Banyana's Caf achievements get high praise

Banyana Banyana, the South African national women's football team, returned home from the Confederation of African Football (Caf) African Women's Championship to a rapturous welcome from hordes of supporters who brought the arrivals hall at Johannesburg's OR Tambo International Airport to a standstill, *Allafrica.com* says.

Banyana Banyana have reached Caf's final Stage for a third time, but were beaten 4-0 by the hosts, Equatorial Guinea, in the title decider.

Coach Joseph Mkhonza, who was recently voted South African Coach of the Year, said the team had achieved its goal of beating their nemesis Nigeria and reaching the final. Captain Amanda Dlamini said the semi-final win against Nigeria might have taken some of the fight out of the team, but "getting so near, yet so far" was not a disgrace. Safa President Kirsten Nematandani said Banyana Banyana had done the country proud, *Allafrica.com* reports.

Writing in the *Sowetan Live*, minister of sport and recreation Fikile Mbalula said that Banyana Banyana's "historic victory over eight-time champions Nigeria in the semi-final has been a highlight of the tournament and has sent a clear message that they are a force to be reckoned with in Africa."

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