

2008-11-19: The inauguration of Orlando Stadium

19 November 2008

Media statement by the acting Executive Mayor of Johannesburg, Councillor Nandi Mayathula-Khoza, on the inauguration of Orlando Stadium, Orlando Stadium, Soweto - Johannesburg

The media

Ladies and Gentleman

On 30 July 2008 the Executive Mayor Clr. Amos Masondo announced that he will be opening the Orlando Stadium on 23 November 2008 and this is happening this week - end.

I am excited to inform you that the City has completed the rebuilding of Orlando Stadium that will be used as one of the training venues for the 2010 FIFA Soccer World Cup. The Executive Mayor will mark this historic milestone with an inaugural ceremony on 22 November 2008. The full programme will be held over 3 days with the following PSL matches being played at the stadium.

Orlando Pirates vs. Thanda Royal Zulu

22 November 2008

Moroka Swallows vs. Platinum Stars

23 November 2008

Kaiser Chiefs vs. Golden Arrows

26 November 2008

Curtain raiser - Pirates & Swallows Legends versus Chiefs & Sundowns Legends.

In addition, we will also be entertained by the following groups:

- Rev Vukile Mehana
- Soweto Gospel Choir and Imilonji kaNtu
- Zulu Boy
- Arthur
- Alaska, Mandoza

Every passing day brings us another step closer to that much anticipated first whistle that will start the 2010 FIFA World Cup at Soccer City, in the Nasrec Precinct. Perhaps it is appropriate to indicate that today, it is a mere five hundred and sixty eight (568) days before the first ball is kicked.

For almost 40 years, the Orlando grounds were sacred to South African soccer, only to be replaced by the gigantic concrete bowl of FNB Stadium-the Cathedral of African soccer.

On the 3rd of May 2006, a day after Orlando Stadium celebrated its 47th anniversary we handed her - the 'old lady' to the contractors. On that day we marked the City of Johannesburg's ground-breaking movement towards the first 2010 project to be initiated by

the City.

On the 2nd of May 2008, Orlando Stadium celebrated its 49th anniversary. During the Confederations Cup in 2009, Orlando Stadium will be 50 years old.

When we announced that Orlando Stadium will be demolished and reconstructed, we had a vision of what the new Stadium would look like and what it would mean to the community. This facility is the biggest and the most sophisticated stadium in this residential area. Orlando Stadium, before its construction used to sit plus or minus 24 000 people and by the time this new facility is complete it will accommodate more than 40 000 people.

This project was conceptualised in such a way that it took into account our commitment to use the pressure of 2010 FIFA World Cup to ensure that a lasting legacy is left behind for the benefit of the residents of Johannesburg. When the soccer spectacle has come and gone there must be something of value that is there for all to see and point at.

What we will be doing this coming week – end and following week (22- 26 November 2008) is the implementation of this vision. What you will see is a state of the art stadium that meets all FIFA and PSL standards and requirements.

As per our commitment in 2006, that we will make this facility a multi-purpose stadium, in addition to the technical compliance, we also have the following facilities:

- A multi-purpose stadium for soccer, rugby, gatherings and concerts amongst others.
- Hospitality: plus or minus 120 suites (dependent on size)
- Conference facilities
- Meeting Rooms
- Weddings, Matric Dances and similar functions
- Gymnasium
- Fan shop
- Offices
- Video Screens
- Security facilities including CCTV cameras that extend into the precinct

The stadium is being rebuilt at a cost of R280 million. Twenty five percent (25%) of this amount came from Municipal Infrastructure Grant and seventy five (75%) percent from the City's budget.

This Stadium is surrounded by a quality precinct, which will ensure free and safe movement of spectators and enhance the enjoyable experience that will be created by the stadium facilities.

In addition to the stadium and precinct, well-lit footways from Orlando and Mamlankunzi stations have been provided. Surveillance cameras are to be extended to these footways to improve spectator safety.

The mood of 2010 is one of excitement and vibrancy and as residents, investors and the media we all need to play our part in nurturing this development and make it a self - sustainable facility for our children.

The community at large has benefited from this development through the jobs that has been created. To date 2 205 jobs has been created and training provided in the following fields: carpentry, bricklaying, plastering and painting.

Orlando Stadium becomes the home of football in Soweto and re-establish itself as the heart of community activities in the area.

Orlando Stadiums is completed on time, within budget and without compromising quality as per our commitment.

We will be witnessing a fulfillment of that promise we set ourselves to use the pressure presented by hosting the world cup to accelerate our own development project. We have started a journey to realise the lasting legacy that we promised to realise long after the 2010 FIFA World Cup spectators have come and gone.

Orlando Stadium represents a change in Soweto's skyline. This Stadium will be a reference point for all tourist and soccer lovers as a legacy for 2010.

In conclusion, let me re-emphasise that for us in the City, we see this project as part of a bigger programme of restoring the dignity of our people. We have spared no amount of craftsmanship in ensuring that quality is not compromised.

The inauguration of the stadium will indeed mark a significant moment in the history and future of soccer.

Thank you

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