

Safa determined to make Afcon a success

By [Nthambeleni Gabara](#)

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JOHANNESBURG: South African Football Association (Safa) President Kirsten Nematandani says all stops will be pulled to ensure South Africa's successful hosting of the 2013 African Cup of Nations.



Speaking before officially handing over his duties as interim chairman of the 2013 Afcon LOC Board to his deputy, Chief Mweliso Nonkonyana, in Johannesburg, Nematandani said Safa will hit the ground running with its preparations.

"Nothing can stop the 2013 Afcon from [succeeding]. We have no more ... time to relax. We have to hit the ground running also to ensure that our national team is ready for the tournament," he said, while signing the handover agreement with Nonkonyana.

Cabinet on Friday announced the host cities of the 2013 Afcon and those of the 2014 African Nations Championships (CHAN).

The opening and closing ceremonies of the 2013 Afcon will be played at Johannesburg's FNB Stadium, while matches will take place in Port Elizabeth (Nelson Mandela Bay), Rustenburg (Royal Bafokeng), eThekweni (Moses Mabhida Stadium) and Mbombela (Mbombela Stadium).

Nematandani told Nonkonyana that with the support of government, there would be no reason for the hosting of the continental tournament - scheduled to begin on 19 January and end on 10 February - to fail.

In responding, Nonkonyana pledged to do his best as interim chair until a permanent Afcon LOC Board is established.

"We dare not fail South Africa and the entire African continent. We cannot host the 2013 Afcon tournament in a lower standard than that of the 2010 FIFA World Cup.

"I don't have enough words to thank our government for the support, but one thing for sure is that we are not going to fail them. We will work very hard to ensure that the tournament is a success," he said, thanking Nematandani for laying a solid foundation for him.

Nonkonyana said during his tenure, the 2013 Afcon Board will operate in line with what the Constitution of the country dictates.

Mvuzo Mbebe, 2013 Afcon LOC boss, said all 16 teams which will participate in the tournament are expected to be in the country on 13 January, while Bafana Bafana will play a team yet to be announced during the opening match on 19 January, at FNB Stadium in Johannesburg.

According to Mbebe, there will be 24 group stages, six matches in each group, eight knock-out matches, 17 match days, 24 match sites, with two group stage matches per day in the same venue in the same host city.

"All group matches for a single team will be played in the same city, unlike in the FIFA World cup where a team plays group matches in three different venues," he said.

Mbebe said from 13 May to 18 May, they would be visiting the host cities for verification and engagement on any outstanding issues. They would also be meeting with the Inter-Ministerial Committee appointed by Cabinet.

He said this month will see the launch of the countdown and marketing campaign for the tournament, while the inspection visit by the Confederation of African Football (CAF) will be in July.

The opening window for media accreditation for the South African media only will also begin in July, together with the unveiling of the tournament mascot.

He said the theme song of the tournament will be launched in August, while the media accreditation of the international media will be opened in September.

Mbebe said the final draw of the 2013 Afcon will be done in October.

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