

**SPEECH OF THE FREE STATE MEC FOR SPORT, ARTS, CULTURE AND RECREATION, MR DAN KGOHULE, DELIVERED BY THE ACTING HEAD OF DEPARTMENT, MME KGOMOTSO THLAKUDI ON THE OCCASION OF THE SANLAM - KAY MOTSEPE SCHOOLS CUP FINALS**

12 July 2011

Programme Director  
Members of the Executive Council present  
Executive Mayor of Mangaung Metro Mr. Manyoni  
Mr. Dennis Madondo from the Motsepe Foundation  
Mr. Frank Louw from Sanlam  
Distinguished Guests  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

We are privileged as the province of the Free State to welcome you and host the finals of the Sanlam Kay Motsepe Schools Cup. It is indeed inspiring that an individual can honour the memory of a parent through sport. Mr. Patrice Motsepe has been one of the influential individuals who have played a critical role in shaping the socio-economic transformation of our society. We are truly inspired by the vision and commitment from the Motsepe Foundation, Sanlam and other sponsors in realizing the importance of promoting sports in our schools.

For far too long sport in our schools has been underestimated as a means of developing and defining the psyche of our nation. It is important to realize that sport is an integral part of the life of a nation.

Sport can be a catalyst for economic development. It is important that we collectively identify the problem areas in our schools that impact negatively on the development of sport, and that we put in place strategies to resuscitate sport in schools.

As government we're prepared to engage in programmes that ensure and create conditions in which our learners can excel in sport. This means providing sports fields, training equipment and facilities and sports equipment.

We have huge social problems in many of our schools, including drug abuse, teenage pregnancy, HIV and AIDS and lack of discipline among learners. Sport is an indispensable means of improving the social fabric of our society, and can make a very real contribution to ensuring our children lead meaningful lives.

We have a duty to revive sport in our schools, and ensure mass participation from our learners. Competitiveness from a young age is healthy, as long as it is nurtured in a positive spirit. Incorporating sports and reviving mass participation in our schools will give renewed opportunities to our learners to remain in school and complete their education.

We must use school sport as a nursery for talent identification and development, which will lead to our learners moving onto higher honours and make us all proud. But in all our work, we are guided by the President's call for partnerships. If indeed we are going to grow and develop our province as a learning home for all our children, we all need to join hands.

Schools cannot operate in a vacuum; they require wider, sustained support from the broader community. We must build dynamic partnerships with the private and social sectors.

If indeed we are going to further open the doors of learning and culture, if indeed we are going to grow and develop our learners, we will need the energy and the efforts of people like yourself, to make this a reality.

We believe that this is essential because sport in education is an important vehicle for building a transformed, non-racial, non-sexist society, united in diversity.

The benefits of sport are for all to see. Team work builds confidence and comradeship on the sport field and in the classroom. Competition improves the mind and body and brings out the best in people. Learning rules is a virtue in itself, because you will discover that we need rules to live by and that we cannot live as isolated units without rules. It is difficult to play sport without keeping to the rules. And exertion is a good in itself – a healthy mind in a healthy body.

Sport is for everyone. Our learners can all enjoy the physical exertion and they can benefit from the excitement that sport brings.

It is also critical to note that sport is also for those with disabilities. Our disabled athletes have set new standards. We need to take advantage of the many benefits that physical education and sport can give to children.

We should recognize and emphasize the crucial role of sport and physical education in the lives and development of women and girls. We should sturdily encourage their participation and success.

We have a responsibility to provide learners with the opportunities to participate in school sport, to provide the facilities and equipment, and to provide educators with the necessary skills to facilitate the successful implementation of school sport.

Ladies and Gentlemen: it is imperative that we emphasize the role played by sport in the intellectual development of a learner and, the subsequent advantages it has in his or her academic performance. We therefore need to ensure that sport becomes an integral part of a learner's activities in school if we are to ensure improvement in academic performance in our schools.

While we recognize that the provision of sport equipment and infrastructure is of paramount importance, we also believe it is necessary to focus firmly on the management and administration of sport and recreation. The establishment of the Free State Sport Confederation and lately, the Free State School Sport Controlling Body, is geared towards this goal of ensuring proper management and administration of various sporting codes at all levels in the province. Leadership is necessary and quality leadership has to be provided to give direction and ensure unity of purpose in any aspect of life.

I wish to applaud the Motsepe Foundation, Sanlam and other sponsors for initiating and supporting this tournament. It is our wish that through initiatives such as this one we can identify and develop more talent in the sports fraternity. Let me conclude by once again welcoming all participants and their mentors to the Sanlam Kay Motsepe Soccer tournament. I wish all of you a pleasant stay in our province and I hope that all the players will maintain a high standard of professionalism and sportsmanship during the tournament.

I thank you!