



**Welcome Address by Her Worship, the Mayor, Cllr Zandile
Dlamini
On the Occasion of the 5th Research Symposium**

01 – 02 June 2017 – 08h30

Inkosi Albert Luthuli International Convention Centre

- Programme Director, Ms Shirin Motala (HSRC)
 - EThekweni City Manager – Mr Siphon Nzuza
 - Our Co-host partner for 2017, Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) led by its CEO, Prof. Crain Soudien
 - Chief Strategy Officer, eThekweni Municipality, Mr Adrian Peters
 - Chief Executive Officer, Universities South Africa and our erstwhile academic partner and ex Vice Chancellor of DUT: Prof. Ahmed Bawa
 - Vice Chancellors and Reps. of each of the academic partnering institutions:
 - Prof. Thanda Mthembu: Vice Chancellor of Durban University of Technology
 - Prof. Mandla Makhanya: Principal of the University of South Africa;
 - Prof. Deresh Ramjugernath, Dep. Vice Chancellor of University of KwaZulu-Natal
 - Prof. Xoliswa Mtose, Vice Chancellor of University of Zululand
- And Prof. Zodwa Dlamini, Act Vice Chancellor of Mangosuthu University of Technology

- Chairs, moderators, respondents and presenters in each of the panel sessions
- Academics, faculty staff and Students,
- Partners and stakeholders,
- City officials and the Organizing Committee
- Distinguished guests, Members of the media,
- Ladies and gentlemen,

Good morning and a very warm welcome to our city of Durban. It is indeed an honor for me as Mayor of Durban to officially open this Research Symposium, where ground breaking partnerships have been formed between eThekweni Municipality and each of the mentioned institutions of higher learning since the historic signing of the latest Memorandum of Agreement in June 2015.

I am really encouraged to see so many of our young researchers, from academia and from our city wanting to make a difference to society by using their research evidence to make the argument. I am hopeful that this is a great start to the much needed policy dialogues in the city and significantly reassuring when our youth are influencing the transformation process.

When we initiated the formation of the first-ever local government-driven, practitioner-based Municipal Institute of Learning (MILE), it was partly in response to our national government's turn-around strategy which sounded the call for municipal collaboration to enhance local government practitioner capacity. As part of our municipality's knowledge management strategy to position Durban as a center of learning.

Programme Director,

Durban is indeed a City in Transformation - accelerating economic transformation for inclusive and sustained socio-economic outcomes; strengthening partnerships for improved governance and creating liveable spaces that are safe and secure. Yesterday, we adopted R45billion budget that will be used for service delivery. Part of the budget must be able to create jobs and used to empower black business. We are unapologetic about empowering our black people especially those that are led by youth and women.

We therefore encourage our academic partners to activate their social responsiveness and work alongside us in responding to our developmental agenda. By working together a lot more can be achieved.

As a leading NEPAD City, and an active member of the United Cities and Local Government in Africa, our Municipality has played an important leadership role in the coordination of the learning agenda around strategic planning, sustainable development and urban local governance in cities on the continent.

As a forward thinking City, Durban is one of the few cities in the world to have established its very own institute of learning, eThekweni's Municipal Institute of Learning (MILE), which is steadily establishing itself as a dedicated knowledge management and capacity enhancement vehicle working alongside local practitioners locally and internationally to facilitate the desired outcomes.

In 2013 at the World Congress of the United Cities and Local Governments in Morocco, MILE was nominated to pursue the learning agenda for the entire African continent. So it is very

significant that our academic partners work alongside us in ensuring that together, we can support the developmental agenda of our continent.

It is worth noting that in positioning Durban as a learning City, our political and administrative leaders have come to realize the potential value of partnering with the institutions of higher learning and can relate to similar experiences elsewhere of the economic, social and other benefits for cities that work closely with academia.

Similarly, academia have come to appreciate that cities need the ideas, energy and outside view represented by universities, communities, staff and students. Research institutions, as I understand its role, should be in the business of responding to societal challenges, contributing to local solutions and identifying innovations for everyday problems. Programs and projects such as this annual research symposia, built environment seminars, guest lecture program, integrated learning program, sectoral engagements, agreements and research collaborations should continue to serve as vehicles to achieve the desired partnership outcomes. I am optimistic that, as we work together to foster a sustainable partnerships between academia and this city, we can, in the long term, make tomorrow a better day than today for our residents in Durban, our country and our continent.

Reflecting on the last five years of this strategic partnership, I am deeply encouraged by progress made. This is evidenced in the range of joint programs and collaborative projects that exist between our City's line departments and specific faculties across the partnering institutions, the constructive inputs of academic experts on strategic city projects and the numerous "think tanks" that have been set up – all geared towards

ensuring that evidence based research influence our policy making processes.

Whilst some of these historic relations are now part of established projects, numerous new synergies have given birth to projects over the last five years and relate directly to us jointly finding local solutions to key challenges facing our City.

It is for these reasons that our city leadership has taken a long term and strategic view that our partnership with academia must remain intact, serviceable and well sustained – as we work together towards a common purpose for Vision 2060.

Programme Director,

The recent refreshing of our Memorandum of Agreement in 2015 with each of you as our preferred partnering institutions, is an indication of our serious intent to work alongside you to improve the quality of life for all that we serve. Our role therefore as city leaders is to support this partnership in every possible way and commit towards jointly seek solutions to both local urban issues and globalization where the knowledge generated from higher education becomes part of the social fabric and changes the environment in which it operates.

In conclusion, I want to thank members of the Organizing Committee for working tirelessly in making this event a reality, Members of the Scientific Committee for assembling this program, Members of the Research Committee for supporting the City's research agenda, to all presenters, session chairs, moderators as well as city respondents and you the participants – for contributing to a successful outcome. I look forward to an outcomes report that we can engage on and take forward within this collaboration.

I wish you all well in your deliberations and hope that our visitors also take some time to enjoy our beautiful City, Durban.

I Thank you!