

FIFA 2012, 62nd Session Background Guide

Preparations for the World Cup (Ex: State of Brazil's Infrastructure)

Welcome to the 62nd session of the FIFA Congress! My name is Joseph S. Blatter, your newly re-elected president, and I am proud to receive you all for our annual meeting, staged in Budapest, Hungary. We are very excited for the FIFA World Cup 2014 in Brazil and wish to ensure its utmost success. Our past World Cup in South Africa included 64 matches attended by 3,178,856 fans, a number only surpassed by the 1994 and 2006 FIFA World Cups. The 2010 World Cup proved to be an immense boost to the host nation, with 83% of foreign fans stating that they planned on returning to South Africa.

While the host nation proved capable of staging the event at least 100 days prior to the start, many doubted the ability of South Africa to complete preparations in time. Concerns included a high crime rate of 50 murders per day, a construction workers strike in 2009, political instability in the wake of Jacob Zuma replacing Thabo Mbeki as president, and xenophobic attacks against refugees from Zimbabwe. In the face of such difficulties, South Africa had pledged on building or renovating 10 stadiums, increasing security, and expanding transportation capabilities. In case South Africa would not be able to host the World Cup, due to a natural disaster or the like, in 2007 I announced that a contingency "Plan B" was in place should the need arise. Other nations had volunteered to replace South Africa as the host of the 2010 World Cup, including England, the United States, Mexico, Spain, and Japan, while three football associations and countries (whose names I withheld) stated that they could complete preparations in one year's time. Rumors speculated that Germany might host the 2010 World Cup, considering its exceptional facilities were still operational from hosting the 2006 World Cup. However, in 2008, we formally declared that it was certain the World Cup would not be moving from South Africa, and that FIFA would simply work with whatever structures were in place. Staging the World Cup in Africa was a dream of mine, and I was determined to see it through.

Once again, we find ourselves concerned with the state of preparations for the 2014 World Cup Brazil, a situation we hoped to avoid. It was extremely dissatisfying to see how little in the way of preparations had been completed even after 30 months since the unanimous decision to declare Brazil the host of the 2014 World Cup. As it is now May 2012, we are only 26 months away from the competition's start! Construction work on stadiums has been stalled due to excessive red tape, and airports remain to be woefully overcrowded. The expansion of airports is essential in transporting football fans between the 12 host cities in Brazil. Although the São Paulo International airport was originally built with a capacity of 17m travellers, in 2009, 22m travellers passed through its two terminals. Fortunately, the Brazilian government has finally increased private sector involvement to alleviate the situation.

In recent history, the most distinct case of a FIFA event shifting from one host nation to another was in 2003, when the FIFA Women's World Cup was moved from China to the United States due to an outbreak of the SARS virus. As it stands now, despite our worries over lingering problems, only drastic, unforeseen events push us to shift the World Cup to a new host nation. Additionally, the new continental rotation system of host nations further lowers the possibility of alterations.

While host nations miss construction deadlines, FIFA shakes its head, scolds, and entreaties the nation's political leaders. It is up to the FIFA Congress to explore the institution of a set system of rules for ensuring timely preparations; our near continual state of worry is unacceptable with such high stakes as

the success of the World Cup. For the sake of football, the greatest sport on Earth, I ask that the FIFA Congress act with diligence and courage.

Joseph S. Blatter

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Problems during the World Cup

Ty Spitzer

FIFA

The world cup is approaching, and problems are already starting to come up. For instance, Brazil's president says preparations for the 2014 World Cup could be jeopardized if government officials and businessmen fail to work together in the coming years. Brazil's stadium is in need of significant upgrades to successfully host soccer's biggest showcase. Many critics and some government officials say the country needs to pick up the pace to get ready on time. Brazil is expected to invest nearly \$20 billion in infrastructure to prepare for the World Cup, but bureaucracy, especially in the bidding process and environmental licensing, may create issues and delay some of the necessary construction work. (Brazil will also host the Confederations Cup in 2013 and the Rio de Janeiro Olympics in 2016.) Brazil has already missed a deadline to start renovating most of the 12 stadiums that will be used in the tournament. Sao Paulo, South America's largest city, is yet to present a project to replace Morumbi stadium after it was dropped. Along with stadiums not being able to fit enough people, Brazil will also be facing a very similar

issue. It is obvious that even now Brazilian airports and other transportation hubs will be severely stressed in the days to come if Brazil does not do something to improve its transformational infrastructure. Along with extensive improvements in infrastructure, Brazil will have to overcome other challenges similar to the ones faced by South Africa -- high crime rates, a huge disparity between rich and poor, and long distances between host cities. Brazil possesses high rates of violent crime, such as murder and robbery; the homicide rate has been steadily declining, but it is still above 20.0 homicides per 100,000 inhabitants, placing the country in the top 20 countries by intentional homicide rate. In 2010, there were 473,600 people incarcerated in Brazilian prisons and jails. In Rio de Janeiro, where a bloody conflict between criminal gangs and police reasserting control over a slum zone dominated headlines last week. The federal government has shown it will back the security efforts of Rio de Janeiro state, authorizing soldiers to deploy in the slums into next year and maybe beyond. But with a third of Rio's six million residents living in the shantytowns, the scale of the problem is so huge that other measures will also be needed. For instance, The US government has identified security as such a challenge that it sees big opportunities for US defense and private contractors. Brazil is also being criticized by how it is spending its money. Officials at all levels are being blasted for missing deadlines, not controlling costs and for a lack of transparency in government actions, according to the report from the Audit Court, responsible for overseeing how the Brazilian government spends public money. There is a massive risk of misuse of public funds, to the level of what happened in the preparations for the 2007 Pan American Games in Rio de Janeiro, when the government acknowledged that it made serious mistakes in planning and financing for that Olympic-style event. Brazil's megalopolis of Sao Paulo lost the city's flagship Morumbi stadium because of lack of financial guarantees. Brazil is in serious trouble because of its many issues and it is going to have to make some tough decisions in order to solve its current predicament. Most importantly for Brazil, they will need to get their act together and finish all of their projects that they guaranteed to the world, and more importantly, the projects that will make Brazil a suitable host for the 2014 World Cup.

