobiliser that could make a difference to Education for All's 1Goal campaign to ensure universal access to school for children across the globe, local organising committee senior manager Greg Fredericks said yesterday. Mr Fredericks was speaking at a Johannesburg event at which African soccer greats Roger Milla and Patrick Mboma, their Dutch counterpart Ronald de Boer and former Mexico, US and Nigeria coach Bora Milutinovic launched an education programme that forms part of international lobby group Education for All's 1Goal campaign. The activists are using a Facebook group, Twitter feeds and the support of iconic soccer personalities to highlight the plight of the 72- million children worldwide who do not have access to education. Marketing expert Walter Pike said advertising campaigns that used several means of getting the message across, and used social networking tools to give people a way of spreading the word themselves, could be extremely effective if they captured the imagination. World Cup organiser Fifa has chosen the 1Goal campaign as one of its charitable "legacies" for the host nation. President Jacob Zuma will host a world education summit in SA on July 11, the day the final match is played. This is the first time an education summit will take place during a World Cup tournament. "If communities across the world lobby governments to support education, we can only have a better world," Mr Fredericks said.
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