

**SPEECH BY FORMER PRESIDENT F W DE KLERK ON 8 SEPTEMBER 2010, PESTANA
CHELSEA BRIDGE HOTEL, LONDON**

**“THE LEGACY OF THE FIRST AFRICAN WORLD CUP – LET’S MAKE SURE IT’S JUST THE
BEGINNING”.**

A FAIRY TALE COME TRUE

Six years ago the Fairy Godmother - in the guise of Sepp Blatter - waved a magic wand, and announced that South Africa had been chosen to host the 2010 FIFA World Cup. For the first time in history, Africa - the Cinderella continent - had been chosen to host the world’s premier sporting event.

Mind you, had it not been for a little legerdemain and the mysterious voting of the FIFA representative from Oceania, South Africa - and not Germany - would have hosted the preceding World Cup in 2006. President Nelson Mandela who had attended the announcement in 1999 with great expectations, remarked laconically “Ah well... there evidently were some aspects of the end game that we South Africans did not fully understand.”

So, in the 2004 announcement, it was Africa’s turn. Sepp Blatter had all but promised that no more ugly first-world stepsisters would be permitted to jump the queue.

From that moment the countdown started.

- Would South Africa be able to make the grade?
- Would an African country actually be able to deliver a top class world event?
- Would we be able to turn our third world pumpkins and mice into of the glittering stadiums, airports and infrastructure that the event would require?

The world was skeptical. We heard again the old familiar choruses that precede all major global sporting events, wherever they are held: The stadiums would not be ready; security was inadequate; the infra-structure of airports, railways and roads would simply not be able to cope.

The skepticism continued right until the eve of the event. In May this year YouGovStone, on behalf of SABMiller, carried out research among its network of influential people to establish their views on the coming event. The results were, to say the very least, discouraging:

- Only 29% of those polled thought that the World Cup in South Africa would be a great success;
- 58% expected that there would be problems with security;
- 57% thought that there would be transport and logistics problems; and

- 59% thought that the average South African would not benefit from the event.

Most South Africans, on the other hand, had little doubt about our ability to hold a successful World Cup. After all, we had already hosted very successful Rugby and Cricket World Cups in 1995 and 2003. In 2009 - at the drop of a hat - we had been able to step into the breach and host India's wildly popular 20/20 Cricket Competition after the security situation in India had made it necessary to move the event.

The fact is that one of South Africa's strengths is its ability to manage large projects. We have excellent - and highly competitive - civil engineering companies that successfully participate in and manage large projects all over the world.

If anything, South Africans were a little too optimistic. One of our leading real estate companies provided advice to home owners on how they could convert their homes into B&Bs and make fortunes during the four weeks of the World Cup. As a result, hundreds of expectant homeowners built luxury guest suites and waited forlornly for bookings that never came. Small entrepreneurs seriously overestimated the number of visitors who would come to South Africa for the event.

Restaurateurs geared up for a bumper season - but most were deeply disappointed: not only did international crowds not descend on their eateries, their regular South African customers also stayed away in droves because for a whole month they were glued to their TV screens watching soccer!

Despite all this, Danny Jordaan, the Chairman of the local organizing committee, and his team made steady progress.

- Magnificent new stadiums were built - and old ones were renovated and refurbished.
- New highways and rapid transit systems were constructed.
- South Africa's major airports were vastly expanded and modernized. After years of being cocooned in hoardings and scaffolds, Cape Town's new international airport emerged just before the World Cup like a gigantic crystal butterfly.
- In our major cities large clocks counted down the days to the opening match on 11 June.

Our leading companies jumped onto the bandwagon and helped to sweep up national support. Government, opposition, religious and civil society leaders embraced one another and exhorted the nation to make a success of the event. Unprecedented security arrangements were made and special courts were established to dispense swift justice to law-breakers.

In the process, South Africans also learned that the FIFA fairy godmother was not motivated solely by altruism. She made it clear that she - and she alone - would choose Cinderella's ball gown and accessories. Apparently unconcerned about any practical

implications, Sepp Blatter insisted that the Cape Town Stadium should be built in Green Point - because he thought it would look pretty with Table Mountain as its backdrop. The City would rather have upgraded the existing Newlands Stadium - or built a new stadium at Culembourg, close to existing rail and road routes. However, FIFA was adamant that it would either be Green Point - or there would be no games in Cape Town at all.

Most of the accessories - including the flags, vuvuzelas and even Zumi, the World Cup mascot, were manufactured in Asia. Companies that were not official FIFA sponsors were prohibited from displaying their wares or advertising anywhere near the games. Our stadiums were suddenly flooded with American Budweiser beer - a virtually unknown product - and our own excellent Castle Lager was nowhere in sight.

Nevertheless, it worked.

For a glorious month South Africans laid down the burden of our divided history and joined one another in a magnificent national festival.

- The noise of our divisive national debate - of the Julius Malemas and right wing extremists - was drowned out by the discordant but joyous blare of the Vuvuzela.
- The only colours that were important were the colours of the South African flag. Hundreds of thousands of South Africans festooned their cars, taxis and trucks with the national flag.
- Enterprising university students developed and marketed socks, emblazoned with the flags of participating nations, that fitted snugly over car wing mirrors.

We celebrated wildly when, against all expectations, Bafana Bafana drew against Mexico. We commiserated with one another when we lost to Uruguay and had to exit the competition. Nevertheless, despite our 83rd ranking we did quite well and performed better than many other countries - including France - that were much higher up the international ladder.

