

## TJI ONLINE Destinations

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### South Africa on Track for 2010 FIFA World Cup

With eight months remaining until the start of the FIFA World Cup 2010 in South Africa, the country is on target for the start of the continent's biggest athletic event ever.



Marthinus Van Schalkwyk

Marthinus Van Schalkwyk, minister of tourism for South Africa, during his participation in the recent JATA-World Travel Fair, said that South Africa has invested some \$340 million in its infrastructure, from airports, railways to roads and stadiums to make way for the event starting from June 2010.

He said that everything is on schedule for the opening of the World Cup, with the stadiums to be ready by November 2009 when FIFA will be there to inspect the venues.

Hosted for the first time on the African continent, Van Schalkwyk said the event will be an "African Flavor World Cup" featuring the culture and uniqueness of African countries.

South Africa is not new to international sporting events as it earlier this year hosted the FIFA Confederations Cup, considered a dress rehearsal for the 2010 World Cup. It over the past few years has hosted the Rugby World Cup, Cricket World Cup, World Cup of Motorsport, Women's World Cup of Golf and African Nations Cup, said the minister, referring to the country's wide experience in successfully hosting world-scale events.

Meanwhile, he said that some 34 billion people worldwide will watch the World Cup next year, with some 3.5 million people planning to visit South Africa, of which 350,000 will be from overseas, including Japan.

Despite the downturn in the global economy, the minister said that it has not downsized the scale of the event.

In Japan, promotions have begun, with tie-ups with major sponsors such as Sony, Coca Cola, Adidas and Sun International. The World Cup trophy will be brought to Japan through promotions by Coca Cola.

A Japanese website [www.south-africa.jp](http://www.south-africa.jp) has been introduced that features pictures of the Japan team members, stories of the team and travel to South Africa.

Visa International will also conduct promotional efforts in Japan.