

REMARKS BY THE MINISTER OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT, MS BATHABILE DLAMINI AT THE OPENING CEREMONY OF THE 2011 GOLDEN GAMES, MANGAUNG-FREE STATE PROVINCE

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Programme Director

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Director-General, Mr Vusi Madonsela

Chairperson and Members of the South African Older Persons Forum

Beloved parents and grandparents

It gives me great pleasure to join you here today on this joyous occasion of the official opening ceremony of the 2011 Golden Games under the theme “ Celebrating Active Ageing”. It is fitting that we are gathered here to celebrate the lives and times of our senior citizens here at the historic township of Mangaung, particularly as we prepare the 100 centenary celebrations of the African Nation Congress. In 1912 the people of country gathered here in Mangaung to establish the African National Congress (ANC).

The Centenary is at first and foremost a milestone achievement of the ANC, as a liberation movement. It seeks to celebrate our proud traditions, values and principles that earned our movement an indelible place in the souls and minds of our people and the people of the world. The Centenary reflects the ANC in all its facets and dimensions, for example, mass mobilisation, the underground; armed struggle and international solidarity. The Centenary is an ANC celebration, and therefore seeks to ensure that all structures of the organisation - national, provincial, regional and local - and the Alliance partners, participate fully in the programme and activities of the Centenary.

We are gathered here to emulate the exemplary leadership of the forefathers of our struggle who gathered here in 1912 and committed themselves and future generations of our movement to work towards the elimination of conditions that hinder the fulfillment of the rights of our people, including our older persons who have been through a lifetime of hardships.

It is indeed a distinct pleasure to look out upon this audience and to see so many senior citizens, from different parts of our country participating in the 2011 Golden Games. Your very presence here invests this occasion with special meaning, for you truly represent wisdom and a bridge between our past, present and our future.

I am pleased to note that the Golden Games are growing in stature as the provincial participation and the number of participants in this year's Golden Games has increased significantly. For us the Golden Games are far more than merely a sport festival for older persons. They are a social manifestation of our democratic values. Through the Golden Games, the humanitarian spirit is raised to new heights, and the cause for older persons is promoted amongst all the generations.

I would like to take this opportunity to express my heartfelt gratitude to the organizers, volunteers, coordinators and all participants of the 2011 Golden Games. Without all your support no single department would have been able to pull this together. I would like to take this opportunity to appeal to the business community to assist us with sponsorships to raise the profile of the Golden Games and to enable as many older persons as possible to participate in future Golden Games.

In conclusion, I would like to wish all the participants the best of luck in various sporting codes. Besides the Games, I hope that many of you will form long lasting friendships with each other.

Let the Games begin!

I thank you.