Once we had been knocked out, South Africans switched their allegiance wholeheartedly and without reservation to Africa's best remaining hope, Ghana. Black South Africans were surprised that nearly all whites identified with Africa - with Baghana, Baghana - rather than with England or some other European country.

When Ghana sadly - and unluckily - left the fray, many black South Africans returned the compliment and supported Holland, because of its historic ties to many of their white compatriots. Such were the times and such was the spirit that animated our people for that magic month in the depth of the southern winter.

But as with all fairy tales the clock struck twelve.

Cinderella had to scurry down the palace steps, and confront again the harsh realities of our national life. The party was over. The bunting was removed. Our national attention shifted from the empty stadiums to the continuing poverty and inequality in which too many South Africans continue to live. The vuvuzelas were silent. Strident voices again began to dominate the national discourse.

Nevertheless, during those four weeks we had successfully changed international perceptions of our country. It was clear from another survey carried out by YouGovStone on behalf of SABMiller in August 2010 that there had been a major and positive shift in attitudes toward South Africa. The survey revealed that

- fully 72% believed that the World Cup would have a very positive or positive legacy for South Africa - compared to only the 29% of those polled before the event, who had thought it would be a success.
- 54% thought that it would bring great benefits to South Africa.
- 61% said that, as a result of the success of the World Cup, they thought that South Africa would be a good place to hold global events of all kinds.
- 42% felt more positive about visiting South Africa as a tourist.

Unfortunately, since then we South Africans have been attracting attention for all the wrong reasons. On the soccer field of international opinion we have been resolutely scoring one own goal after another.

- First came the Protection of Information Bill that would give government broad powers to classify virtually any information regarding its activities in the “national interest”. The effect would be to stop whistle-blowers and investigative journalists from trying to obtain and publish information on government corruption and inefficiency.
- Then came ANC proposals for the establishment of a Media Appeals Tribunal that would ensure “responsible” and “balanced” reporting by the press and that would lay down stiff penalties - including prison sentences - for recalcitrant journalists.
- This was followed by reports of a new system of land ownership which would cap the rights of South Africans to own freehold property and that would require all new foreign landowners to have local South African partners.
- During the past few weeks we have witnessed a protracted strike by relatively well-paid civil servants who are demanding salary increases twice the current rate of inflation. All this threatens to send the government deficit over 7% of GDP.

Alas, the silly season continues. Julius Malema continues to bellow about the nationalization of the mines. President Zuma and the ANC - with a weather eye on international credit ratings - continue to insist that this is not their policy. The increasingly divergent factions within the ANC Alliance continue to circle one another, hurling insults, before the ANC’s important National General Council later this month.

The situation is back to normal.

Cinderella is back in the kitchen, sitting on the ash-heap. The FIFA fairy godmother has flown off to her next assignment in Brazil - weighed down by almost two hundred million dollars in profits. The Afro-pessimists have returned in strength, confident that South Africa's World Cup success was just a flash in the pan.

However, we South Africans have always been much more realistic than that.

We did not expect that the World Cup would change the underlying realities of South Africa - and it did not.

- It did not have much impact on poverty and inequality.
- It did not resolve the issues of race and class that have dominated our national discourse for hundreds of years.
- It did not bring the scourges of AIDS and crime to an end.

Anyone who expected such outcomes would really have to believe in fairy tales.

However, by the same token, all these developments have not seriously undermined the strengths that made the World Cup success possible.

- We South Africans are remarkably resilient and have a wonderful ability to confound the pessimists. Most foreigners who have visited our shores since 1652 have confidently predicted that the country could not possibly work. But we have proved them wrong.
- Nobody in 1985 thought that we ourselves would be able to end apartheid and find a peaceful solution to the spiraling conflict in our society. Yet we did.
- After 1994 Afro-pessimists doubted that a black ANC government would possibly be able to run a sophisticated economy. But for sixteen years it has done so - and achieved uninterrupted economic growth for thirteen of those years until bankers in the northern hemisphere upset the global economic apple cart.

I am confident that we will once again prove the pessimists wrong.

- I do not believe for a moment that the ANC will be successful with its current assault on the media. The Protection of Information Bill will be withdrawn or satisfactorily amended; and the Media Appeals Tribunal will be shelved.
- The current proposals relating to land tenure will wither in the light of national and international economic scrutiny. Our farmers, together with government, will hammer out a workable approach to land reform.
- The ANC will successfully resolve the divisions within its Alliance. Or even better, it will split and open the way to national politics based on social and economic policies rather than on race.
- And South Africa will retain the Rugby World Cup next year. Just you wait and see!

The glorious weeks of the FIFA World Cup are receding further and further into our collective memory - but some things will remain,

- Including our ability to compete with the best in the world;
- Including the world-class infrastructure that was created for the event; and
- Including the natural beauty and the warmth and hospitality of our people that the World Cup has introduced to hundreds of millions of potential tourists.

As we all know, Cinderella, in her headlong flight down the palace steps, left something of her magic behind in the form of the crystal slipper that was retrieved by Prince Charming. The FIFA World Cup left us with a similar magic legacy: it is the shining vision of the brilliant, multifaceted nation we can and will become.

This, I believe, is the main legacy of the World Cup: it has shown us the nation that we can become if we all unite behind a worthy vision and work together in the spirit of June/July 2010.