

LOC will not interfere with Nigeria decision

JOHANNESBURG: World Cup organisers in South Africa say they will not get involved with the decision by the Nigerian government to suspend that country's football team from international football events for two years, following the team's poor showing at the tournament.



"The Nigerian government felt that they need to engage with the team on that matter, so did the French government, following the exit of their team. But, FIFA has made their position very clear on the matter and we will not interfere," said Organising Committee CEO Danny Jordaan.

Speaking at a media breakfast organised by Gauteng Premier Nomvula Mokonyane on Thursday, 1 July 2010, Jordaan said while the LOC regarded the decision and that of the French government to summon football authorities to be "harsh" FIFA was the only relevant body to deal with the cases.

Nigerian President Goodluck Jonathan on Wednesday shocked the entire football fraternity when he announced the suspension of the national team from international competition for two years following their early departure from South Africa.

He said the suspension will give the team an opportunity to "reorganise". The decision may affect Nigeria's participation in the African Cup of Nations qualifiers ahead of the showpiece in 2012.

Meanwhile, Jordaan is confident that South Africans will carry on the spirit of patriotism and nation building shown during the World Cup long after the tournament has left the country's shores.

"South Africans have demonstrated the love they have for this country...they know what is important and I'm confident they will continue to focus on nation building. The country is already talking about hosting the Olympics, so South Africans put their country first," he said.

He said the World Cup could not have been a success without the flair and enthusiasm demonstrated by South Africans since the tournament started on 11 June. "It's the people of our country and of course the foreign fans that have injected

energy to this tournament. Everyone has just been amazing".

After 20 days of World Cup action, players have taken a two-day rest before the start of the highly anticipated quarterfinal matches from Friday, 2 July.

Mokonyane said Gauteng had a series of entertainment events lined up to entertain the visitors in their remaining week in South Africa. "We have from the beginning made our mark to the world and what is key is that we made our mark to those who had an opportunity to visit Gauteng and South Africa and we will continue to make them feel at home.

"Everyone has just been glued to South Africa and yes we have made a few errors but we can safely say we have been great hosts so far," Mokonyane said.

More than 2.6 million fans attended matches at various stadiums throughout the country since the start of the World Cup and Jordaan said the organisers were targeting a three million attendance figure. If they achieve that, South Africa's World Cup could become the most attended in recent history, behind only the 1994 leg of the tournament held in the United States.

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