

Opening of mini football field at Lentelus Soccer Centre, Hamandshand Rd, Stellenbosch

Tue. 8 July 2014, 14:00

Welcoming remarks by Prof Leopoldt van Huyssteen, Chief Operating Officer and Acting Rector, Stellenbosch University

Afternoon, everyone and welcome here. A special word of welcome to our distinguished guests:

- Ms Lillianne Ploumen, Minister of Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation of the Kingdom of the Netherlands
- Mr André Haspels, Dutch Ambassador to South Africa
- Ms Bonnie Horbach, Consul-General for the Netherlands in Cape Town
- Mr Johan van Geijn of the Royal Netherlands Football Association
- *Mnr Gerard Nijkamp van "Die Blouvingers", of te wel die Nederlandse sokkerklub PEC Zwolle*
- Ms Jos Dirx of the NGO "Girls & Football SA"
- Mr Dean Lotter, General Manager of Philips Lighting SA
- Ms Miranda Laseroms of Greenfields
- Mr Ashley Kotzin of Forwardzone
- My colleagues from Stellenbosch University, as well as Innovus, our innovation company that has also been tasked with managing football.
- And very importantly, representatives of three local schools closely involved in this initiative – Cloeteville Primary, Pieter Langeveldt Primary and Ikhaya Primary.

Ladies and gentlemen, thank you for joining us. This is a special occasion for us, but also a sad one. Sad, because our Rector and Vice-Chancellor, Prof Russel Botman, passed away unexpectedly on 28 June. But at the same time special because of how much this initiative meant to him.

It is an honour for me to stand in for him. Russel would have been over the moon today, for several reasons. He believed in the power of sport to change lives. He specifically championed the Stellenbosch University Football Programme. One of his priorities was the empowerment of women – starting with the girl child. And environmental sustainability was close to his heart. All of these things come together right here at this soccer field.

So, to all our partners ... thank you for making Russel's dream come true. He famously said "the daughter of the farmworker" should enjoy the same opportunities as "the son of the farm owner". A huge stride in that direction is being taken with this facility – and the associated Girls-and-Football programme. This facility is hope made tangible, because it allows us to promote not only soccer but ultimately human development. As Russel said, we "want to develop soccer skills at grassroots level in various communities in and around Stellenbosch ... and in doing so, we want to see social progress."

Ek kan u verseker dat die Universiteit Stellenbosch alles sal uithaal om die momentum vol te hou. Weereens baie dankie vir almal se bydraes. Ons waardeer dit.

Ten slotte, dames en here ... ons hou duim vas vir Nederland in die halfeind van die Wêreldbeker more-aand! Geniet die res van die program.