

CLLR ZANDILE GUMEDE'S EXCEPTANCE SPEECH

Inauguration address by Her Worship, Mayor Cllr Zandile Gumede

Inauguration address by Her Worship, the Mayor Cllr Zandile Gumede of Ethekwini Municipality on the occasion of her Inauguration Ceremony

23 August 2016 – 15h30

Durban City Hall, Main Auditorium

Mr Speaker; Mr William Mapena
MEC for Local Government and Traditional Affairs, Mrs Nomusa Dube-Ncube;
Mayor James Nxumalo;
Members of the Executive Committee;
Fellow Councillors;
Amakhosi asendlunkulu;
City Managers and teams;
Business leaders;
Religious leaders;
Distinguished guests;
Members of the media;
Comrades and Friends;
And my Majola Gumede family;
All protocol observed.

Today we humbly accept the responsibility that the people of eThekwini have given us.

In accepting this responsibility, we commit to work with our people, opposition parties, government, business and civil society to realise the vision of our great city:

“To be the most caring and liveable city, in Africa, by 2030”.

Mr Speaker, this occasion takes place during a month when our country celebrates over 20 000 brave women, who protested against pass laws, by marching to the Union Buildings on 9 August 1956.

Today we can assure you that we have the same strength that was shown by these women 60 years ago.

Before I proceed, let me congratulate South African athletes for representing us so well in the Olympic Games 2016. To those who brought home medals, in particular Caster Semenya, Chad Le Clos and the rest of the team – you have made us very proud.

Baba, Zwide nethimba lonke, siyabonga kakhulu ngomsebenzi omuhle kusukela ngonyaka ka-2011 kuya ku-2016.

We are grateful that the previous Council laid a firm foundation for service delivery as well as sustainable growth and development in our city.

Our task, as the newly elected Council, is to consolidate and accelerate what has been achieved. We must reach for new heights and raise the bar through interventions that will change our city for the betterment of our people.

This Council shall continue to improve people's lives through accelerating service delivery, economic growth, job creation, social and rural development.

We are aware that as an ANC-led city all eyes will be on us.

We will continue to provide great leadership in South Africa and the rest of the continent. In the same breath, we will continue to explore innovative development solutions by learning from our peers.

EThekweni Municipality has a good service delivery track record and has received many accolades. Despite these accolades we cannot live on past achievements.

The city must continue to get the basics right.

In other words, our streets must be clean, roads must be without potholes, waste must be collected weekly, our street lamps must work, households and businesses must have regular power supply, issues of health and safety must be addressed and water and sanitation are also on our list of priorities.

EThekweni has grown from 103 to 110 wards. Most of these wards are rural so there is a need for us to fast-track infrastructure development to ensure better quality of life for these communities

Urbanisation is causing our city to burst at the seams. We need to have a clear plan to eradicate the slums by relooking at our housing models.

We want to ensure that those people living in flood plains, informal settlements and backyards receive priority from a development point of view.

All new houses will comply with the NHBRC standards.

Our appeal is that no new invasion of land should be tolerated.

We will also urgently look at our housing allocation policy to make sure that the needs of the poorest of the poor are taken care of.

The establishment of a number of good governance committees, that ensure the city runs efficiently, have resulted in a clean financial audit for the last financial year.

We will consolidate and accelerate this status.

Anyone who transgresses good business principles with the city, be it a member of the executive, an ordinary councillor, any member of our staff or private companies trading with the city must rest assured that we will come down on them with the full force of the law.

We will continue to drive a corruption free city.

With regards to the roads network, GO Durban, is gaining momentum but we still need to unlock more opportunities especially around job creation through our supply chain policies.

GO Durban will provide a reliable and efficient public transport service to communities and will have a direct and positive impact on the City's economic growth.

Still on transport, you have spoken and we have listened. We are facing challenges with the municipal buses.

This Council is, as we speak, devising a plan in consultation with national and provincial government, to immediately change the status quo and also to provide a sustainable solution.

We are also committing ourselves to working with all stakeholders in the transport industry including taxis.

