



## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **UNDER 19 CRICKET WORLD CUP**

Cricket Kenya wishes to express its deep disappointment at the decision by the ICC to remove its hosting rights for the Under 19 Cricket World Cup to be held in February 2010.

As a consequence of this decision, Cricket Kenya believes it is necessary to give a full account to explain its position with the facts and to counter some of the grossly misleading stories appearing in the local media.

### **BACKGROUND**

In 2006, at the invitation of the ICC to its members to host various ICC feature events, Kenya successfully bid for the hosting rights of the 2010 event. The ICC's declared policy to improve the profile of the game and to promote it globally led it to assure its members that all Under 19 World Cups would be staged in an Associate country. Malaysia was granted hosting rights for the 2008 event, with Kenya following in 2010 and Canada in 2012.

Kenya was proud to bid for the event. Contrary to the misinformed comment in Mr Waindi's article in the East African Standard of 21<sup>st</sup> July 2009 that the Cricket Kenya "arguably" (sic) stood to make US\$8 million, there was no real financial gain to be made. This event is an ICC feature event. Advertising, media and broadcasting rights belong solely to the ICC and their partners. The hosting fee receivable by Kenya was US\$150,000.

It was nevertheless important for such an event to be in Kenya. It was an unrivalled opportunity to spread interest in the game and elevate the country into a true cricket destination – quite apart from the benefits that would inevitably accrue to other business sectors in Kenya.

The Under 19 World Cup involves 16 countries participating in four groups involving 44 matches being played over 15 days. It includes a Plate event which runs in tandem with the main event. The Kenya event requirement was for at least 14 separate first class venues, 7 to be used for matches and 7 as full practice facilities. Since the 2008 Malaysian event had drawn criticism for allegedly poor outfielders and wickets, the ICC felt, somewhat belatedly after that event, that it was now imperative that such events were hosted on playing surfaces (on both match and practice grounds) that were "first-class".

Kenya's potential to host this event was judged on that basis of the suitability of its playing surfaces - and that basis alone. There was no issue with any of its other facilities – either on or off the field as stated in Mr Waindi's article in the Standard of 21<sup>st</sup> July 2009.

It should be made clear that nowhere in the hosting agreement is there any mention of any requirement relating to the standards of the playing surfaces or any time limit for preparations. The host country is simply expected to have its facilities ready by the time of the event.

The intention to develop venues countrywide was conscious and deliberate and Cricket Kenya firmly stands by that decision. It would have been logistically impossible to host this tournament in Nairobi alone which simply does not have sufficient grounds capable of being turned into first class venues for a tournament of this kind. Both Mombasa and Nakuru have existing cricket grounds which are more than capable of being turned into top venues.

### **THE INSPECTIONS**

Cricket Kenya had been in contact the ICC Events office on the requirements for this tournament since 2006, but were asked to wait until after the 2008 Malaysian event.

The first inspection by the ICC was carried out in October 2008 – a mere 15 months before the event. ICC's inspector, Andy Atkinson, reported that although Kenya had sufficient venues, considerable work was necessary to upgrade the outfielders on existing venues and to put in place sufficient resources, equipment and manpower to ensure that the newly constructed venues in Mombasa and Nakuru were ready on time.

Based on that report, Cricket Kenya prepared an estimate amounting to some \$250,000 for the cost of carrying out these works at the 14 venues across the country (8 in Nairobi, 4 in Mombasa and 2 in Nakuru). This was submitted to the ICC for consideration and guidance in January 2009 and followed up by several requests by Cricket Kenya in January and February 2009 for meetings to discuss its request for assistance for finance and expertise. These meetings were cancelled by ICC management for a variety of reasons notably lack of time and unavailability of staff. Ultimately, Cricket Kenya was advised that, having bid for the event, it would be expected to rely on its own resources for such preparations or alternatively seek a loan. Its hosting fee of US\$150,000 could only be released after completion of the event.

In February 2009, ICC management unilaterally decided to call for alternate hosts. New Zealand offered to host the event if Kenya was found to be unready. New Zealand Cricket indicated, however that they would need to know if they were hosting the event no later than June 2009 to enable them to organise their domestic

season. This approach by ICC to other countries was done without prior consultation with Cricket Kenya.

In March 2009, in the absence of any meaningful response on its request for support, Cricket Kenya decided to go ahead with its grounds renovation programme without any further delay. It engaged contractors, mobilised equipment and material and commenced work at the various grounds in Nairobi, Mombasa and Nakuru. Completion of all ground construction (to include preparation of wickets and grass seeding) was achieved by end April at the new venues at Coast Gymkhana (Mombasa) and Rift Valley Sports Club and Greensteds School (both in Nakuru). It also began to upgrade its existing venues in Nairobi. The cost of these works, so far, is well in excess of US\$150,000 and Cricket Kenya has utilised and committed its own resources for this purpose – including the recent purchase of grounds machinery which (in the region of US\$ 50,000) to enable it to support the various clubs and schools involved, none of whom have such equipment.

