

Statement by KZN Health MEC, Dr Sibongiseni Dhlomo congratulates young Proteas on their historic victory over Bangladesh

28 September 2017

TODAY, on the 28th of September 2017, I am so proud to be called a South African. These are moments in our history that make one feel immensely joyful and grateful to have experienced freedom in the true sense of the word.

Fallen heroes in the history of sport are today rejoicing for the victory accomplished in the 1st cricket Test match between the Proteas and Bangladesh in Potchefstroom.

It is overwhelming to see for the first time in the history of South Africa cricket especially in test format, 3 African players in the starting eleven (Themba Bavuma – Batsman, Kagiso Rabada – Bowler, and Andile Phehlukwayo – All-rounder). Because of these players – and indeed the efforts of the team at large – I am proud to be South African today. This milestone will open many doors for future African players to come through.

I would like to wish the team under Captain Faf Du Plessis all the best in this series. Well done to Cricket South Africa and the coach as well as the selectors for making this possible.

This milestone reminds me of one of our fallen heroes Solomon Mahlangu, who said, and I quote: "My blood will nourish the trees that will bear the fruits of Freedom in South Africa."

That time has arrived. Today, it is an honour and a great privilege to say that through cricket – which was once regarded as a sport for rich white people - we are all enjoying the fruits of the selfless sacrifices of people like Solomon.

The wonderful exploits of these players give us hope that even though we may still have challenges in our country, there is hope for a better tomorrow.

Because of what they are achieving at such high level, even children who are underprivileged... children in the dusty streets and nooks and crannies of our country... will be able to dream and start believing that if they work hard, they can also make it at the top.

Their success in sport is not only a benefit to themselves, but to their immediate families and the country as a whole.

It will also give confidence and motivation to other Black children that if Andile Phehlukwayo, Hashim Amla and Keshav Maharaj can do it, I can also try.

Well done coach Ottis Gibson, well done captain Faf Du Plessis for driving and supporting such a vision.

ENDS