

**MEDIA RELEASE, HUMAN SCIENCES RESEARCH COUNCIL  
7 FEBRUARY 2007**

**Attitudes to the 2010 World Cup: Positive expectations continue, but not unabated**

South Africans continue to hold positive expectations and attitudes towards the 2010 World Cup. A comparison of the 2006 polling data from the HSRC's on-going 2010 longitudinal survey shows relatively little change in broad public expectations from those held in 2005, when the first HSRC poll was undertaken.

The dominant segment (i.e. not a majority in all cases but the largest group segment) of respondents continue to believe that the event will bring lasting and widespread economic benefits to the country, and their area of residence. And respondents continue to believe that the country and their local authority will be ready to host the event.

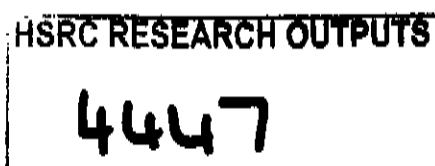
But detailed analysis shows that, in some cases, public attitudes are becoming more nuanced, and respondents more critical about specific issues around 2010.

First, respondents continue to believe that the main advantage to South Africa's hosting of the World Cup will be in the form of economic and employment benefits. In the first survey, some 62% of respondents believed that economic growth and job creation would result; in the just-completed survey this dropped to 51%. This is an appreciable decrease, although partly countered by respondents who – over the two waves of the survey – felt that the World Cup will result in “increased business opportunities”, for instance.

Dr Udesh Pillay, project leader of the HSRC's 2010 project, said this result suggested that with the more visible and public-focused planning for the event and debate that was more widespread, respondents were being more specific in their expectations, and not seeing benefits in broad, amorphous terms. In other words, South Africans were beginning to be more realistic and discerning about their expectations.

Second, while 57% of respondents believed that their local authority would be able to meet the demands of hosting the event, this reflected a drop from the 62% of respondents in the first survey. Respondents in the Eastern Cape showed the biggest increase in critical assessment of local authority readiness – doubling from 22% in 2005 to 44% last year. Respondents may well feel that failure on the part of their municipalities to deliver basic services over the past year mitigates against them meeting more stringent and demanding 2010 World Cup obligations in the run-up to the event.

Third, public assessment of the main disadvantage to hosting the event shows some possibly significant changes over the two year period. In the first survey, the largest segment of respondents (25%) believed that consumer price increases would be the main drawback of hosting the event, followed by those who believed that it would lead to an increase in crime (20%).



The latest survey shows that these categories are now reversed. Twenty-nine percent of respondents now believe that an increase in crime will be the main disadvantage, followed, at 22%, by those who fear an increase in prices. The pervasive crime situation in the country possibly explains this shift, with respondents probably feeling that hosting the World Cup could well provide criminal elements with an environment further conducive to perpetuating their trade.

Fear of crime was spread reasonably uniformly around the country, although slightly higher among urban formal housing dwellers and among respondents in farming areas. Thirty-four percent of wealthier respondents, measured on the living standards measurement (LSM) barometer, cited fear of crime as a major drawback associated with the hosting of the event, compared to 25% and 27% of persons on the "low" and "medium" categories on the LSM scale

The latest survey also recorded a large increase in public knowledge of South Africa's hosting of the world's premier sports event. It jumped by some 16% over the two-year period, to now stand at 89% of respondents. Persons living in rural areas continue to display low public knowledge of the event. While only 8% to 10% of persons living in urban areas said they did not know that South Africa would host the event, between 15% and 19% of respondents living in either the former homelands or on farms remained ignorant of this.

Government communication and widespread media interest explains the overall shift above, together with an entrepreneurial culture taking root among South Africans – following many opportunity-based marketing campaigns - as they begin to explore ways in which they can materially benefit from the event.

Pillay, leader of the HSRC's 2010 project, said that while results of public knowledge among rural inhabitants was not unexpected, it indicated that 2010 communication strategies needed to target persons living in rural areas. He said it was encouraging, to this effect, that Government's National Communication Partnership (NCP) was attempting to address such situations.

According to Pillay, the next installment of this longitudinal series will be conducted towards the latter half of 2007, with the results to follow around this time next year. The idea will be to continue tracking and analyzing changing attitudes, providing policy-makers and practitioners alike with decisive planning information in the run-up to the event, and creating a space for public debate and dialogue.

**For interviews and sound bytes, contact:**

**Dr Udesb Pillay**

**Executive Director: Urban, Rural and Economic Development (URED)**

**Cell phone: +27 (0)836807356**

**Office: +27 (0)12 3022528**