

**WELCOMING SPEECH BY THE HONOURABLE MAYOR OF AMATHOLE DISTRICT MUNICIPALITY, ALDERMAN SAKHUMZI SOMYO, ON THE OCCASION OF THE OPENING OF THE 4<sup>TH</sup> NATIONAL INDIGENOUS GAMES, AT SISA DUKASHE STADIUM [MDANTSANE – EASTERN CAPE] ON 29<sup>TH</sup> AUGUST 2007**

All protocols observed.

It is my pleasure to welcome all of you to the 4<sup>th</sup> National Indigenous Games. We hope and trust that everybody will enjoy both the games and hospitality of our district municipality. We are indeed extremely happy to have been chosen as the host district municipality on behalf of the Eastern Cape Province.

Let us take this opportunity to congratulate the National Department of Sports and Recreation for the very concept of indigenous games which were considered inferior in the past.

We are also rising to honour and salute those who continue to indulge in these games for their continued indulgence foments and promotes such values like ubuntu, communalism and respect, among others. These games were not and should not be about playing *per se* but about putting the society together for the on-going and dynamic observation of these values. So those who take part in these games [players, officials and spectators] are not just players, officials and spectators in the ordinary meanings of these words but cadres who fight for the preservation of societal values.

We understand the National Indigenous Games as intended to contribute to the transformation of the South African society by, among others, helping us achieve the following objectives:-

- To celebrate and promote our rich cultural diversity
- To promote reconciliation and nation-building and

- To change the skewed heritage landscape of our country in order to promote cultural tolerance.

The end-goal of these National Indigenous Games is to create a society that recognizes and values the cultural heritage of all.

Sports Heritage forms part of our Heritage Strategic Plan at Amathole District Municipality. The pertinent objectives of our Heritage Plan are the following:-

- Nation-building
- Social cohesion
- Human values and
- Economic development

Central to both these Indigenous Games and the Amathole Heritage Strategic Plan is the objective of Nation-Building. Given the past divisions that our society has suffered from, it is important that programmes that are intended to undo that undesirable past should indeed be nurtured and valued so that their outcomes can contribute to social upliftment.

On behalf our council and the people of our district we wish you every success and may all the best teams win.

Thank you

