

SPEECH BY THE MEC FOR SPORT, ARTS AND CULTURE, MEC CONSTANCE BELLAH KUPA-MABUZA, AT THE LIMPOPO SCHOOLS SPORT SUMMER GAMES OPENING CEREMONY ON SUNDAY, 04 OCTOBER 2026 @ 08:00 FLORA PARK HIGH SCHOOL

Programme Director,

The Head of the Department of Sport, Arts and Culture, Mme Mokgonyana

Executive Mayors and Councillors; representatives of the Department of Education,

Departmental officials; school principals, educators and coaches,

Parents, guardians, athletes, ladies and gentlemen,

Avuxeni. Ndi Matsheloni. Dumelang! Good morning

Halala Vhembe, Halala, Mopani, Halala Sekhukhune, Halala Waterberg. And Hello the host... Capricorn District...

It is an honour to join you as we officially open the Limpopo Provincial School Sport Summer Games. This occasion is about more than medals: it is an investment in our learners. It is a platform to discover talent and an opportunity to build discipline, teamwork through sport.

In partnership with the Department of Education, we recognise sport as a powerful instrument for development and social cohesion. It brings together learners from different communities and teaches perseverance, responsibility and cooperation.

Programme Director,

These Games strengthen the provincial school sport system. Every champion begins somewhere, and our schools are where talent is first identified and nurtured.

Together with schools and federations, we are mandated to build a clear pathway from the school playground to district, provincial, national and international competition. School sport is not an optional activity; it is central to the holistic development of every learner.

School sport development means to leave no one behind. Whether a learner comes from a rural village, township or urban centre, every child deserves an equal opportunity to participate and develop their talent.

Programme Director

Limpopo has immense sporting potential and has produced athletes who represented the province and the country with distinction. We must widen this pipeline and show young people that sport can lead to scholarships and careers in competition, coaching, administration and officiating.

To our coaches, educators and principals: thank you for creating opportunities and shaping character. To parents and guardians: your sacrifices and encouragement help learners remain committed and pursue their potential.

We encourage our learners compete with respect and discipline with the opponents and remember that character matters as much as the result.

Programme Director

Sport also helps us confront substance abuse, crime, violence and gender-based violence. It gives young people a positive space to build confidence, form friendships and resolve differences constructively. Let us use every sporting platform to promote safe schools, responsible citizenship and respect for women and girls.

We must raise boys who understand respect and girls who know they have every right to participate, lead and excel. No sporting code should be reserved for one gender. Talent has no gender.

To every learner: enjoy the Games, compete fairly, make lasting friendships and represent your school and community with dignity. Whether or not you reach the podium, value the discipline and hard work that brought you here. Keep training, learning and believing in yourself.

The future of Limpopo is represented by the learners gathered here. When we invest in them, we invest in our province. Let us build a Limpopo where every child can participate, every talent can flourish and every young person can dream without limitation.

The Department reaffirms its commitment to sport as a vehicle for youth development, social cohesion, healthy lifestyles and economic opportunity. May these Games celebrate discipline, diversity and the limitless potential of Limpopo's children.

I wish all our young athletes the very best. Play hard, play fair and play with pride.

Ke a leboga. Ndza khensa. Ndi a livhuwa. Thank you.

I declare the games opened. Let the games begin! You are all winners!