

## High praise from UEFA for South Africa's 2010 progress

The CEO of the 2010 FIFA World Cup Organising Committee South Africa, Dr Danny Jordaan, on Thursday, 25 March 2009, gave the Union of European Football (UEFA) Congress in Copenhagen, Denmark, a comprehensive update on the country's preparedness to host the soccer showpiece. Following Jordaan's presentation, a number of senior FIFA and UEFA officials praised South Africa's 2010 preparations.

Thirteen of the coveted final 32 places in the 2010 FIFA World Cup tournament in South Africa will be filled by teams from Europe, with Jordaan's briefing very positively received by some of the key figures in world football.

Jordaan assured UEFA member associations at the congress that South Africa's 2010 FIFA World Cup stadiums were on course to be completed by October this year, in line with its FIFA deadlines. He also updated them about the country's transport, safety and fan park plans for the first African FIFA World Cup, taking place in June next year. Jordaan also briefed the UEFA delegates about preparations for the FIFA Confederations Cup 2009, which kicks off in June 2009, and which will feature reigning UEFA champions Spain and reigning world champions Italy from Europe.

"UEFA is a very important stakeholder and it is important that we keep them briefed on our progress. Not only will Europe bring the highest number of teams to South Africa in 2010, but the European football associations also have well-established fan clubs and we need to work with them to bring those fans to South Africa next year," Jordaan said after his address to UEFA.

A substantial number of the anticipated 450 000 international visitors who will travel to South Africa for the 2010 FIFA World Cup are expected to come from Europe, with the likes of England, the Netherlands and Germany traditionally having among the largest fan bases at FIFA World Cup(™) tournaments.

"Already well over 800 000 applications have been received for the 743 000 tickets that have been made available in this first round of ticket sales, many of them coming from fans in Europe. This means that the tournament is already oversubscribed, but it is still of utmost importance that the associations know exactly what to expect in South Africa in 2010," said Jordaan.

"The presentation was excellent and really gives confidence to member associations that everything in South Africa is well on track," commented Geoff Thompson, England's former Football Association chairman who was re-elected as a UEFA vice president at the Congress, after Jordaan's briefing.

"The stadiums look superb and we are also very impressed by the number of security personnel that will be deployed to secure the event and by the country's track record in hosting major events. To have a World Cup in Africa is something many of us have dreamed of for years and without a doubt entrusting South Africa with the 2010 FIFA World Cup has been

well placed," he added.

Thompson said that the number of tickets already purchased by UK fans was evidence that English fans are gearing up in their thousands to travel with their team next year.

There were also warm words of praise for South Africa's 2010 preparations from German football legend Franz Beckenbauer.

"I am convinced that it will be a wonderful World Cup. With the organising talent that South Africa has, the country has nothing to worry about," said Beckenbauer, a current FIFA executive member who was chairman of Germany's 2006 FIFA World Cup Organising Committee.

The German Football Association (DFB) secretary-general Wolfgang Niersbach went so far as to say "I believe the event will go along way to changing the world's perceptions about Africa".

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