



**Address by Her Worship, the Deputy Mayor Cllr Fawzia
Peer
On the Occasion of the Joint Women's Day Function**

**30 August 2016 – 09h00
Moses Mabhida Stadium's Mixed Zone**

- Programme Director,
- CEO of Ushaka Marine World, Ms Stella Khumalo
- CEO of the Durban Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Ms Dumile Cele,
- CEO of the Inkosi Albert Luthuli International Convention Centre, Ms Lindiwe Rakarebe,
- Speakers in different topics,
- Captains of industry,
- Women leaders,
- Stakeholders and partners,
- Distinguished guests and dignitaries,
- Ladies and gentlemen,
- All protocol observed

Good morning!

Women are often referred to as the mothers of the nation. This reminds me of the popular isiZulu idiom ***wathinta abafazi wathinta imbokodo!*** which means ***you strike a woman, you strike a rock!***

Programme Director, indeed, women are the pillars of our society and eThekweni Municipality recognises the important role they play in their communities, in government and in the business sector.

The march to the Union Buildings by 20 000 South African women from different races on 9 August 1956 against apartheid pass laws, was proof that women cannot be silenced. They made sure that their voices were heard and demonstrated that they were determined to bring about change.

We, as government recognise this unique strength and have taken steps to empower women to change their economic situations.

Programme Director, eThekweni aims to empower women from a very young age so that they have the necessary skills to position themselves for opportunities.

We are not only paying lip service to this ethos. We have programmes in place run by the young women desk. These programmes equip and skill women to play a vital role in the economic development of the City. We also have the various success stories to prove it.

In the past three financial years from 2013 to 2015 alone, eThekweni Municipality has awarded over 2000 contracts to Women Owned Business Enterprises worth over R4 billion across different fields such as construction and engineering.

Programme Director, to ensure the continuity of women contributing to the economic development of eThekweni, the Women Empowerment Programme was initiated in eThekweni almost 10 years ago.

I am proud that the programme has provided a sizeable number of women in business with opportunities to participate and contribute meaningfully to the City's economy and that of the country.

Since its inception, more than 620 women owned small, medium and micro enterprises (SMMEs) have benefitted through training and mentorship. Some have received millions of rands worth of business opportunities resulting in the creation of hundreds of jobs. Some of these women have gone on to trade internationally while others have seen their businesses expand.

We understand that the full participation of women is necessary to long-term, sustainable economic growth and social progression in the City.

I can therefore confidently say that the Municipality will continue to support and invest in women empowerment programmes and provide them with the relevant skills and

support. This will allow them to position themselves for even greater opportunities thus contributing positively to the economic development of eThekweni.

In closing I wish to say we appreciate the role women play in societal growth. Women empowerment and development is a priority in our Municipality!

Thank you!