

34th Anniversary of June 16 1976 commemoration

16 June 2010

Welcome speech by the Executive Mayor of Johannesburg, Councillor Amos Masondo, on the occasion of the 34th Anniversary of June 16 1976 commemoration and the wreath laying ceremony, Hector Pieterse Museum and Memorial, Orlando West, Soweto - Johannesburg

Programme Director and
MMC for Community Development: Cllr Bafana Sithole
Premier Nomvula Mokonyane
The Executive Mayor of Tswane: Dr Gwen Ramokgopa
MEC for Infrastructure and Development: Ms Faith Mazibuko
Speaker of Council: Cllr Nkele Ntingane
Chief Whip of Council: Cllr Nonceba Molwele
Members of the Mayoral Committee
Fellow Councillors
City Manager: Mavela Dlamini
SAFA President: Kirsten Nematandani
Local Organising Committee CEO: Danny Jordaan
The June 16 Foundation
The Family Representatives
The National Youth Development Agency
Leaders of Political Parties
Leaders of various Civil Society Organisations
The Greater Soweto Community
Comrades and Friends

Programme Director, I feel very privileged to be part of this occasion – the 34th Anniversary of June 16, 1976 student uprisings and the celebration of National Youth Day. On behalf of the City of Johannesburg, all our residents and citizens, please allow me to extend a word of welcome to all of you.

We will do well to remember what the President of the ANC, OR Tambo, said: "a nation that does not nurture its youth, does not deserve its future". We all have a responsibility to know where we come from. If we do, we can have a better understanding not only of the road that we have traveled thus far, we can indeed have a better grasp of where we are today. And if we know where we are today, there is a greater possibility of forecasting more accurately and of shaping our own future. If the future is a place where our youth is going to spend most of the time, then we need to invest in that future. We need to help young people prepare themselves for this better tomorrow.

The 2010 FIFA World Cup is here. We see it in the display of the South African flag across our City and country – in offices, restaurants, shops, schools, houses, on vehicles, literally everywhere. We can feel it. It is here. The World Cup is finally with us.

The 11th of June 2010 has come and gone, and Siphile Tshabalala was able to score that historic and memorable first goal of the World Cup in a match between our own Bafana Bafana and Mexico. Since then, many more games have been played. Many more football stars have shown us and the world what they are capable of doing inside and outside the field of play.

Of course, we will do well to remember, that one of the reasons why we won the bid is because Nelson Mandela in person, engaged in vigorous campaigning for this country to host this biggest sporting event. Of course, we have also said over and over again that South Africa is a mere stage and the African continent, the real host. And we know that the African people across the continent will welcome and embrace every visitor with a warm embrace and a true spirit of Ubuntu and Harambee.

At a moment like this, we should take this opportunity to salute our legends, both those living and those who have since passed on, for playing the beautiful game of football even under the most difficult and trying conditions of apartheid South Africa.

What comes to mind are teams like: Avalon Athletics, Durban Aces, Witbank Black Aces, Blackpool, Moroka Swallows, Pimville United Brothers, Orlando Pirates, Kaizers Chiefs, Spa Sporting Club and many others.

What also comes to mind are players like: Kalamazoo Mokone, Difference Mbanya, Chippa Moloi, Bernard Hartze known as "Dancing Shoes", Carlton Moloi, Sugar Ray Xulu, Master Pieces "Modimo Wa Bolo" Moripe, "Maria Maria" Lamula, Johnny Magwegwe Mokoena, Ndoda Venter, Dharam Mohan, Ace Mgedeza, Blessing "Killer" Mgidi and many others. Every African country boasts of similar soccer heroes, legends and experiences. All of these were young people who made huge sacrifices to make the beautiful game of football a reality in our country.

We know that June 16 1976 laid a firm foundation for many different struggles and resistance that led to the 1994 27 April democratic breakthrough. We would have failed the class of 76 if we do not deepen democracy, build a non-sexist and a non-racial society and ensure overall that a more prosperous country characterised by a more humane society is brought into being.

Our memories of the heroes and heroines of June 16 will remain embedded in our hearts and minds forever. June 16 will always be celebrated as the day, which changed the course of history in South Africa. It untied the struggles of the peoples of South Africa and propelled the struggle to new heights. Let us work together in empowering our youth. History demands it.

In these few words, Programme Director, please allow me to welcome you to Soweto and to the City of Johannesburg.

Ke nako

Thank you.