



## SwissCham Southern Africa (SCSA)

### Event Review

#### Business Luncheon Presentation

- Topic: **"Football for Health in Africa "**
- Speaker: Professor , FIFA Chief Medical Officer
- Venue: **Zunfthaus zur Safran**, Limmatquai 54, Zürich
- Date: **26<sup>th</sup> March 2009; 11:30 – 14:00**

On 26<sup>th</sup> March 2009, SwissCham Southern Africa (SCSA) was proud to welcome the Prof. Jirí Dvorák as special guest and speaker for a Business Luncheon Presentation. Prof. Jirí Dvorák became professor at the University of Zurich in 1995 and is specialised in neurology and spine disorders. He has been with the Schulthess Clinic since 1987 and currently is the Chief



Medical Officer of FIFA and Chairman of the FIFA Medical Assessment and Research Centre (F-MARC). Especially this body has for the last fifteen years continuously contributed to an ever growing body of knowledge on football medicine and the multiple benefits of football as a health enhancing leisure activity for everyone.

Prof. Dvorák's well performed multimedia presentation was roughly structured in three parts. In the first section Prof. Dvorák confirmed that FIFA was positively surprised to what extent South Africa's medical service is up to standard and fully prepared for both, the FIFA Confederations Cup 2009 and the FIFA World Cup 2010.



In the second part Prof. Dvorák elaborated on obtained research results concerning injuries caused by soccer and the related health care costs. Amongst doctors, governments and health care organisations it is a well known and undisputed fact that neither now nor in the future there is enough money to cover these costs worldwide. Therefore, prevention is the path to pursue. Research conducted by F-MARC has proven that the established preventive program "The 11" is an effective way to reduce injuries and related health care costs by 30% to 50%. Considering the 250 million football players worldwide the potential savings are billions.

In the last part of his presentation Prof. Dvorák explained that FIFA has realised that the F-MARC research results cannot only be used to influence the soccer rules and consequently decrease football injuries. Additionally, football can be promoted as a health enhancing leisure



activity for everyone to address the above mentioned challenge. F-MARC actively wants to use soccer as a universal education tool to prevent and treat the major threats of diseases such as obesity, diabetes, hypertension and diseases of the heart and vessels. Moreover, this tool shall increasingly be used to spread simple but effective messages on how to protect oneself from the most devastating infectious diseases such as HIV, tuberculosis and malaria. In order to implement



this plan F-MARC has developed a similar 'The 11' program as it has successfully done for the prevention of injuries. In close collaboration with Grassroot Soccer ([www.grassrootsoccer.org](http://www.grassrootsoccer.org)) this project is being implemented this month and shall be promoted during the most expensive airtime during the FIFA World Cup 2010.

Finally, the participants congratulated Prof. Dvorák not only for his well performed speech but also for his impressive engagement for health in Africa. The event closed by a delicious three course meal.



