

# Let us reclaim our pride, our country, our unity



LET'S  
TALK

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We are divided but we have been united. We feel discontent but we have known elation. We can be great, for greatness is in us.

the run-up to the tournament.

But I believe we are really longing for the sense of nation-building, national pride, unity and patriotism that the football spectacle brought with it.

When we hosted the send-off for the Proteas and the Springboks ahead of the cricket and rugby world cups respectively, we saw some of it returning briefly. Last week, Lead SA, the Department of Basic Education, Shout, the Nelson Mandela Foundation, Proudly SA and Brand SA called on the public to converge to record a special Happy Birthday song for Madiba ahead of his 94th birthday on July 18.

In true SA tradition, people arrived in their hundreds. Many sported their SA colours and they sang and waved the flag again with real zeal.

A young man told me afterwards: "Today it felt like the spirit of the World Cup has returned. I wish it could remain with us forever."

Another participant said: "For an hour, I forgot about politics, about race



Soccer fans blow vuvuzelas following the World Cup match between SA and Mexico at Soccer City in Joburg. The writer urges citizens to once again find that shared national identity and pride.

PICTURE: AP

and about The Spear. It was so wonderful." There is little doubt that we are all hungry for the glue that is needed to bring this nation together.

We need more national pride. We all want to be true South Africans.

The words Mandela, Madiba and Tata do unite us. Let's also use our elder statesman's traditions, values and legacy to bring us all closer together.

Sport has in recent history played a critical role in bringing us closer together. The Springboks will be taking on England in three Tests this month.

Team South Africa is getting ready for the Olympic Games in July.

Let's use these and other events again to rally behind our national sporting teams. They deserve our support.

We are bombarded every day with stories about political divisions, crime,

corruption, racial polarisation, maladministration and poor service delivery.

Yes, we need to hold the government accountable. We must continue to demand answers and service excellence.

But at the same time let's focus on what we need to and must do as a country to make a difference and bring back the World Cup spirit of two years ago.

Let's use our experiences to bring back the oneness which our country needs.

Let's bring back the spirit of being South African and let's all be Proudly South African.

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**I**N A FEW days time, we will be marking the second anniversary of the World Cup. Two days ahead of kick-off on June 11, 2010, South Africans converged in their thousands to wish Bafana Bafana well.

Who will ever forget the sea of yellow in Sandton and other parts of our country? Who will ever forget the patriotism that brought us together as a nation?

We sang the national anthem with pride. We waved our flags high. We welcomed our visitors with true South African smiles.

We stood united as we took on the world. The World Cup made our country shine across the globe.

One month later, the final whistle blew and normality slowly returned.

We all looked to the future with optimism and we all wanted the much spoken about World Cup legacy to kick in.

The new stadiums, improved transport infrastructure and better police visibility were some of the many advantages we are still benefiting from.

But have we done enough to promote football at grassroots level?

Are we seeing the benefits from the millions of rand that Fifa gave to the South African Football Association (Safa)?

As the World Cup came to a close, I wrote in this very column: "The challenge for us is to ensure we let the legacies of the World Cup live on.

"It's necessary for us to continue embracing the spirit of unity, ubuntu and joy that we've displayed over recent weeks."

I am often asked what needs to be done to get back the *gees* of the World Cup.

There is little doubt that we, as a nation, reminisce and long for the excitement and fun we experienced in