

SPEECH OF THE FREE STATE MEC FOR SPORT, ARTS, CULTURE AND RECREATION, MR DAN KGOHULE, ON THE OCCASION OF THE MOTLALEPULA NTSALA SOCCER TOURNAMENT, FICKSBURG

21 May 2011

Programme director
Honoured guests
Ladies and gentlemen
Comrades

The Motlalepula Ntsala Soccer Tournament is held to pay homage to the life of a young, talented and aspirant soccer player. Indeed the passing of Motlalepula Ntsala, who was a Grade 11 learner at the Boitumelo Secondary School here in Meqheleng, Ficksburg, was unexpected and tragic. The events that transpired on the fateful day of 19 February 2010 during the 32 Schools Mini World Cup soccer matches caught us all by surprise.

Needless to say, both teams displayed unsurpassed commitment and talent during that day. The youngsters were motivated and displayed a high standard of skills until the accident that involved Motlalepula and another player. As a department we have conveyed our sincerest condolences to the family, friends as well as the educators and learners at Boitumelo Secondary. We hope that the bereaved have had time to comprehend and make peace with the loss of Motlalepula. We hope that the success and achievements that he accomplished during his time with us will inspire his peers that will take part in this tournament held in his honour.

When we hosted the 32 Schools Mini World Cup tournament early in 2010, we did so to invoke a sense of enthusiasm amongst young and aspirant soccer players ahead of the main 2010 FIFA Soccer World Cup.

I have said before that this tournament presented us, as province, with an opportunity to showcase the excellent talent that we have in our schools and it also provided a platform for young and aspiring sports athletes to hone their skills.

My department takes the development of sports very seriously. We have made it our mission to ensure that sports development begins at school level. This will enable us to identify and groom young talent while presenting an opportunity for young athletes to take part in competitive sports tournaments provincially and nationally. We should recognise and emphasise the crucial role of sport and physical education in the lives and development of young people and we have to sturdily encourage their participation and success.

The department recognises that we have a responsibility to provide learners with the opportunities to participate in school sport, to provide the necessary facilities and equipment and to provide educators with the necessary skills to facilitate the successful implementation of sports in our schools. It is also important to note that sport is also for those young people with disabilities. Our professional disabled athletes have set new standards in different sport codes internationally. We need to take advantage of many benefits that physical education and sport can give to children with disabilities.

I should emphasise 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.

Let me take this opportunity to thank and commend everyone who is involved in the Motlalepula Ntsala Soccer Tournament for their commitment and passion for the game. I hope that together we will be able to find ways of ensuring that the tournament becomes an annual event in honour of the life of Motlalepula. To the Ntsala family, we thank you for allowing us to keep the memory of Motlalepula alive by hosting this tournament.

I wish all participants in this tournament all the best. Remember to maintain a high level of professionalism and brotherhood both on and off the field.

Good luck!