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Football for Hope launched

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JOHANNESBURG - World Cup mascot Zakumi entertained Alexandra residents at the launch of the local Fifa Football for Hope 2010 host site yesterday.

Football for Hope aims to enhance dialogue and collaboration between football associations, committed clubs and players, professional leagues, commercial partners as well as local organisations advancing social development.

A number of prominent figures graced the occasion, including officials from the 2010 Local Organising Committee (LOC), representatives from world football governing body, Fifa, as well former and current local soccer players who hail from the township.

Addressing local residents and the media who gathered at the sports grounds yesterday, 2010 LOC CEO Danny Jordaan said the Football for Hope festival seeks to change people's lives through sport.

"We hope that by bringing other people from different countries across the globe, you (locals) will listen to their stories and realise that you are not different from them as they also go through social deprivation and different forms of struggles. South Africans understand the importance of social development and the power of sport to influence positive social change, so this festival is a key initiative for us."

In welcoming the young local group of players who will form part of the 32 teams of boys and girls from disadvantaged communities worldwide who will participate in the festival between July 4 and 11, retired soccer player Maimane Phiri thanked Fifa for choosing Alexandra as this year's hosts.

"We can assure you Alexandra will never disappoint, in fact we are ready," he said.

Zakumi was also on hand to entertain local residents.

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