

Desired 2010 legacy must be defined

2010 WORLD CUP/Udesh Pillay

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IT IS tempting to see the legacy that 2010 needs to leave behind in terms articulated exclusively in the language of "social justice". In other words, there is a body of thought that posits that for 2010 to have been deemed successful, the primary beneficiaries must be the poor, marginalised and impoverished. The argument is that in the run-up to 2010 and, indeed, after the event, the value of the spectacle must be measured, inter alia, by the number of jobs created, the extent to which services to the poor have been accelerated, how the public transport

system has been enhanced, the net contribution to the gross domestic product (GDP) to allow redistribution and social grant programmes to gain momentum, and whether other reconstruction and development programmes and "welfare-based" Asgi-SA objectives can be fulfilled.

There is also a growing body of thought that argues 2010 can make significant in-roads in changing the anomalous form and structure of our cities, brought on by decades of apartheid spatial planning.

Issues of growth and equity, as mutually reinforcing concepts, are

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crucial if 2010 is to meet with the kinds of successes we hope, including in the planning stages. The success of the event will be measured not only in terms of how we make South African cities more competitively globally, but in terms of how an undertaking to the poor and indigent can be fulfilled.

What has been of concern to me recently, however, is the framing of this debate in mutually exclusive terms. To use two examples, we either create jobs and improve the plight of the poor by doing so, or we focus on the opportunities created by 2010 to attract foreign direct investment that will help grow the economy to 6% a year.

We cannot, so the argument goes, do both!

This is where, I surmise, we are getting it wrong. These goals are not contradictory, and a debate needs to start around these issues if this is a World Cup that is to be truly bene-

ficial to all South Africans. What is required is a consensus-driven understanding by all stakeholders and constituencies that if we work together, pool resources, align visions, collectively chart processes, and conjointly identify targets, the end result will truly benefit the country as a whole, not just specific sectors. While competing discourses on development are important, this must not come at the expense of a collective vision.

This potential meeting of minds will agree that not all of SA's urban "ills" will be solved by 2010 nor, conversely, will our country immediately join a global hierarchy of competitive national economies. It will also agree that 2010 will create jobs, but not solve our unemployment problems; that it will improve our public transport system, but not solve the public transport problem; that it may help accelerate service delivery in some of our urban

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townships, but only marginally; that it will position the country more competitively, but not before we get more of the basics right; that we will have world class facilities, but for the large part these are likely to be under-utilised in future; that there is likely to be a positive net contribution to the GDP, but that 2010 is unlikely to deliver an 6% growth rate.

Our 2010 legacy must be broadly defined. Surely we have an obligation as policy makers, practitioners, civil society and scholars to make sure that in our many meetings, round-tables and forums ahead of 2010, we negotiate a consensus about anticipated benefits and prospective costs?

For me there is currently a dis-juncture between what people on the ground are saying and feeling about 2010, and the way this is being articulated by their leaders and representatives. If recent debates, and much unpleasantness, around the Gautrain, Green Point Stadium, the N2 Gateway project and La Merce airport, are anything to go by, we may be in for a tough round of negotiations, compromises and settlements. I am not fond of the words "trade-off", "trickle-down" and "best practice". I

also agree that in a crudely defined "rich/poor" continuum, especially as development agendas take root ahead of 2010, we need the necessary checks and balances to avoid outcomes that create tension and unnecessary conflict. But somewhere in between all of this, we need to arrive at a national consensus, driven by our leaders, on what kind of legacy 2010 is realistically and practically able to leave behind.

Legacy outcomes are not zero-sum games. Perhaps we need a stake-holders' compact of sorts as the increasing importance of talking with one voice gains momentum. In that end, the recent communication partnership being driven by the government communication and information system is commendable. No one, after all, wants to have to say after 2010, FIFA obligations notwithstanding, that "... I told you so!"

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