

SA confident on job-creation prospects

WITH less than four years to go to the opening whistle of the World Cup, South Africans are confident that the biggest sporting spectacle ever to be hosted in Africa will bring increased job opportunities and improved economic growth.

They also believe it will consolidate SA's global position.

These were some of the views of almost 85% of respondents polled in the first of a series of annual national attitude surveys being conducted by the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC), SA's statutory social science research agency, during the countdown to the World Cup.

About 2 900 respondents across the country were canvassed in a representative sample during the second half of 2005. The second wave of the annual survey is under way.

Udesh Pillay, executive director of the HSRC's urban, rural and economic development research programme, says that over time,

the organisation hopes to distill and track these trends and patterns, so that with each successive wave of the survey, the results will become more definitive.

In the first wave of survey results, respondents were almost equally divided on whether the expected benefits from 2010 would be lasting or short term. About 47% believed the benefits

of hosting the event would be long term, while 44% said the benefits would be short term.

About 34% of respondents expected job creation to be a benefit at national level, 28% expected this to be the case at city level, while 15% believed jobs would be created at neighbourhood level. While 33% expected to gain personally from the World Cup, an equal number said they did not expect to receive any personal job-creation benefits.

Pillay points out that the World Cup provides host cities with the opportunity to fast-track

urban development, to improve their economic infrastructure, to promote economic development and job creation — and to present themselves on a global stage.

However, he emphasises that the focus of the HSRC's research

project has moved beyond urban development alone and places considerable emphasis on the "legacy" of 2010. Core issues centre on what the World Cup will leave behind as a lasting legacy

for the host cities concerned, for SA and for the African continent.

"Host cities expect that the greater benefit of hosting the 2010 matches will lie less in the event itself than in the long-term

benefits of transport, sports and other infrastructure investments — as well as in the image that is created of the cities as a destination for tourists and investment," Pillay says.



HSRC executive director Udesh Pillay ... with less than four years to go before the 2010 Soccer World Cup, South Africans are confident that the biggest sporting spectacle ever to be hosted in Africa will bring increased job opportunities and improved economic growth.

