

Speech by Her Worship the Mayor, Councillor Zandile Gumede on the occasion of the Reception to welcome the delegates attending the BRICS Trade Unions Forum meeting – 27 July 2018

- Comrades
- Friends
- Ladies and gentlemen

Good evening

On behalf of the eThekweni Municipality I wish to warmly welcome you all to our great city and thank you for choosing Durban as the host city of this important conference.

I welcome you at a time of the year when we have just celebrated the birthday and life of Nelson Mandela and Mam Albertina Sisulu. Two of South Africa's liberation struggle icons.

Next month we celebrate the women in our society and rededicate ourselves to the development and inclusion of women.

I am pleased that workers through their representative unions are part of these important engagements that are critical to the progress required for workers in all BRICS countries. BRICS is itself the product of a rapidly changing world, which has seen the emergence of new economies, the realignment of old alliances and shifts in the balance of global power.

It is therefore appropriate that at this moment in the evolution of BRICS, we should focus on collaboration for inclusive growth and shared prosperity in the 4th Industrial revolution. Quantum leaps in technology and innovation present enormous opportunities for growth, development and human progress. I am sure that your deliberations will ensure that this growth and innovation respects and includes workers in future workplace security.

This surge in innovation has the potential to dramatically improve productivity and to place entire countries on a new trajectory of prosperity. It has the potential to solve many of the social problems we face, by better equipping us to combat disease, hunger and environmental degradation.

However, unless it is approached in a collaborative manner, underpinned by a developmental agenda, rapid technological change could merely serve to entrench existing disparities within and between countries. Trade unions can make a valuable contribution to ensuring that labour and management ensures that development agendas are mutually beneficial.

BRICS comprises of Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa and these five major emerging economies comprise of about 43% of the world population, 37% of the world GDP and 17% of world trade.

The BRICS trade Union Forum started out of discussions between the major trade unions of the associated countries under BRICS. I am sure that all your deliberations will enrich the discussions and solutions to grow all the BRICS countries economies.

Over the past two years, half of all working families have experienced either unemployment or underemployment, and 1.2 billion people live in abject poverty. We have to

work together in all our BRICS countries at all levels to tackle unemployment.

I am sure that your deliberations, will place job creation through industrialization, the building of a strong manufacturing base, prioritisation of food security through agriculture, accessibility of IT for all countries and people, to enhance sustainable development and social progress.

It is hoped that increased co-operation between BRICS trade unions and countries will advance your collective interests to ensure job creation, decent work, protection of workers rights and solidarity amongst you all.

I wish you all a successful conference that will see BRICS trade unions working together for a more equitable world that respects all workers, especially women and people with disabilities.

I am sure that you will all work hard to promote dialogue and cooperation between the peoples of the BRICS nations to ensure decent work for all. The inclusion of workers' representatives in the official format of BRICS has provided

additional opportunity to accelerate comprehensive development of our countries and demonstrate around the world that this Forum can become a real counterweight to the forces that now seek to dictate the course of the world development.

Finally, I wish you all a successful conference that will see the BRICS countries working together to ensure stable employment and better quality of life for all our people.

I thank you.