

Media Statement by the Executive Mayor of Sedibeng District Municipality, Cllr. Mahole Simon Mofokeng on the occasion of the state of readiness for the Sedibeng 2010 FIFA Soccer World Cup

Friday, 21 May 2010

Introduction;

Programme Director;

Let me first acknowledge the presence of our Executive Mayors from Emfuleni, Lesedi and Midvaal Local Municipalities;

The Members of the Mayoral Committees;

Municipal Managers;

2010 FIFA Soccer World Cup Task Team members; and

You Members of the media

Ke a le dumedisa

Allow me to recognize the role of the media as voices and representatives of society with regards to information dissemination, awareness and education. Thank you for attending this briefing on the state of readiness of our District Municipality and commitment as hosts of both Ivory Coast and Switzerland National Teams in their preparation to participate in the coming historical soccer extravaganza, the 2010 SOCCER WORLD CUP.

I am here like you, filled with the same emotions of joy, excitement and pride that I felt on the 15th of May 2004 when we received the news that our country has been awarded the rights to host the 2010 FIFA World Cup.

None of us could have imagined the strides we have made in preparing our country for the world's largest, most exciting sporting event after the Olympic Games.

Today marks yet another critical milestone of the great journey pursued by the LOC, government, business bodies and fellow South Africans in ensuring that this 2010 Soccer World

Cup tournament becomes a reality. It is exactly 20 days before the grand opening match at the Soccer City Stadium in Johannesburg.

With these few days left, I can confidently say that Sedibeng is 90-percent ready for the World Cup. Our preparations are on schedule. And as we finalise our preparations, we are mindful of the fact that the World Cup is not only about the 90 minutes spent on the sport field during a game.

It represents an opportunity to speed up growth and development, to market our region, the country and the continent to the world. The World Cup is also about providing a stage to show the very best of the African continent, and to build pride and unity.

The 2010 Task Team members who are here with us are working tirelessly to ensure that these pride and unity is built. As we all know that there will be thousands of visitors from different parts of the world, we had to make sure that we prepare thoroughly for them when it comes to tourism.

Sedibeng, together with its various stakeholders, has been working towards ensuring that the tourism offerings for 2010 are of good quality and sustainable to ensure tourism growth, as well as to ensure that the region is marketed as the destination of choice for spectators and officials during the World Cup.

Awareness has been created amongst accommodation establishments to grade, the opportunity for home owners to offer their homes for alternative accommodation for visitors, entertainment and recreational establishments and tour operators have been encouraged to package tours and recreational activities and all stakeholders will have greater market access for their products.

Packages have been designed by stakeholders to ensure that the quality of leisure activities is of a high-standard for international tourists, but will also ensure that local residents will also be able to take advantage of these offerings. These packages include, Ladies Golf Special, Water Mania, Group Cruises, Bicycle Tours, Horse Cart Tours, Wine Route, Sharpeville Precinct, Peace Negotiation Site and Wine Tasting at Emerald Casino, Shebeen Night Life and the others.

On the accommodation site, our Tourism Department conducted an audit on the graded and non-graded accommodation facilities in the region and the process is ongoing. About 27 establishments in the Sedibeng Region have already signed up with MATCH Hospitality, FIFA's worldwide exclusive rights holder of the Official Hospitality Programme for the 2010 FIFA World Cup South Africa™.

More than 62 establishments have already been graded and a further 86 establishments have been identified for grading. These establishments' details have been submitted for grading.

We have also held talks with homeowners to encourage them to register private homes on the Sedibeng accommodation database to accommodate fans in home stays. Various apartment blocks in Vanderbijlpark, owned by private individuals, will be rented to the supporters for the duration of the World Cup. This process will be administered by a registered property group.

In partnership with the Gauteng Tourism Authority (GTA), we managed to train 50 volunteers who will proudly welcome international sporting fans. These volunteers were selected from the 254 who had registered for the programme. The training took place last month.

STADIUMS

I must say, there has been some disturbing reports about state of readiness of the training grounds especially the George Thabe stadium. Let me allay those fears and assure you that the George Thabe is 95-percent ready for the Ivory Coast team. Water taps, toilets and broken windows have been repaired.

The flood lights have been repaired and are in good working condition. The pitch is in an excellent condition. In fact last week, some of our 2010 Task Team had to welcome a delegate send by the Ivory Coast Team coach to have a look at the pitch.

While at the pitch, one of the delegation's team members' reaction when he was walking around the pitch was and I quote: *"this pitch makes you want to take a ball and kick it all over the field"*. This tells you of the condition it is in now. You will see it yourself during the site visit later today.

Isak Steyl stadium is also 95-percent ready for the Swiss team. The pitch has been marked. Change rooms renovations have been completed. Catching nets and security fence are up. Road markings have been completed and the pavilion painting is almost completed.

