



**Opening Remarks by the Mayor of eThekweni Municipality,
Councillor Zandile Gumede on the occasion of the
French Barbarians WELCOME GALA DINNER**

Programme Director,

The French Ambassador, His Excellency Christofe Farnaud

Our players, the Barbarians, led by Mr Frederic Michalak

The Acting Deputy City Manager for our Economic Development and Planning Cluster Philip Sithole.

All Councillors Present

Members of the Media

Ladies and Gentlemen

I greet you all

It is with great pleasure to welcome you to our beautiful City of Durban, the Africa's playground and the warmest place to be.

Programme Director, allow me to tell our visitors a little bit about my City, Durban. Our City has been rapidly changing as a tourist destination. The Durban you see today, is a much-improved city with

world class and iconic key projects that have reached fruition, such as the Moses Mabhida Stadium and uShaka Marine World.

It all begins when you arrive in Durban, at the world class King Shaka International Airport, which was awarded the title by Skytrax in 2015 as the "Best Airport in the World Handling Under 5 million Passengers".

This stadium at which you will be playing in on Friday, Moses Mabhida, was named after a former Secretary General of the South African Communist Party and it attracts tourists in numbers and it has hosted many major international events long after the 2010 World Cup and 2013 Orange Africa Nations Cup.

The Nkosi Albert Luthuli International Convention Centre has been a key factor in bringing important and often global events and conferences to the city and we have just been recognized for the 15th time now by the World Travel Awards as Africa's Leading Meetings and Conference Centre.

This City is also home to the first female African Union Commission Chairperson Dr Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma, it is also home to the Olympic, World and Commonwealth Games champion Chad le Clos. When you drive north of where we are, you will find a home of the Africa's first Nobel Peace Prize Laureate and the founding President of the African National Congress (ANC) , Chief Albert Luthuli. This is the very same City where Nelson Mandela cast his vote during South Africa's first democratic elections.

Ladies and Gentlemen, having told you about our City, I won't be doing justice if I don't thank SA Rugby, Durban Tourism and Moses Mabhida Stadium team that worked around the clock to make sure that everything is in place for the upcoming exhilarating encounter. This going to be the very first time that our iconic Moses Mabhida Stadium will host a rugby match and I have no doubt that this will be the most thrilling clashes of the year.

Ladies and gentleman, once again, welcome to Durban, enjoy the evening and the beautiful live performance by the Pietermaritzburg quartet.

I thank you