

Zimbabwe pays for "brand opportunity" from Brazilian team visit

By [Dumisani Ndlela](#)

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Zimbabwe has splurged an undisclosed amount of cash to lure the Brazilian national football team into the country ahead of the FIFA World Cup which kicks off in South Africa on 11 June 2010.

Tourism and Hospitality Minister Walter Muzembi says this will help the country capture what he called "a brand opportunity" from hosting "a team whose brand value stands at US\$60 billion" (about R460 billion).

Zimbabwe plays the Samba Boys on Wednesday, 2 June at the National Sports Stadium in Harare.

Muzembi declines to reveal figures, citing confidentiality, but notes that they have been paid half of what they had asked for - not surprising when some reports have it that they were asking an astronomical amount.

The Brazilians have been booked at the five-star Rainbow Towers Hotel, formerly Sheraton Hotel, at which 70 rooms costing an average of US\$500 (about R3810) per room have been reserved. A subsidiary of South Africa's Impala Platinum, Zimplats, has been persuaded to help with the sponsorship, as well as struggling state-owned mobile phone company, NetOne. CBZ Bank, in which government has a shareholding, has also been roped in to fund the Brazilians' visit.

Muzembi says they expected increased tourist traffic into Zimbabwe as a result of the deal with the Brazilians.

"Our own brand opportunity will arise from our ability to sell the country before, during and after the match," Muzembi told the state-owned *Sunday Mail* newspaper.

ABOUT DUMISANI NDLELA

Dumisani Ndlela is a Zimbabwean journalist specialising in business and financial reporting, with experience reporting on commodities, stock and financial markets, advertising, marketing and the media. He has previously reported from a number of regional countries as well as from the UK and Germany on commodities and regional integration. He can be contacted on dndlela@yahoo.co.uk.

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