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Majority of South Africans believe country will be ready for 2010 – survey

By: Creamer Media Reporter

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Marketing research company African Response on Wednesday stated that its 2010 Barometer has seen a record high in the nation's confidence ahead of 2010.

"Since March 2004, there have been vacillations in the public opinion, but with the tournament only over a year away, the majority of South Africans have shown support for those that have been slaving away to make sure that we are prepared – 78% believe that we will indeed be ready," the company said in a statement.

Overall confidence has increased by 2% from the last reading, taken in January this year. Confidence levels vary across the country, and African Response found that Durban's support of the event preparation was highest at 86% as with Johannesburg at 84%, while Cape Town demonstrates little faith at only 68%.

An estimated 85% of the 1 200 respondents stated that they would catch the games on television. Most enthusiastic were respondents from Johannesburg (89%) and Durban (90%) as well as those in the age category of 16 to 34 years.

There has been a slight decrease in the percentage of the respondents who intended to go to one of the live matches. Compared with a score of 56% in the last reading, 53% now intend to sit in the stadium for at least one of the games. African Response theorised that this was perhaps owing to the fact that phase one of ticketing was now complete and for some, the opportunity to secure a ticket had passed by.

The company noted that much had been done to restore and rejuvenate the country before tourists descended for the tournament, and African Response has been tracking perceptions of readiness on many of the aspects.

"Construction on South Africa's roads has been a highly visible affair and while this has caused a degree of frustration for drivers, 64% believe that they will be ready. In Pretoria only 50% have this confidence."

The company noted that while it was encouraging to see people working on the roads, it was possible that this could also contribute to some skepticism, in seeing only the initial stages of new roads or extensions to highways happening now, it might be difficult to imagine how these would be complete by the time 2010 rolls around.

"Confidence in public transport being ready decreased slightly from the last reading, now at 70% from 72% last reading. This is possibly due to the public negotiations around the Bus Rapid Transport system from government, which could imply a delay in its implementation," African Response said in a statement.

With load shedding and electricity cuts firmly in the past, the public were showing more optimism, with 60% of interviewees believing that electricity would meet requirements during the World Cup.

The citizens of Johannesburg, at 72%, showed the highest levels of confidence while those in Cape Town (53%) and Pretoria (46%) were less convinced.

"There has been some major restructuring at the OR Tambo International Airport, leading to 89% of Johannesburg respondents believing that our airports will be ready when World Cup fans enter our country. Cape Town shows a more cautious outlook with a comparatively low 72% agreeing that the airports will be sufficiently equipped. The difference here is possibly owing to the fact that the Johannesburg airport has been built while the Cape Town airport is still going through construction. Nationally, this figure stands at 80%."

African Response stated that the confidence in policing and security did not enjoy as much confidence as some of the other attributes. Pretoria residents were particularly dubious about security issues, with only 53% showing trust

compared with 76% of Johannesburg respondents.

Accommodation and restaurants have typically enjoyed high confidence levels and this reading was no different, with between 87% and 82% of respondents stating that these would be ready.

“Confidence in our stadiums, perhaps one of the most significant aspects for this event, has suffered a slight decrease this wave. Last reading 78% of respondents were convinced that these would be done compared to the lower 75% seen in this wave.”

As far as the national team was concerned, African Response stated that belief in the local soccer stars has increased this wave, with 54% now confident that the team would be ready for the event.

Since the inception of the survey, a large proportion of South Africans have believed that the event would benefit our country, however, this wave has seen a record high of 89% in those believing that the event was good for our country.

“In terms of personal importance, Johannesburg citizens, as well as those aged between 25 and 34, are most convinced of the significance of the event, with 88% and 83% respectively agreeing that it is personally important for them. Those in Cape Town do not see as much importance, with only 65% agreeing with the statement. 85% of respondents from Durban see the significance of the event to them personally.”

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