

SPEECH OF THE FREE STATE MEC FOR SPORT, ARTS, CULTURE AND RECREATION, MR DAN KGOHULE, ON THE OCCASION OF THE LAUNCH OF THE 32 SCHOOLS MINI 2010 WORLD CUP, WELKOM

16 October 2009

Programme Director
Honourable Premier
Colleagues in the Executive Council
Mayors and councillors
Phakisa Board Members
Heads of department and municipal managers
Honoured guests
Ladies and gentlemen
Comrades

Our readiness for the 2010 FIFA World Cup as a province has been tested on a number of occasions. Through the 2009 FIFA Confederation Cup matches hosted in the province as well as the public viewing areas that were hosted during the cup we have been able to test and prove our readiness for the 2010 FIFA World Cup.

Last week we hosted what the Premier has referred to as the cultural pilgrimage in his State of the Province Address, MACUFE. Beyond any shadow of doubt MACUFE 2009 was a cultural pilgrimage which brought people from all walks of life together as they descended into the Free State and Mangaung particularly. MACUFE 2009, which was hailed as an enormous success by various media houses and stakeholders, has also served as an important platform for the testing of our readiness for 2010.

I must stress that, more than any other event MACUFE serves as a best suited event for that purpose since it combines the elements of cultural entertainment as well as soccer, which is what 2010 will be about. While we will be staging this soccer tournament we will also be expected to showcase our cultural and artistic identities and talents.

MACUFE, during its 2009 and previous years' editions, has done just that. We need to sustain this momentum by building on the lessons learnt from this and other events.

Programme Director, comrades, ladies and gentlemen, 2010 FIFA World Cup should indeed also be about young people and learners. This tournament should also be about communicating positive messages to young people of our country and province. Whilst I do not agree with the sentiment that says today's youth constitute the lost generation, undoubtedly there are enormous challenges that confront our society as regard the youth and learners. As government we are called upon to develop and implement targeted programmes and projects that will speak to youth development in our quest to transform and build our country.

Our failure to do so will indeed create a fertile ground for the so-called the lost generation. If we are to conduct a closer inspection of the violent protests that from time to time break in some parts of our country we will see that young people are at the centre of such protests.

The social ills such as alcohol and drug abuse, teenage pregnancies, violent crimes and so on, can be addressed through intensive engagement of young people in creative and productive activities into which their energies must be channelled. I do not have any doubt that the 32 Schools Mini 2010

World Cup programme would serve as one such programme that will actively engage our youth and learners into these productive and creative activities.

We will have to ensure that this programme is sustained beyond 2010 in one form or another. Through our school sport programme and other sport and recreation programmes such as OR Tambo Games, indigenous games and so on we have to keep young people in sport and out of prison, hospitals or mortuaries.

As the Department of Sport, Arts, Culture and Recreation we are confronted by this enormous challenge of having to assist our sister Departments of Social Development, Health as well as Police, Roads and Transport to prevent over-expenditure which will be precipitated by social ills affecting the youth. As the department, with the necessary resources and sufficient allocations, we should be able to assist our society to prevent such social ills by promoting social cohesion, moral regeneration, active and healthy life styles amongst young people and learners.

Through the 32 Schools Mini 2010 World Cup programme and beyond we must keep young people and learners busy and keep them away from idling. As the saying goes, an idle mind is the devils workshop.

I thank you.