Let me also take this opportunity to announce that both stadiums will be handed over to the LOC and FIFA delegation tomorrow the 22nd of May 2010. You are all invited to give coverage to the event.

SAFETY AND SECURITY

Our safety and security risk assessments and disaster management plans are well on track and the 2010 Task Team is prepared for any eventually. Our fire and rescue operational plans for the two base camps, as well as the two primary viewing areas. We are busy finalising those for the secondary viewing areas.

The safety and security team is working with SAPS, Traffic and other role players. The teams are meeting on a weekly basis to ensure maximum planning.

Patrollers will be used to ensure community participation. The patrollers have already been empowered with training and basic skills in Security, Fire Fighting, First Aid, Disaster Management and access control. We are not in a position to divulge more details in relation to safety and security as you all know that most of the information will be confidential for the safety of the two teams.

RECREATION, ENTERTAINMENT AND GAMES

To keep the excitement going before the kick off, together with different stakeholders, we have lined up a number of events as part of our build up programme. The events include the *“FLY THE FLAG - PEOPLE’S BUS”*.

The bus delivers an interactive engagement of teaching the nation to be good hosts, to know the words to the national anthem and sing it with pride, to do the Diski Dance and to fly the flag for football. This event will run from the 26th of May until the 28th of May. The bus will visit

Radipeo Primary School, Boxer Store in Sharpeville, Thabong Shopping Centre in Sebokeng and Ratanda High School.

On the 3rd of June the 2010 FIFA Soccer World Cup Trophy Tour comes to our area. The trophy will be displayed at the Vaal University of Technology. We will ensure that the community is mobilized to be part of the activities. On the 11th of June we will join the rest of the world to witness the opening ceremony of the 2010 FIFA World Cup. Our opening ceremonies will be held at Saul Tsotetsi Sports Complex in Sebokeng and the Constitutional Square in Vereeniging which our two Primary viewing areas (PVA's).

Talking about the PVA's, we have in total 17 Public Viewing Areas (PVA's) within the Sedibeng area which are supported and managed by government. Two of these PVA's will be "Primary" PVA's which implies that they are bigger venues. As I have mentioned, the Primary PVA's will be situated at Saul Tsotetsi Sport Centre in Sebokeng Zone 14 and the other one will be at Constitutional Square in the Vereeniging CBD. These PVA's will have Plasma Screens, stage and sound for entertainment.

Currently it is planned that all the games will be screened at Saul Tsotetsi and approximately half of the games will be screened at Constitutional Square. Supportive programmes and activities will also be staged at these two major venues.

The other 15 PVA's are scattered all over the Sedibeng area and they will be our Secondary Public Viewing Areas. Mostly state owned facilities such as community halls will be used as venues. These venues will have satellite dishes, multipurpose PA systems, roll down screens, projectors and music for entertainment.

The geographical spread of these PVAs was seriously taken into consideration when the venues for the secondary PVA's were identified and that is why one will find these facilities varying from Noordvaal, through Bophelong, Boipatong, Evaton and other places right up to Midvaal and Lesedi Local Municipalities.

The secondary PVA's will be manned on a permanent basis during the World Cup and will be supported with programmes such as 5 a-side soccer matches.

COMMUNITY MOBILIZATION

To ensure that our communities become part of the festivities during the World Cup, we have lined up a series of meetings with our NGO's and NPO's to brief them about our preparations so that the message can be passed to community members.

We have already met with the business sector, our parliamentary constituency offices and a number of pastors. There is a follow up broader meeting of churches next week.

Ladies and gentlemen, let me also mention that we have had meetings with the department of education to request the involvement of schools in the build up programmes and during the World Cup. Learners will be identified from different schools to attend the training sessions of both Ivory Coast and Switzerland teams.

We are still to engage our local football association to assist with the identification of soccer players from different teams who can attend the open training sessions of both teams.

We have also developed a soccer development programme which caters for the coaching clinics for the under 15 players and train the trainer courses for youth coaches. This programme has also been brought in line with the proposal of PSV Eindhoven in the Netherlands. We are planning to engage the teams of Ivory Coast and Switzerland to provide similar clinics.

Conclusion

In closing, I want to quote the words of Mr Joseph S Blatter , the FIFA President, when he said I quote, "We have to trust the Africans' ability to organize the competition. Trust will give them confidence. If they have confidence, they will be better in the future."

As South Africans and Africa, we are really honoured to have such support from FIFA and we are indeed confident that we will deliver the great world sporting event with an African touch.

Africa's time has come – South Africa is ready! Sedibeng is ready.

Ladies and gentlemen of the media, I invite to join me and the Executive Mayors present here as we visit our sports grounds

Feel it, it is here

I thank you.

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