

**Keynote address by Mr OE Mongale Deputy Director General for
North West Public Works at the National Sport Tournament Prize
Giving and Closing Gala Dinner held at the Mmabatho Convention
Centre on Saturday 7 October 2006**

Programme Director

Members of the National Sports Committee

Umpires and referees from SAFA North West

Distinguished guests

Colleagues

The Annual National Sports Tournament of the Departments of Public Works and Transport and Roads was launched two years ago in Kwa Zulu-Natal. Last year Western Cape hosted the tournament.

The North West Department of Public Works was honoured to jointly with the Department of Transport, Roads and Community Safety host this year's tournament.

Programme Director, the location of sports in the work place is in two tiers, in other provinces employee sports is coordinated by the employee wellness programme, while in others it is separately coordinated by a sports committee.

In 2006, a national committee was selected to organise the tournament and ensure that policies are drafted in order to locate sport within a regulated environment.

The North West Department of Public Works is motivated by the theme; “sports creating unity in the work environment” because it seeks to inspire wellness amongst all civil service officials.

According to the National Department of Sport and Recreation White Paper; “Sport may be defined as any activity that requires a significant level of physical involvement and in which participants engage in either a structured or unstructured environment, for the purpose of declaring a winner, though not solely so; or purely for relaxation, personal satisfaction, physical health, emotional growth and development.”

The above definition endorses government's employee assistance programme of wellness, which has core objectives that are implemented to:

- Prevent potential psychological and social problems that could negatively affect job performance

- To promote physical and psychological well being

- Reduce absenteeism

- Increase productivity

- Reduced turnover of staff

- Higher employee credibility

In recent years, sport has become a metaphor for life. We talk about leveling the playing field, competing for our place, playing by the rules and being good sports.

Through sport, we learn that hard work is rewarded with results, but also that as some of you would have experienced over the three days, the best team doesn't always win. All of us would also have

experienced that although individual brilliance is essential, high performing teams are stronger than any lone star.

Sport is as a channel for our competitive instincts and an outlet for our sense of pride and identity. In a very real sense, it is a civilized form of war as it allows rival factions to do battle. But the only casualties are bruised egos and wounded prides. Although the different teams fought viciously, this annual tournament remain an instrument of friendship that brings every level of management and employees together for a fun and promotes fitness, health and a sense of pride and achievement.

After Months and weeks of pushing the frontiers of what is physically and mentally possible, the players through dedication and training fine tuned their bodies and honed their skills for us to witness spectacular feats of human accomplishment over the past three days. All of the participants and the teams indeed deserve a round of applause for their effort, dedication and participation.

After three days of stiff and tough competition we are gathered here this evening to recognise and celebrate those teams and individual participants who withstood the pressure and excelled throughout the tournament.

We congratulate the organising committee for including indigenous game in the tournament. These games are the root of our culture and are pivotal in the preservation of traditional recreation. The participation of women in the women's soccer tournament is also an indication that we are moving in the right direction. Our contribution is immense to diversifying the landscape of the 2010 dream.

The department in recognising that 80% of an employee's day is spent in the work place is developing a gym as part of the employee wellness programme. The gym is to be well equipped and accessed by employees after working hours to ensure that we promote healthy well-being of employees.

Sports programmes for the disabled will also unfold as part of integration in the workplace. The policy developments for disability and wellness, emanates from a consultative forum that the department held with disabled employees on the 1st of September this year. Changes that are to be implemented will create accessible sports for disabled people such as wheel chair dance and basketball and athletics.

We sincerely hope that together with the Department of Transport, Roads and Community Safety, the Department of Public Works met the expectations of the teams as a host.

In conclusion let me remind colleagues that as we strive to achieve the state of effortless performance in our lives, sport gives us the clues to making it happen. As we return to our work stations recharged, we have to work hard, have a positive mental attitude, listen to our intuition, respect the rules, immerse ourselves with the passion to serve our people and love what we do.

Ke a leboga.