To demonstrate our commitment to building a globally competitive investment destination, we have built a One Stop Shop for investors and developers that will facilitate all catalytic projects.

The business community is excited by this initiative, which indicates that we take their needs and concerns very seriously.

We are in the process of establishing a team of experts, affectionately known as Team Durban, that will assist our catalytic projects office to quickly achieve its objectives.

I am very excited about some of the mega projects that are already up and running including the multi-billion rand northern and western water aqueducts. These aqueducts will ensure a steady supply of portable water in the areas of concern.

While we wait for the rain, we are also hard at work looking for solutions to the drought that is hurting us as eThekweni.

We are convinced that we can learn a great deal from the education programmes we are deploying around water related concerns. Please remember to SAVE WATER. ASONGE AMANZI.

Transforming the township economy is going to receive an added focus over the next five years. We will work with all stakeholders to fast track our vision of empowering small businesses - that are the heart of our townships.

Our Energy Office in particular will be expanded to realise the opportunities presented by the green economy.

We will work with Provincial Government, the Passenger Rail Agency of South Africa and other State Owned Enterprises to drive the agenda for the construction of our own speed train infrastructure from King Shaka International Airport to Bridge City and to the Inner City.

We are committed to take forward the establishment of Agri-Parks within eThekweni. We will work with Amakhosi to make this agenda as inclusive as possible.

The development of young people, women and disabled persons is a major focus of our office.

We will also look at resources that must be prioritised for youth development linked to job creation and the establishment of sustainable youth business enterprises.

EThekweni Municipality has the largest concentration of higher education institutions in the province. We will continue to partner with local universities and technical colleges in training programmes to ensure that our youth get the skills required for economic growth.

We will also work with the state security agencies to root out non accredited, fly by night, institutions.

Consistent with our consolidation and acceleration programme, we are going to roll out Wi-Fi infrastructure throughout the city.

Military veterans across the spectrum have unique needs. The mayor's office will work closely with the Department of Military Veterans to provide the best possible solutions.

As a caring city, we are committed to addressing homelessness and poverty to ensure everyone can live with dignity.

We believe there is a direct link between economic conditions and social ills, as a result, we are focused on improving the economic status of all our people.

In due course, we will convene a Mayoral Lekgotla to provide political direction on our plan for the next five years, guided by the National and Provincial priorities of our government.

Our Election Manifesto has directed us to increase councillors' accountability to our communities by among others, convening regular community meetings and feedback.

We will, in addition to this important directive, subject members of the Executive Committee to signing a Performance Agreement with the Mayor, to ensure alignment with the legislated Councillors' Code of Conduct.

By mid-November 2016, all councillors will be expected to have established ward committees and the Speaker will oversee this important responsibility to provide direct linkages between elected councillors and stakeholders within their wards.

Throughout our term of office, we shall keep lines of communication open and sustained with the electorate.

Unity of purpose will remain a critical pillar of our work with all sectors of society.

We recognise that one of the necessary conditions that will enable us to implement our programmes, is the need to build a capable developmental state. In this regard, we commit to fill all critical vacancies within the next six months and to review our capacity to implement and monitor progress especially in the Mayor's Office.

In closing we would like to extend our special gratitude to the millions of our people who turned up at the voting stations to exercise their right to vote for a government of their choice.

We must also commend all the people of eThekweni for the peaceful manner in which the Municipal Elections took place.

We are deeply honoured by the extended mandate the electorate has bestowed on our movement, the African National Congress.

Your confidence in our movement is not taken for granted. We promise to do everything in our power not to neglect you as our constituency and we have learned that no government can succeed unless it listens to its people and uses its resources for addressing their needs.

As elected councillors, we promise to serve you with respect and humility and conduct all Council affairs in an honest and transparent manner.

In executing our strategic tasks, we will be guided by the advice of the great West African scholar and revolutionary Amilcar Cabral when he says:

“Hide nothing from the masses of our people. Tell no lies. Expose lies whenever they are told. Mask no difficulties, mistakes, failures. Claim no easy victories.”

Thank you very much and may God bless you!