



basic education

Department:
Basic Education
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Address by the Minister of Basic Education, Mrs Angie Motshekga, MP, at the Nedbank Cup Multipurpose Sports Court Handover Event

03 September 2021

Programme Director

Minister of Sport, Arts and Culture: Honourable Minister Nathi Mthethwa

MEC of Limpopo Education: Honourable Ms Polly Boshielo

MEC of Limpopo Sport, Arts and Culture: Ms Thandi Moraka

PSL Chairperson: Dr Irvin Khoza

Marumo Gallants FC Chairman: Mr Abram Sello

Nedbank Group Executive: Ms Khensani Nobanda

Local Inkosi & Traditional Authority and councillors

School Governing Body Chairperson and Members

Principal and Teachers

Distinguished Guests

It gives me great pleasure to have this opportunity to address this august occasion - the first-of-its-kind handover of the multipurpose sports court as an offshoot of the annual Nedbank Cup.

It is ke yona (the one) time, indeed!

I am advised that today's event is courtesy of a tripartite partnership of the Professional Soccer League of South Africa (PSL), Nedbank and the winners of the 2021 Nedbank Cup, Marumo Gallants.

The innovative rules of the 2021 Nedbank Cup allow the winning team to select a school within their municipal borders to receive a multipurpose sports court.

As the basic education sector and Government as a whole, we commend this partnership that seeks to uplift our communities.

This initiative will undoubtedly contribute towards the advancement of school sport as envisioned in the Memorandum of Understanding with the Department of Sport, Arts and Culture led by my colleague, Honourable Minister Nathi Mthethwa.

Programme Director, the development of mass sports and its place in modern society is a topical issue of great importance amongst academics and ordinary people alike.

The popularisation of physical culture, sports and a healthy lifestyle play a vital role in society in any country.

We are convinced that mass participation in sport is the basis of professional sport, the condition of physical perfection of the younger generations.

Our future Olympics gold medalists will be nurtured here.

Professional sport allows, by identifying unique opportunities and abilities of each person in a particular area of sports activity (through increased specialisation and individualisation of the training process), to achieve maximum, record sporting results.

In professional sports, winning the official international, national, and other sporting events create a moral incentive to develop mass sports.

In this regard, we acknowledge and commend the winning athletes in various sporting codes in the recent 2021 Olympics and Paralympic Games.

We have excellent ambassadors of our country that no tourism product can ever achieve in the winning Olympic athletes.

Programme Director, we must admit that we relegated sport matters to professional sporting bodies over the years.

I am glad to say through trial and error, that is beginning to change.

Through sports facilities build programme and partnerships like these, we intend to reclaim the importance of sport both as a societal issue and an educational tool within a developmental state.

Speaking about the role of sport in modern society, researchers argue that sport is a continuous social experiment in which mankind showcases potential, accumulating and improving human capital, expanding its potential.

Sports - by performing developmental, educational, patriotic, communicative functions, integrating and coordinating individuals and social groups, helps the nation develop.

Therefore, it is not surprising that scientists have made an assertion that the sport system is directly connected with the subsystems of health, science, culture, upbringing, and education.

Sport has a significant impact on the socio-economic and political processes of any modern society.

In fact, just over a century ago, the American philosopher William James called for the creation of a “moral equivalent of war”: the search for something – other than war – that would enhance a person’s self-discipline, hardiness and self-sacrifice.

No wonder the world-leading thought leader Dr Keith Suter thinks that sport now performs that role, the “moral equivalent of war” – something that enhances self-discipline, hardiness and self-sacrifice without inflicting injury to anyone.

Programme Director, it was within this context that the governing party the ANC has long held a belief sport is a crucial tool for social transformation and social cohesion.

Hence, the ANC resolved that the sport funding model in our country needs to be completely overhauled so that sports can meet its mandate, i.e. creation of the common good and the strengthening of social cohesion within society.

The most exciting standing ANC resolution called for the ring-fencing of 15% of the Municipal Infrastructure Grant (MIG) to fund the building and maintenance of sports facilities in all municipalities.

