

**WELCOME SPEECH DELIVERED BY THE EXECUTIVE
MAYOR OF TLOKWE AT THE BANQUET DINNER FOR
THE VODACOM KNOCKOUT CHAMPIONS**

Programme Director

Premier of the North West, Mme Edna Molewa

President of SAFA Dr. Molefi

MEC for Social Development, Mme Nikiwe Mangqu

Executive Mayor of Dr Kenneth Kaunda District Municipality

National Coach, Mr. Joel Santana – a special welcome to our shores

Vodacom Head of Communications

Honoured and Esteemed Guests

Ladies and Gentlemen

On behalf of Tlokwe Municipality it is my pleasure to welcome you all to our city, the city of expertise and sporting excellence. I am not speaking for the Premier, but I am sure she will agree with me when I tell you that you have arrived in the home sports in the North West, the country's hub of sporting expertise.

Just this week our city was hosting sports awards to acknowledge and honour our local sports people who have excelled in various sporting codes in the past year.

Four athletes from those who received the honours will soon be leaving our shores with their fellow countrymen from across the country to represent us in the coming international Olympic games in Beijing.

Again. next week we will be hosting a media launch and a string of meetings in preparation for the SRSA Zone VI youth games that will be played in this city in September – October this year. This is a premier international athletic event involving all the SADC countries as well those in its close vicinity.

Programme Director, I mention these events to demonstrate the commitment of our city to the development of sport as well as ensure that it remains a primary site of engagement in our drive to develop as a community within the broader goal of nation building. No one can deny that sport is one of the critical building blocks in this regard.

The game of soccer is particularly the most closest to the minds and hearts of millions of our people. The very history of soccer is steeped in the history of our nation in the making, its trials and tribulations, its lows and highs, failures and successes. The same story told through its development is the same narration of our nation.

Over the past few weeks, Programme Director, both our city and its neighbours, Matlosane, have been teeming with young soccer stars on the rise as well as prowling scouts who are out on the hunt for these future jewels. I firmly believe that in the process a seed has also been sown in the recesses of the minds of our youth to aspire and to work hard to reach their best of dreams.

Allow me also Programme to express my heartfelt commendation and thanks for the excellent partnership behind these games; i.e. SAFA, Vodacom and Dr. Kaunda District Council for having afforded us the privilege of hosting the games, and thereby contributing in our own humble way in the development of this beautiful game.

This spirit of partnership is the same spirit being displayed at national level as our country slowly trudges along towards the hosting of the ultimate one, the FIFA 2010 World Cup. I firmly believe that this spirit is replicating itself and cascading down to every area of South African life throughout our cities, towns and villages.

And tomorrow, ladies and gentlemen, as we finally crown the winners of the Vodacom Championship, I know that it will also equally be the crowning glory of the success of the partnership forged through co-operation and collaboration prior to and during the course of these games.

There will be no losers but all of us will leave this city a little richer in knowledge, in relational ties and in experience. We all will be winners and champions in the making.

Ladies and gentlemen, I therefore entreat you to seat back, relax and enjoy the hospitality of our city.

I thank you all.