

**OPENING AND WELCOMING SPEECH BY THE EXECUTIVE MAYOR OF
AMATHOLE DISTRICT MUNICIPALITY, ALDERMAN SAKHUMZI SOMYO
ON THE OCASSION OF A MAYORAL FUNCTION TO HOST A DINNER FOR
DIGNITARIES ATTENDING THE LAUNCH OF THE 4th NATIONAL
INDIGENOUS GAMES ON 31st AUGUST 2007**

Programme Director – Councilor Jacobs

The Minister of Sport and Recreation – Rev Dr Stofile

The Minister of Sport of North Korea – Mr Mun Jae Dok and his delegation
MEC, MPLs

Executive Mayors, Mayors and Councilors

Traditional leaders

Civil society organizations

Officials

Honoured guests

Ladies and Gentlemen

I am honoured and priviledged to open the proceedings of this Mayoral Reception for all the dignitaries gracing the launch of the 4th National Indigenous Games in 2007.

We welcome you to this dinner and to the district of Amathole. I understand that some of you arrived yesterday and some this morning and therefore you have already tasted the hospitality of our district and that you will enjoy the games as they begin tomorrow. We are honoured to host these important games and yourselves in particular, in our district, and on behalf of the Eastern Cape Province.

Let us take this opportunity to once again congratulate the Department of Sport and Recreation for initiating and sustaining these National Indigenous games.

This, indeed, is going a long way, among other things, in restoring the dignity of our people, particularly the historically oppressed and marginalized.

The programme of African Renaissance which we consciously chose as a country has got to find expression in the resuscitation of our long-held values which, since time immemorial, used to glue our society together, such as nation-building, communalism, respect etc. To us that is the essence of these games. It is against this background and in this context that we view participants in these games, more than mere players, officials and spectators in the ordinary sense of these words, but as preservers of culture.

At Amathole, we pride ourselves in the depth of preserving heritage and tradition during the colonial times against the wars of dispossession, where our men both young and old used stick-fighting. These games therefore are more than just a cultural expression but at the same a reminder of how tradition was historically put to good use in defense of our humanity and heritage.

In closing, a message we wish to send to all, as participants in these games, whether they are players, officials, spectators or dignitaries, is this:-

“What lies before us and what lies behind us are tiny matters compared to what lies within us.” Oliver Windell Holmes

Good luck to the teams participating in these games – may the best teams win!

I thank you

