

**SPEECH OF THE MEC FOR SPORT, ARTS, CULTURE AND RECREATION, MR DAN KGOTHULE, ON THE OCCASION OF THE FREE STATE SPORT CONFEDERATION LAUNCH AND CELEBRATION OF ATHLETES' ACHIEVEMENTS, BLOEMFONTEIN**

15 January 2010

Programme Director, Mr T.J. Kambule (HOD: Sport, Arts, Culture and Recreation)  
Honourable Minister, Reverend Makhenkesi Stofile  
Mayors and Councillors present  
Comrade Julius Malema, President of the ANC Youth League  
Members of the National Task Team  
Representatives of sport federations  
Our beloved golden girl, Caster Semenya  
Athletes present here  
Honoured guests  
Members of the media  
Ladies and gentlemen  
Comrades

Today we are gathered here in Mangaung for two objectives combined into one occasion - the launch of the Free State Sport Federation as well as the celebration of our athletes who have performed well at various levels. These two objectives are cardinal in our quest to advance sport and recreation in our Province and country. The fact that this function is hosted at once intertwining these two objectives does not mean that anyone of the two, or both, is less important. It is our firm view that the simultaneous launch of a sport structure that will be looking after the interests of athletes, on the one hand, and celebrating the achievements of the very same athletes, on the other hand is not contradictory but a necessary symbiosis in the advancement of sport and recreation in our land.

Programme director, we meet at an interesting time when our country has registered a mark on the global arena of sport competitiveness as epitomised by our athletes in various sporting codes. The performance of the Berlin three during the 2009 Olympics is but an expression of who we are as South Africans when it comes to sport and recreation.

We also meet at the time when our country has entered what one will venture out to call the last lap towards the 2010 FIFA World Cup. We meet today about 42 days after the final draw of this tournament has been completed in our country. Our successful staging of this draw, as well as the successful staging of the 2009 FIFA Confederation Cup, has proved our organisational ability beyond any shadow of doubt. Our ability to stage the FIFA World Cup has been in doubt from the word go. Afro pessimists never gave us a chance. As we speak now our readiness for this world tournament is beyond doubt.

Ladies and gentlemen, comrades, we have to continue to raise the bar on both the playing field and outside. Let us remember that we hold the flag, not only of our country but also of the rest of the continent. The hopes and aspirations of Africa for success are pinned on us as South Africans. As the Free State province we are today launching the Sport confederation as the controlling and macro structure of sport in the province. We have established this structure which is composed of provincial sport federations; local and district municipality sport councils; the Free State Academy of Sport; tertiary, school and disabled sport bodies. This is with the primary objective of ensuring proper and well coordinated sport programmes in the Province, good governance and intensified partnership. A strong link between the Department and athletes, whose objective is the promotion of sport and recreation, will be enhanced by this structure.

On the 5th of December 2009 all the stakeholders who are the constituent part of this Federation met to adopt a constitution as well as elect the executive committee. Programme director, we will later introduce this committee as part of the programme of this event. Honoured guests, as part of our effort to enhance sport and recreation in the province, and in keeping with the spirit of partnerships that I alluded to above, may I take this opportunity to announce that the identified priority Sport Federations will receive funding from the department to enable them to forge ahead with sport development in the province. I believe that this funding will go a long way towards addressing the developmental needs of athletes in these various sport federations.

As we honour our athletes at this special occasion I have no doubt that this cream of the crop of athletes who are being honoured today will serve as a beacon of hope to those up and coming athletes who aspire to represent their Province and Country in major national and international tournaments. May I add my voice in congratulating the Berlin three who have done us proud on a global scale during the last Olympics. We value your perseverance and tenacity even in the face of the most severe adversity. Yes the world that we live in is a cruel world. It is the world that is divided in terms of north and south where the south's ability to perform against the north will forever remain in doubt on this side of the revolution. It therefore requires solidarity amongst us and our friends. It requires us to soldier on even in the face of the most severe adversity.

Every victory by us must thus be celebrated and showcased in order to continue to eradicate the seed of doubt that has been planted about our ability.

We would want to sustain and spread this ability to perform on the sporting field. One of such efforts to do so will unfold this afternoon. As part of this launch of the Free State Sport Confederation and Celebration of athletes' achievements our golden girl, Caster Semenya, will conduct clinics at the Mangaung Outdoor Sport Centre. You are all invited to form part of that event. Your presence there will be highly appreciated.

Programme director; let me take this opportunity to present the honourable Minister of Sport and Recreation, Comrade Makhenkesi Stofile. We are delighted for his presence at this occasion. As the custodian of sport and recreation nationally we continue to admire his resilience and his steadfastness in the fight for justice in sport globally.

Minister Stofile does not need any introduction. However let me just remind you in just few words who this man is.

Currently, Comrade Stofile occupies a position of Minister of Sport and Recreation of the Republic of South Africa. He has been in this position since 29 April 2004. This speaks volumes about his abilities in this portfolio. He is also the chairperson of the African National Congress (ANC) in the Eastern Cape and has been in this position since 1996.

He was:

- Machine operator at textile factory in Port Elizabeth (1965 -1968).
- Part time tutor with African Independent Churches Association Seminary (1971- 1972).
- Senior lecturer in Theology and Philosophy of Religion at University of Fort Hare (1973 - 1986).
- Minister of the Presbyterian Church of South Africa since 1975.
- Led successful protests and prevented a planned tour by New Zealand's All Blacks in 1984.
- He was convicted under the then Ciskeian Internal Security Act and subsequently sentenced to 11 years imprisonment (1987).

- Senior lecturer in Theology and Acting Head of the department at University of Trankei (1991).
- Regional Secretary and member of the National Executive Committee of UDF (1983 - 1986).
- Sports Administrator specialising in rugby, cricket and netball administration (1965 - 1994).
- Coach of rugby specialising in junior and club rugby (1974 -1994).
- Member of various boards and Councils of(NGOs), Technikons and Universities since 1991.
- Regional Chairperson of the African National Congress (ANC) (1990 - 1991).
- Chairperson: Area Political Committee (Military Combat Work of the ANC) (1979 - 1986)
- Member of the ANC internal Leadership core (1990 - 1991).
- Member of the Governing Council of the University of Fort Hare since 1991.
- Director of Public Relations and Development of the University of Fort Hare (1992 - 1994).
- Member of Parliament (1994 - 1996).
- Treasurer General of the ANC ( 1995 - 1997).
- Premier of the Eastern Cape (1997 - 2004).
- Member of the National Executive Committee (NEC) of the ANC since 1990.

Indeed Comrade Stofile is the son of the soil who was baptized, not only in the Holy Spirit, but also in the revolutionary traditions of the liberation struggle and the African National Congress.

Ladies and gentlemen, comrades, please welcome honourable Minister Makhenkesi Stofile.

I thank you.