

# Rising to the challenge

By **DANNY JORDAAN**

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER, 2010 FIFA WORLD CUP, REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



**DANNY JORDAAN** graduated from the University of Western Cape (UWC) in Cape Town and the University of South Africa (UNISA) in Pretoria with a BA Honours degree. He also holds honorary doctorates from the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University, UNISA and UWC. During the course of his long and varied career he has been a Senior Lecturer at a tertiary institution, politician, sportsman, sports administrator, businessman and a political activist in the struggle against apartheid. He is also a former President of the ANC in the Port Elizabeth area and served as a Member of Parliament under Nelson Mandela.

Day by day, as the 2010 FIFA World Cup draws ever closer, many hundreds of thousands of South Africans are responding to the call and rising to the challenge.

Preparations for the tournament are nearing completion on many fronts and, as more and more citizens become involved, the levels of excitement and anticipation continue to rise.

Perhaps more than ever before, this will be a World Cup hosted not by politicians or officials but by an entire population, not by few but by the many. The six new stadiums – in Johannesburg, Durban, Cape Town, Port Elizabeth, Polokwane and Nelspruit – are now complete. Local people have watched these towering structures rise from the African soil, and the world will be delighted with what they find. The outstanding efforts of the SA construction companies in building the six stadia have been matched in other areas – in transport, in accommodation, in ticketing, in safety and security, in IT, in legal and finance, in legacy – with deadlines being met at SAFA House in Johannesburg and at the offices of each of the nine Host Cities around the country.

Our message to the UK and the rest of the world is unequivocal: SA is ready. The occasion of President Zuma's visit to the United Kingdom gives us an opportunity to proclaim that, working in conjunction with our partners, FIFA and the SA Government, we have prepared a world class stage for the greatest footballers in the world. With each passing day, an unforgettable African festival of football is taking shape. And it will be an emphatically African festival.

Ever since the day back in 1994 when SAFA officials first conceived a plan to stage the World Cup, we have clearly understood that, in order to be successful, we could not bid exclusively for South Africa. Hosting the World Cup needed to be seen as 'investment in Africa'. For South Africa to win, it had to be a win for the entire continent. It was very much a moment for saying: we are here, we are capable, and we are worthy.

You can never underestimate the power of being seen – to be really seen as an equal and credible choice. The psychological effect of years of Africa being portrayed as a continent that needs aid and not investment has been profound. Even the positive stories are treated as tales of hope in a darkness of chaos, as if the positive moment was an exception rather than the norm and that, if anything was achieved, it was achieved against all odds.

Against this background, we believe the psychological impact of hosting the 2010 FIFA World Cup in Africa will reach far beyond the 30 days of the tournament and the 64 matches of football. The World Cup has become a real rallying point for pride and self-confidence, to an extent that I don't think any other event would have delivered. The blunt truth is that football is Africa's favourite sport and now, finally, in 2010, football is coming to Africa. World football is treating Africa as not just a distant factory of high class players, but as a viable and excellent host of the showpiece tournament.

Now, of course, we must justify the faith and confidence placed in us. We wish to stage this event as an effective catalyst for an image makeover for the country and the continent; and, to be successful, we must show a clear understanding of how the business model of major international sporting events has changed in recent times. First, commercial partners pay a premium for the right of association with this major event, which has developed an outstanding reputation over the past 80 years. Second, television rights have grown to a point where the total revenue from TV rights at the 2006 FIFA World Cup was US\$556 million, the lion's share of total revenue of US\$957 million.

We recognise these commercial realities, and have committed ourselves to protecting the interests of the FIFA commercial and broadcast partners. The 2010 FIFA World Cup has been declared a protected event by an Act of Parliament, effectively meaning no person may use a trademark associated with that event to derive any benefit from such an association without the permission of the event organiser.

We are also aware of the technological requirements. The infrastructure required for the High Definition broadcast will require more fibre-optic cables than deployed at any previous event and we have risen to this challenge – the tournament has proved a catalyst for enhancing the IT capacity of the country, fast-tracking installation of the most modern technology. All these elements are intricately woven together in the FIFA World Cup, balancing the global reach of the game with the financial success of the showpiece. So we have the technology, the infrastructure and the systems.

We also have the spirit, and it is this spirit – this uninhibited sense of joy and festival, wrapped in African smiles – that will ensure the 2010 World Cup unfolds as a complete success. 