

**Special Olympics South Africa
2010 National Summer Games**

OPENING CEREMONY GAMES DECLARATION ADDRESS, 8 SEPTEMBER 2010

Prof Russel Botman, Rector and Vice-chancellor, Stellenbosch University

www.sun.ac.za/university/Management/rektor/toesprake.html

www.sun.ac.za/university/Management/rektor/speeches.html

Goeie naand, almal! Molweni! Good evening, ladies and gentlemen!

Dr Mathews Phosa, chairperson of the Special Olympics SA, members of Special Olympics SA's Board, representatives of Special Olympics Africa, Uganda and Swaziland, coaches, volunteers, family members, supporters, and – most importantly – all the athletes ... from my side, a warm welcome to each of you on this special evening.

It is my privilege to say a few words on behalf of Stellenbosch University. We have a proud history of world-class sport at this institution, including a strong focus on sport for people with disabilities. It is thus an honour for us that the Stellenbosch University Sport Performance Institute (SUSPI) was chosen to host the 2010 National Summer Games of Special Olympics South Africa.

This year, the Special Olympics movement celebrates 42 years of changing the lives of people with intellectual disabilities through sports, and of promoting the idea that each person, regardless of ability, should be considered a valuable member of society.

2010 is also nine years since the famous Special Olympics "Flame of Hope" was lit in South Africa at a ceremony attended by former President Nelson Mandela and the bodybuilder, actor and politician Arnold Schwarzenegger. Hope is such a powerful theme. It allows us to strive for what can be achieved instead of passively accepting things as they seem to be. That is why we have chosen this

theme for Stellenbosch University's HOPE Project, which was launched recently. It is a set of development goals through which we are focusing the activities of the University on helping to make the world a better place for everyone.

While great strides have been made the past four decades, there may still be people who doubt the power of the human spirit to overcome all kinds of limitations and challenges. I am sure that if they watch the talent and determination that will no doubt be on display at these Games the next three days, they will change their minds.

Athletes, we have come here in celebration of you. Your coaches have challenged you; your family, friends and sponsors have supported you; you have trained hard – now it's time to show off your abilities. It's time to do your best, and have a lot of fun in the process!

Atlete, julle maak ons trots, julle maak ons gelukkig, julle stel vir ons 'n voorbeeld. Julle inspireer ons met jul passie en toewyding. Julle wys ons hoe belangrik dit vir 'n mens is om jou volle potensiaal te ontgin. Doen so voort!

In ruil onderneem ons, jul aanhangers en ondersteuners, om die boodskap van gelyke menswaardigheid uit te dra, en om alles in ons vermoë te doen om te verseker dat elke mens elke moontlike geleentheid kry om sy of haar menswees volledig uit te leef.

But that's enough of the speeches. All that remains is to officially declare these Special Olympics South Africa 2010 National Summer Games open. So, as they say in the classics, "Let the Games begin!"