## ATM Crime a Concern During 2010 FIFA World Cup

As South Africa welcomes the world to its shores security is at an all time high. Over 40,000 police officers have been deployed in anticipation of the FIFA World Cup and the eyes of the world are watching the country carefully to see if South Africa's security plan for this event can hold firm.

The South African Minister of Police, Nathi Mthethwa, recently made a statement that the security plan had been applauded by security experts from the 31 participating countries and by 188 Interpol member countries. "We are confident that the 2010 FIFA World Cup™ will be safe and secure," commented Mthethwa. The plan includes South Africa's approach to addressing terror threats, hooliganism and crime.

ATM related crime has always been a problem in South Africa, with numerous street facing ATMs being targeted with ATM bombings, card scams and forced withdrawals. Comments Marc Sternberg, founder and MD of South Africa's leading independent ATM provider, Spark ATM Systems, "It's a real problem in South Africa, especially now when we consider how many tourists will be using ATMs across the country during the World Cup. The majority of tourists are used to having safe and convenient access to cash in their own country - and they will expect the same when they arrive here."

Spark ATM Systems has a dedicated team who regularly analyse local and international crime statistics and trends to ensure they offer the safest and most convenient access to consumer's cash. "International visitors and local consumers feel much safer using an ATM in a secure environment such as a hotel reception or within a retail store," says Sternberg, "there is usually a member of staff, security camera or security guard present which gives our visitors much more confidence in being able to withdraw cash safely. They are very uneasy about using street facing ATMs and have often been specifically warned by their home countries to be wary of ATM usage in South Africa."

Perhaps evidence of this is the fact that Spark ATMs are not targeted for bombings or other acts of crime. "There are much lower amounts of cash inside our ATMs compared to Bank ATMs which makes them unattractive targets for criminals" comments Sternberg.

In anticipation of the World Cup, Spark ATM Systems has been deploying their ATMs within retail and hospitality industries across the country – in both metropolitan and rural areas. The company saw a 65% rise in ATM installations over the past year – the majority of which were in convenience outlets. Sternberg says that the hospitality industry has been pushing to meet the expected demand

for safe ATMs as they have been inundated with urgent installation requests with the World Cup a few days away.

"The bottom line is that cash is still king," concludes Sternberg, "Credit card and travelers cheque usage have dropped considerably over recent years so we need to ensure that we offer our guests a safe and convenient place to withdraw cash, and also entice them to spend it."

## Ends release

For more information please contact Rob Baird on 082 748 8884 or rob@luxurybrands.co.za