Sadly, we are yet to implement these ground-breaking ideas, but we are getting there.

Programme Director, we have entered a paradigm shift.

We have realised that sport is, in fact, an integral part of a child's development.

In this regard, we have a Memorandum of Understanding with the Ministry of Sport, Arts and Culture to implement an Integrated School Sport Framework.

This framework aims to promote mass participation in school sport and physical activities that are aimed at enriching the curriculum.

We believe that sports and recreation play an essential role in the holistic development of a child.

Dr Wanda Draper, in her seminal work, *Your Child is Smarter than You Think*, sums up the new approach to children holistic development.

She puts it thus:

“You can’t send the head to school and leave the body at home—the whole child goes to school, the whole child lives at home, and the whole child participates in the world.”

We are thus unambiguous in our new approach that our children and young people need to be developed holistically.

This means that their schools must better prepare them to read, write, count, and think critically.

Furthermore, we recognise the value of school sport and physical education to provide the foundations necessary for the holistic development of our learners.

School sport is the bedrock of sports in the country.

It is a bulwark against rising levels of social ills.

To this effect, we have taken a conscious decision to encourage learners to participate in various sports activities.

Participation in sport has many important benefits.

Sport can unite people, build families and encourage communities.

Sport provides challenges and adventures, fills vacuums and gives meaning and a sense of purpose to people's lives.

Participation, irrespective of the level at which it occurs, can engender self-respect, esteem, confidence and leadership abilities.

Sport can also be used to reduce the social stigma experienced by marginalised groups, including people with disabilities and people living with HIV and AIDS.

Engaging these individuals to participate in sport activities with other community members creates a shared space and experience that helps break down stigma.

Sport activity enables people to focus on what they have in common.

This is an important step in enhancing these individuals' self-concept and emotional health.

Hence, sport can overcome social barriers and empower individuals by helping to reduce social exclusion and promote lifelong learning.

Lack of physical activity by our learners deprives them of the crucial attributes I have highlighted above.

Programme Director, I glanced over a discussion paper developed by the McKinsey Global Institute - the business and economics research arm of global management consulting firm McKinsey and Company.

The paper discusses the nexus between sport and health.

It found that overweight or obese people now outnumber undernourished by nearly two and half times.

This report states that more than 2.1-billion people worldwide – nearly 30% of the global population – are overweight or obese.

The Heart and Stroke Foundation South Africa said recently, “One of the most worrying trends is the increase in overweight or obese children.”

The 2013 South African National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (SANHANES-1) found that the percentage of South African children between two and five years old who have significantly

more body fat than what is deemed healthy has increased from 10.6% to 18.2% over the past decade.

This report, Ladies and Gentlemen, was later collaborated by the Healthy Active Kids Report Card of 2014, which stated that overall, we are not doing nearly enough to help our children eat better and exercise more.

The Report Card says:

- Children spend more and more time in front of screens large and small
- Fast food and soft drink consumption is increasing at alarming rates
- Few school tuckshops offer healthier choices
- Obesity rates are up.

From these reports and statistics, it is evident that we need to hasten the implementation of our approach to child development beyond just being a new mantra.

This is, of course, in a bid to stop the rot of obesity and encourage a higher level of physical activity.

In conclusion, participation in sport indeed has many important benefits.

Sport can unite people, build families, encourage communities and allow for such a cheerful mass gathering, Covid-19 protocols notwithstanding.

Physical exercise is good for the balance between the mind, body and spirit.

Furthermore, team sports are good platforms for learning accountability, dedication and leadership, among many other traits.

Putting it all together by playing sport is a winning combination.

A special thanks also go to our partners and stakeholders.

We commend Marumo Gallants for choosing this school.

We thank the PSL under the visionary leadership of Dr Khoza for investing its intellectual labour for the benefit of society.

We are enamoured by the vision of Nedbank to help unlock the potential of our young people through sport.

Your support and contribution to the School Sports Programme are highly appreciated.

I thank you.