

Speech by Premier Dr. Phophi Ramathuba at the Dinner to Welcome Kgothatso Montjane

23 July 2024

MEC for Sports, Arts and Culture, Mr. Jerry Maseko,
Polokwane District Municipality Executive Mayor, Cllr Mamedupu Tefo,
City of Polokwane Mayor, Cllr John Makoro Mpe,
Representatives of Sports Bodies,
Honored Guests,
Distinguished Athletes,
Program Director,
And our beloved Kgothatso Montjane,

Good evening.

I am honored to stand before you this evening to extend a heartfelt welcome and immense congratulations to a true daughter of Limpopo, 36 years of age, a daughter of the soil, hailing from Seshego, on the outskirts of Polokwane, Kgothatso Montjane. Today, we gather not only to celebrate her remarkable victory at the Wimbledon Ladies' Wheelchair Doubles title but also to acknowledge the spirit of perseverance, dedication, and excellence that she embodies.

Program Director, Kgothatso, along with her playing partner Yui Kamiji from Japan, triumphed over the formidable Dutch pair, Diede De Groot and Aniek van Koot, with a decisive 6-4, 6-4 win. This outstanding achievement marks Montjane's third overall doubles Grand Slam title and her first Wimbledon title. She has firmly established herself as South Africa's number one in the women's disabled division, earning numerous accolades both locally and internationally.

Kgothatso, your victory is not just a personal triumph but a celebration for the entire province of Limpopo. Your hard work, perseverance, and dedication have paid off, showcasing your exceptional talent and skill. You have made us all proud. We hope this achievement will inspire other young girls, especially from our rural areas, to believe that the sky is the limit.

Program Director, Kgothatso Montjane's success is a great achievement and an inspiration for aspiring athletes, demonstrating that with determination and resilience, anything is possible. It is a testament to the transformative power of sports. When our youth reach professional levels in sports, they not only bring glory to themselves but also to their communities and the entire nation.

Sports can change lives, offering opportunities that might otherwise be out of reach. It instills discipline, fosters teamwork, and encourages a healthy lifestyle, keeping our youth away from negative influences and guiding them towards constructive paths.

The Limpopo government, through the Department of Sports, Arts and Culture, is committed to supporting our athletes, ensuring they have the resources and opportunities they need to succeed. We believe in the importance of sports development as a critical component of our provincial agenda.

As a government, we continue to champion a socially cohesive and active citizenry through sport, arts, culture, and heritage for sustainable economic growth and development.

By investing in sports infrastructure, training programs, and youth development initiatives, we aim to nurture and develop the immense talent within our province. We want to see more of our young people from the rural areas reaching the pinnacles of success, just like Kgothatso. This can be achieved if we go back to basics and allow sport to be a part of our school curriculum.

Program Director, we must always bear in mind that not all of our children will succeed through the academic trail, but some will determine their future through sport. Through sport, many economic doors can be unlocked. It is imperative that all of us support our young people in sport so they can realize their dreams.

To the parents here tonight and those across our province, your support is invaluable. Encouraging your children to participate in sports can open doors to a brighter future. Whether they become professional athletes or simply enjoy the benefits of regular physical activity, the lessons they learn and the experiences they gain will be invaluable. Let us all work together to create an environment where our children can thrive, both in sports and in life.

Kgothatso, your journey is a shining example of what can be achieved with hard work, determination, and support from family and community. We are immensely proud of you and look forward to seeing you continue to achieve greatness. Your story will undoubtedly inspire the next generation of athletes from Limpopo and beyond.

In conclusion, let us all stand and celebrate our shining star, Kgothatso Montjane, and her extraordinary accomplishments. May she continue to shine brightly and inspire us all.

Thank you.