

## **2017 AFRICAN CHEMICALS IMBIZO – 15 AUGUST 2017**

### **Welcome Address**

#### **Programme Director,**

- From the Department of Trade and Industry, Ms Lerato Mataboge (Chief Executive Officer of Trade Invest Africa) and Ms Karishma Ramcharan (Deputy Director of Plastics and Chemicals),
- From the Industrial Development Corporation: Senior Industry Development Manager, Mr Deon Cloete;
- Chemical Industries Education and Training Authority: Acting CEO, Ms Ayesha Iitzkin
- Trade and Investment KwaZulu Natal, : CEO, Mr Zamo Gwala
- eThekweni Municipality :Head of the Economic Development and Investment Promotion Unit, Mr Shunnon Tulsiram;
- distinguished guests,
- ladies and gentlemen,
- sanibonani,

Good Morning and welcome to the annual African Chemicals Imbizo. The eThekweni Municipality is proud to host the event for the third consecutive year and looks forward to an engaging programme that stimulates growth and investment, not only for our region, but for sub-Saharan Africa more broadly. Firstly, I would like to welcome distinguished guests, many of whom have travelled from far to join us at this prestigious event:

I would also like to extend warm greetings to the Executive Committee of the Durban Chemicals Cluster, our exhibitors and all of our distinguished speakers that are presenting here today. This year's programme appears highly engaging and I am sure that all present will benefit from the insight you will be sharing. Some of the exciting presentations and dialogues given today are highly relevant and important for investment and growth in chemical industry.

For this year's African Chemicals Imbizo, the eThekweni Municipality is also the proud host of 15 African buyers from various countries across Africa. I would like to extend a warm welcome to the delegation and thank them for their valued attendance. I sincerely hope that your stay in our beautiful city is significant and it brings benefit for both your firms and our local chemicals industry.

Lastly I would like to thank and welcome all conference delegates, suppliers and the media who have joined us here today. This event is only truly a success because of those who participate and we look forward to shared learning and networking over the course of the next two days.

The African Chemicals Imbizo seeks to bring the sub-Saharan chemicals industry together to drive investment, growth and intra-African trade. Hosting this event in Durban is strategic given the fact that KwaZulu-Natal is a national leader in the production of chemicals, with the majority being produced within the eThekweni Municipality area. The chemicals manufacturing industry is highly valuable given that it is broad and cross-cutting and it is indeed true to state that almost no manufacturing can take place without the production of chemicals.

The chemicals sector accounts for the direct employment of over 22 000 people and supports many more jobs indirectly through associated industries and downstream manufacturing. Given this and the fact that the chemicals sector is a feeder industry into multiple and cross-cutting value chains, the sector is strategically and economically important for eThekweni Municipality and its people.

Strengthening intra-African trade in chemicals manufacturing is one of the key ways in which the local chemicals industry can develop and grow. National government has prioritised the strengthening of intra-African trade and positioned it as a critical means for the continent to reach its economic development and growth objectives. The World Economic Forum on Africa was hosted on the 3<sup>rd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> of May 2017 in Durban with the theme of 'Achieving Inclusive Growth'. It was identified

at this conference that there is a compelling need for strong intra-Africa trade and regional integration. Although intra-Africa trade has grown over the past few years, this growth has been far too slow and still accounts for only 12-15% of the continent's overall trade. Aligned with national objectives, this 2017 African Chemicals Imbizo aims contribute to the achievement of this vision.

This conference is distinct given the fact that it not only supports economic growth and job creation amongst our largest chemicals producers, but also serves as a platform for our small and medium-sized businesses to showcase their products and capabilities and for the City and local economy to drive radical economic transformation. Many small chemicals manufacturers are here as delegates and are also showcasing in today's exhibition. These have been generously sponsored space by the CHIETA. The eThekweni Municipality actively supports small and medium sized chemicals manufacturers through transformation programmes within the Durban Chemicals Cluster. As part of the cluster's portfolio, it provides direct support and training to black-owned enterprises through a small business training programme. Over the past three years, the Durban Chemicals Cluster has provided training in world class manufacturing, lean manufacturing and innovation to these small businesses and I welcome them all to this event today.

The DCC is committing now to also strengthen and developing the relationship between large chemicals manufacturing businesses and small, black-owned suppliers. This is through access to incentives, and also connecting and facilitating business development. Using the method of clustering, therefore, the eThekweni Municipality is able to effectively further its transformation agenda and ensure that the chemicals industry develops in a manner that is inclusive and sustainable.

The eThekweni Municipality actively supports the chemicals sector through the mutually beneficial Durban Chemicals Cluster. The DCC is a long-standing entity and was established in December 2008 with the aim of developing and ensuring the competitiveness of the chemicals manufacturing industry within the eThekweni municipal region. The DCC

is now in its ninth year of operations and over this period has been able to grow membership, extend its support and broaden its scope of programmes and projects on offer. I would like to specifically thank the industry members of the DCC for a well-developed relationship and the enthusiasm with which you have embraced the activities of the cluster. This, the African Chemicals Imbizo, being one of them. The eThekweni Municipality remains committed to supporting member firms through the cluster and continue to strive to ensure that the sector remains domestically and globally competitive. Given the pivotal role that clustering plays in industrial development and firm-level improvements, the eThekweni Municipality looks forward to continuing its partnerships with industry and supporting the DCC in delivering its strategy and achieving its growth and operational objectives.

I am confident that the African Chemical Imbizo will prove beneficial for both industry and all sector stakeholders present here today and also assist create business linkages for future collaboration. To our visitors to Durban - I wish you all a fruitful and memorable stay in our warmest and most beautiful City and I humbly urge all of you to take the time out after the Imbizo to

Thank you.