

Department  
SPORT, ARTS AND CULTURE  
OFFICE of the MEC

## REMARKS BY MEC KEKANA AT THE WOMEN IN SPORT AWARDS MEDIA LAUNCH

03 October 2023

President of Limpopo Sport Confederation, Mr Ally Pole  
SG of the Limpopo Sport Confederation, Puleng Mmotla  
Founder & Chairperson Futballing Girls NPO Moonira Ramathula:  
Chairperson of Adjudication Committee Tshepo Mathabatha:  
HOD for the Department of Sport, Arts, and Culture Mme Daphney Ramokgopa

Ladies and gentlemen,

I am standing here today among pillars of various sporting codes. This is no ordinary media launch, but a launch for greater heights, a launch for gender parity, and a steppingstone towards fair practise and removal of ridiculing stereotypes against women and girls in sport.

Let me take this opportunity to thank the organisers for this massive milestone they are engaged in. It is not a child's play to propel excellence wholistically, and it must have been even more difficult to project the success of women than their male counterparts, that is owed to historic challenges and views on women the society in general, and views men in particular have against women.

I think that it would be prudent for me to visit the remarks by the President General of the ANC OR Tambo, at the concluding session of the Conference of the Women's Section of the ANC, in Luanda in 1981.

"The mobilization of women is the task, not only of women alone, or of men alone, but of all of us, men and women alike, comrades in the struggle. The mobilization of the people into active resistance and struggle for liberation demands the energies of women no less than that of men. A system based on the exploitation of man by man can in no way avoid the exploitation of women by the male member of society. There is no way in which women in general can liberate themselves without fighting to end the exploitation of man by man, both as a concept and as a social system".

These are powerful words when you align them to sport, and the role of sport in further emancipating the historically marginalised gender.

We should understand that when we have women competing in sports, we bring about a sense of empowerment among them, while at the same time, aiding them build confidence in their abilities and break gender stereotypes.

We know that the exceptional women who are nominated for these prestigious awards have gone through great lengths to challenge societal norms, while experiencing personal growth and achievement. We are immensely proud of all these more than capable women. We know that they will be more assertive and confident in society, and can support the fight against discrimination and gender-based violence. Since 1994, the ANC led government has outlawed gender inequality and put multiple measures in place to address all forms of discrimination against women in broader society.

I agree with President Cyril Ramaphosa in one of his weekly releases, “From the Desk of the President”, when he said that “equal pay for work of equal value is one of most fundamental tenets of gender equality. The sporting fraternity is neither exceptional nor is it exempt”.

I lament with the president that we cannot have the notion that female athletes should still earn less than their male counterparts, labelling the act as an affront to our nation’s sportswomen, more so at a time when the achievements of some of our women’ sports teams surpass those of our men’s teams.

We urge sponsors and sporting bodies to direct greater resources to women’ sports. It is only through greater sponsorship and support that women’ sport will be able to grow and attract larger audiences.

Ladies and gentlemen,

The recently published Draft Policy on Women in Sport has identified several barriers to women entering and excelling in sports. The participation of women in sports from a young age is still inadequate, and that is very much owed to the as opportunities and resources that remain imbalanced. The Department of Sport, Arts and Culture has recognised that a lot still need to be done to lure participation of women in sport, and that attraction to sport should follow a systematic and policy level.

Through the Draft Policy, the Minister Zizi Kodwa outlines a series of measures that will promote and support women in sports and sets out programmes that will address the gender disparities that are currently rife in sporting codes and structures.

My department, both here in the province and nationally, led by the Minister, has utilised various instruments including the Grant Framework Conditions and direct dedicated funding, as well as conditional funding as instruments to promote the development of female sport. This is testament in the Department's financial investment in the establishment of a professional football league over 3 years ago, and the exposure on television that has since attracted some sponsorship. More can still be done.

Ladies and gentlemen, as we look forward to celebrating success and achievements of our impeccable women in sport, Gender-based discrimination has no home here! It should be locked out, and never to be allowed in the space through patriarchal personalities that fail to recognise women as their equal. That unwelcomed deed contributes to women falling victim to acts of marginalisation, isolation, and being exposed to violence. Women in sport encounter various forms of discrimination including sexual victimisation. If there is such, I urge fellow sportswomen to report that without delay.

As I conclude, ladies and gentlemen

If school and community sport are not taking place at grass roots level, the children's potential cannot be realised at an early age. We call upon business to work hand in glove with us in the current national mass participation programmes (school sport and community sport), as we aim to produce high levels of activity that is needed to produce a functional sporting system, and combat disease patterns such as obesity associated with sedentary lifestyles.

I congratulate you once more. I wish the organisers well as the day of the awards draw even closer and wish all the nominees well equally.

The nominees should know that they have already won by conquering the view that women are lesser human, and cannot actively participate in sports. You are a bunch of winners, and I am looking forward to the day.  
I thank you.