

SPEECH OF THE FREE STATE MEC FOR SPORT, ARTS, CULTURE AND RECREATION, MR DAN KGOHULE, ON THE OCCASION OF THE HAND-OVER CEREMONY OF THE MULTI-PURPOSE SPORT COURT

4 June 2011

Programme director
Honourable Minister, Mr Fikile Mbalula
Honoured guests
Ladies and gentlemen
Comrades

I wish to thank you all for being here today as we hand over the first Multi Purpose Sports Court (MUNMAN) to the community of Vredefort. This ceremony takes place against the backdrop of the launch of the inaugural people with disability games in the Free State as well as the opening of the Metsimaholo Local Talent Development Centre in Sasolburg.

For too long the identification, development and nurturing of young sports athletes was a privilege that was afforded to a select few during the previous dispensation. Our present government realises the importance of sports as a key factor in ensuring nation building and social cohesion.

We know that to produce excellent sports athletes takes years of training and guidance and that talented athletes should be identified from an early age.

Our concern as a department is that many young people in our communities are not able to develop their talents be it in sports, the arts, education or any other field because there are no programmes in place to identify and nurture them. This occasion today is a progressive initiative to ensure that talented athletes are offered an opportunity to develop their talents and therefore excel in whatever sports activities they are involved in.

Through community sports my department continues to ensure that mass participation in sports penetrates every corner of our communities. We have committed ourselves to build on the positive outcomes realised in the last financial year. We have been able to introduce a new strategy for sport and recreation in all 82 towns in the province.

The department in association with relevant stakeholders was able to establish six Recreational Sport Leagues in all towns of the province from town level, municipality level, and district level culminating in the provincial OR Tambo tournament which involved football, netball, volleyball, rugby, table tennis and basket ball recreational leagues. I am also pleased that we have been able to train and appoint 246 sport and recreation coordinators to assist with the development and promotion of sport activities across the Free State.

As part of our efforts to ensure access to sports facilities for our communities we have erected five MUNMAN multi-purpose courts in Van Stadensrus, Petrus Steyn, Heilbron, Luckhoff and Vredefort. These facilities allow for a number of different sporting codes to be played simultaneously. Other areas in the province where these facilities will be rolled out are: Diyatalawa, Makgolokweng and Tweeling.

This hand-over ceremony of this MUNMAN facility paves the way for our vision of encouraging all people in our communities to actively take part in different sport and recreational activities. We are also mindful of the plight of the disabled sport athletes. It is within this context that we will support the annual people with disability games.

We have a responsibility to provide disabled athletes with the opportunities to participate in sport, to provide the facilities and equipment, and to provide their coaches and mentors with the necessary skills to facilitate the successful implementation of our disabled sport programme.

I have no doubt that if we are to follow this kind of an approach and do sport and recreation the right way this time around, the Free State will not lag behind in terms of medal tallies at various sporting tournaments.

I wish to urge the community in Vredefort to value and cherish this facility. We are confident that this initiative will enable to produce future sports legends and help us to support the aspirations of young and talented sport athletes.

I thank you.