



THE PRESIDENCY
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

**WELCOME ADDRESS BY HE, JACOB ZUMA,
THE PRESIDENT OF SOUTH AFRICA, AT
2010 UNWTO INTERNATIONAL TOURISM,
SPORT & MEGA-EVENTS SUMMIT,
JOHANNESBURG, SOUTH AFRICA.**

25 February 2010

**Minister of Tourism, Mr
Marthinus van Schalkwyk,
The Secretary-General of the
United Nations World
Tourism Organisation,**

**Honourable Ministers of
Tourism;**

**Honourable President of the
World Travel and Tourism
Council;**

**Honourable Chief Executive
Officers and leadership of
national tourism authorities;**

Distinguished delegates

Ladies and gentlemen;

I am honoured and delighted to welcome this esteemed delegation of tourism leaders from around the world to our country.

We are truly honoured to host you for this significant gathering, of this inaugural 2010 UNWTO International Tourism, Sport and Mega-events Summit.

You have come at the right time to South Africa. This is a seminal year for our country and for the tourism industry in particular, as we are hosting the greatest soccer spectacle on earth, the FIFA 2010 Soccer World Cup.

For the past six years, all South Africans have anxiously looked forward to the arrival of the year 2010.

We all vividly recall the special moment in our nation's history when, on 15 May 2004, FIFA President, Sepp Blatter, announced to the world that the honour of hosting the world's greatest sporting mega-event, the FIFA World Cup™, would be bestowed upon South Africa in 2010.

From coast to coast, all South Africans alike exploded in joy. Since then, for six solid years, South Africans across the nation and the world have been hard at work, preparing to host the 2010 event professionally and proudly.

The importance of 2010 for both South Africa and the world cannot be overstated.

During the 2010 World Cup, it is estimated that there will be a total of 3.5 million participants. Approximately 1.3 million of these are expected to be tourists.

This gives us great optimism given that we have just emerged from the worst global economic recession of our generation.

**Due to the recession,
international tourist arrivals
for business, leisure, and
other purposes are estimated
to have declined worldwide
by 4 percent in 2009, to 880
million.**

The effects of the global economic recession and uncertainty around the swine flu virus, were key contributors to this drop in numbers.

Here in South Africa, we too faced immense challenges in the latter part of 2008 and throughout 2009. As the international markets rapidly dived into recession, local liquidity, investment, employment and trade were severely constrained.

The shockwaves gathered momentum, and were eventually felt by all.

Crippling fear of the suddenly uncertain future started to trickle through, from households to businesses alike.

The world must spare no effort in 2010 to recover from a crisis that spared no-one.

As confidence is slowly built up again and spreads across the globe, the time has come for nations to reconstruct, rebuild and reignite their economies and travel and tourism sectors.

The economic recovery has meant that in 2010 we should see an increase of between 3% and 4% in international tourist arrivals.

It is important to note that while most tourism regions showed a decline in numbers, Africa bucked this global trend with a 5% increase in arrivals.

**And in this southern tip,
amidst all the financial
insecurities, South Africans
remained firmly focused on a
vision – a vision that has
taken years of hard work to
achieve.**

This vision has turned our country into a giant construction site, where we are building new infrastructure to take us into the future.

Our endeavours have put us and our abilities to the test, and made us strive towards our goals with even more determination than ever before.

Our vision, however, was to build more than stadia, roads and airports. Our vision was to build our legacy as champions.

From our politicians to our spiritual leaders, our scientists and doctors, economists, artists, sportsmen and sportswomen, we are all geared towards success.

We want to make the dream of the founding democratic President, Nelson Mandela, a reality. He wants to see a united, non-racial prosperous South Africa.

President Mandela celebrates 20 years of freedom from Robben Island this year, and the World Cup is an excellent anniversary gift for a man who loves humanity, justice and freedom!

**In preparations for 2010,
South Africans across the
country have been hard at
work, building stadia,
constructing road and
transport systems, rebuilding
airports and improving
technology.**

However, we South Africans realise that we are not only working towards 30 days of football. We are building our country.

We see in particular a huge potential to boost our tourism sector. South Africa's tourism industry is one of its fastest-growing industries.

Tourism holds huge potential as a sector for job creation, as both a driver of infrastructure investment and a beneficiary of large scale public infrastructure investment.

It is a key generator of foreign exchange, and is seen as a socially and environmentally responsible champion in our economy.

In 2008, tourism contributed more than 1 million jobs and an estimated R195 billion to the South African economy.

Our optimism about this industry is evidenced by the fact that we decided to create a dedicated Department of Tourism after the general elections in May 2009. Our view is that the sector requires undivided attention to enable it to boost our economic growth considerably.

We want to see tourism's contribution to the GDP grow from 8% to double digits in the next 5 years.

To fully unlock the potential of tourism, we will need to build on our existing successes whilst exploring new frontiers for growth and development.

We will also harness the advantages within the region. In the Southern African region we have the unique TransFrontier Conservation Areas. Visitors to the World Cup tournament who stay at the Kruger National Park in Mpumalanga can cross over to Mozambique for a weekend, and be back in time for their next match.

That's the beauty of the integration we are working towards in the SADC region.

Honoured delegates, let me welcome you once again to this country. As a nation, we have hosted dozens of international events since our liberation in 1994, including globally profiled mega-events.

These include:

- the 1995 Rugby World Cup;**
- the 20th Africa Cup of Nations in 1996;**
- the 2001 United Nations World Conference on Racism;**
- the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development;**
and

- **and the 2003 Cricket World Cup.**

More recently, we successfully welcomed the world to our country when we hosted the 2009 British Lions Tour and the Indian Premier League.

**We have long come to
understand that the
importance of mega-events
to our nation extends far
beyond the events alone.**

They offer us the opportunity to work together to strengthen our tourism industry, our economy, our employment capacity and skilled workforce, our appeal to investors, and of course, our global image and identity.

**They aid us in our pursuit of
excellence, our drive to
become an ever stronger
nation.**

**That is why we are pleased to
host you, and why we look
forward to welcoming you
back in June for the World
Cup.**

**I wish you a successful
summit – may you find the
next two days of
deliberation, knowledge
sharing and consultation
truly inspiring and
enlightening.**

I thank you.