Subsequent inspections by the ICC inspector in April and May 2009 were inconclusive. The reports indicated that although great strides were being made and that it could be possible to hold the event in Kenya, the risk was that time was short and given the amount of work to be done to upgrade to “first class status” it would not be possible to guarantee suitability until later in the year. These reports clearly indicated that the fulfilment of these objectives was hampered by the lack of equipment and expertise at each venue but acknowledged that Cricket Kenya had lately made significant progress in the work it had carried out and was allocating substantial resources towards its grounds. This progress included Cricket Kenya’s decision of seeking support from Cricket South Africa and Cricket Zimbabwe for grounds consultants ending up with visits from Peter Muzzell of CSA and Ian Kemp and Roy Kwari (both from CZ) to support our clubs’ grounds men work.

### **THE DECISION**

At the ICC meetings held in June, the ICC Chief Executives Committee (CEC) considered the presentation made by Cricket Kenya and also discussed the position with Mr Atkinson who had just inspected the grounds again. In his June report, he again pointed out the insufficiency of time as a possible problem. On the basis that there was no “guarantee” that the grounds would be ready on time and that the alternate host, New Zealand, required an immediate answer to enable it to prepare, the CEC recommended:-

- (i) that the tournament be moved to New Zealand;
- (ii) based on the standard of first-class facilities required, Cricket Canada be asked whether it would be ready to host the event in 2012;
- (iii) if Canada stepped down as host, Kenya be invited to host the 2012 event, subject to meeting strict timelines set by management to be ready with the required facilities

The ICC Board endorsed this decision notwithstanding the very strong support Kenya received from India and South Africa to retain the event in Kenya for 2010.

The ICC Board also agreed to refer Kenya's claim for reimbursement of the costs it had incurred by channelling any such claim through its normal processes.

It should be noted that this decision to move the event was taken eight months before the tournament was due to be held

### **THE IMPLICATIONS**

Cricket Kenya is saddened by what it considers to be a wholly premature and unjustified decision to move this event. No account appears to have been taken of the efforts it had made and the need for support it had requested. It is also difficult, with the benefit of hindsight, to resist the conclusion that such a move was premeditated given the manner in which an alternate host was procured. This is not the first time that Kenya has hosted such an important fixture and Cricket Kenya has maintained throughout its dealings with ICC that it would be ready by the time the tournament was to take place.

The ICC's Associates and Affiliates informal meeting in June (which was attended by all 94 non-Test playing countries) condemned this decision. The meeting questioned the ICC's commitment to development which ran completely contrary to its existing policy so far as hosting rights of this event are concerned.

Having learned of the difficulties that Kenya had undergone and the financial responsibilities involved, Cricket Canada have expressed grave reservations as to whether it is capable of hosting the 2012 event. It has agreed to report to the ICC on this once it had considered the matter further with its Board.

With ICC taking this decision a lot of the positive developments that Cricket Kenya had managed to bring on board are now left hanging. Some of these positives, apart from undertaking huge investments in grounds upgrading are as follows: -

- A tournament paper had been drafted for discussion by the Kenya Government's cabinet through the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports.
- Ministries such as Sports and Youth Affairs, Finance, Internal Security, Immigration, Local Government, Tourism and Transport had been approached personally and have been in liaison with Cricket Kenya to support the event.
- The Government of Kenya had agreed to assist in the preparation of our U19 Team.

- The Ministry of Tourism had agreed to host a grand opening ceremony in the national park to be graced by H. E. The Prime Minister of Kenya.
- The ICC Events and Cricket Kenya offices had already finalised the preparation of the tournament hosting budgets after poring over a total of 9 drafts.
- Cricket Kenya had brought on board various service providers as partners in areas such as accommodation, local transport, medical services, security etc all of whom had expressed their willingness to come on board.
- Bearing in mind that Cricket Kenya has no ground facilities of its own; we had to enter into partnerships with all the various Club owners on long term developments of the ground facilities. These discussions alone took quite some time to finalise.
- Cricket Kenya had made inroads in developing partnerships with the concerned Local Government authorities for service provision during the tournament.

These are very positive strides that would have propelled cricket in this country to greater heights in bringing the game closer to the Kenyan population on an international platform.

Cricket Kenya rejects outright the patronising and inaccurate assertion made in the editorial in The East African Standard on 22<sup>nd</sup> July 2009 that it “went to sleep” after securing hosting rights to this tournament in 2006 and that it was incapable of working to a “set timetable”. As can be seen from the above, Cricket Kenya has done whatever it could possibly do to ensure, in the absence of any support, that the required works were commenced – notwithstanding the fact that the “timetable” to get its venues in order by June was only set by ICC in April this year.

## **THE FUTURE**

Cricket Kenya stands by its commitment to improving the grounds at all its venues in Nairobi, Mombasa and Nakuru. This is in line with the agreements it has entered into with the various clubs and schools. It also gives cricket in Kenya additional venues to enable promotion of the game outside its traditional boundaries.

The new ground facilities in Mombasa (at Coast Gymkhana and Aryans Sports Club) and in Nakuru (at Rift Valley Sports Club and Greensteds School) are well on track and will be ready before the end of 2009. New irrigation facilities for the Nakuru grounds have already been installed at both venues and are now fully operational.

All major Nairobi and Mombasa grounds are in the process of being upgraded by levelling outfielders and installing irrigation facilities where possible.

Cricket Kenya remains committed to ensuring this work is completed and to secure the 2012 event in the event Canada decides to give up its rights.

Kind Regards

*(Not signed as sent electronically)*

**Tom J. Tikolo**  
**Chief Executive**