

BUILDING NATIONAL PRIDE Version 5

I feel proud to be a South African. We have delivered a world class World Cup and we feel good. A bit lost now that it has ended.

Soccer experts will tell you that the success of international tournaments is generally determined by the strength of the local team. An early exit translates to local support waning and little support for the remaining teams. We're a special breed. Our team loses and we go and support the 'Black Stars'. When Ghana went out we felt cheated by Uruguay's Suarez's 'handy' work. Then we turn to Brazil and cry when they are defeated. Then we adopt Holland or Spain. And we do so with passion. We really want our new team to win. We put our hearts into the game, and support our new favourite.

Our real World Cup success goes beyond the spectacular stadiums, the efficient transport system, or the fact that the games all started on time. The most important theme is how the people of South Africa became the most gracious, passionate, friendly hosts of the world. We set the platinum standard for hosting an international tournament. For many foreign fans, South Africa was a close second to having the tournament at home, it felt so good.

If we can be this warm for a foreign soccer supporter – can we not be equally warm to the poor in our midst? Can you imagine what's possible when we care enough to change things? We've just proved we can do anything if we put our minds, hearts and hands to.

We decided 16 years ago to build the New South Africa and Madiba, who turns 92 this weekend, led the way. We embraced each other and moved on from being the most divided nation on earth to the warmest hosts for the world. This is an unbelievable miracle that we must be proud of.

As I imagine what comes after a World Cup, I imagine this great nation taking on our most pressing challenges and fixing it. We know we can, we just need the political to do it. If we gave ourselves the challenge of raising the median income for the poorest 20% of the households in our midst, what would we come up with? Would that be more difficult than hosting a soccer tournament? Surely not?

How do we move our own people up the world rankings in addressing poverty and inequality? That's what our flag symbolises for me. Flying it means we care for all our people. We should continue to fly our flag on our cars, houses, shirts every Friday, just as President Zuma guided this week.

I believe that South Africans are overwhelmingly ready for doing better. I believe that the politics of exploiting differences can be locked away. We've seen how we can all come together to support a single goal, and how good that feels. Government tries its best to design formal job-creation schemes. What do we do as citizens?

My only regret from the World Cup (other than that it is over!), is that it seemed so much of the things that brought such colour to our beautiful country was bought somewhere else – flags, vuvuzelas, shirts, scarfs and related paraphernalia appear to have been made in some foreign country. Where is our Proudly South African (PSA) campaign? Every South African

should play a role. Why do we not with pride buy a suit, a beautifully carved craft or the food we eat from a South African company with a PSA logo on it? And I am not talking of the unscrupulous traders and bosses who specialise in swopping labels on imported goods.

I believe that this sort of focus will inspire entrepreneurs to set up local businesses to produce many of the products we now import, because people care about that. I would like a pen made here, or a t-shirt, or a notepad (or a flag or vuvuzela) – and there's no reason why our own products can not be as good as what we've come to expect. Being conscious in our purchasing decisions could really make such a difference.

The quality of lives of our poor is influenced not just by how much money eludes them but also by the conditions under which they live. As the middle classes we're all offended by power outages and potholes in our roads – but why don't we feel the same indignity when there are whole areas where our people live in dire poverty? Why don't we find ways of using our access, connections and networks to benefit our poor? But we all felt the insult to South Africa when the airport in Durban messed up during the world cup, even whilst very few of us were directly affected.

That indignity, that blemish – shouldn't that apply to all services, for all of us, all of the time? We should be outraged at schools where little learning takes place, or where half way through the year our children are without textbooks or where only a small minority of schools have libraries; or that in some clinics babies die from preventable illnesses? Hunger and malnutrition is everyone's problem, as are shoddy houses.

Imagine the possibilities... That's what flying our flag should mean. We care, we want the best, and we accept responsibility for us all. We care about how and where some of our money flows, and choose to buy Proudly South African. Not in ten years. Now. Ke nako.

Happy birthday, Madiba. My fervent hope is that we swop building statues and naming streets in your name to living your values and human spirit every day going forward.

Jay Naidoo – former Cabinet Minister and Chairman of the Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition who has now returned to the voluntary sector fulltime. His biography "Fighting for Justice" is released on the 22nd July.