

Opening Remarks by Mayor Zandile Gumede at Social Cohesion Women Breakfast

10 June 2017

Programme Director,

Her Excellency – Dr Dlamini-Zuma,

Distinguished guests,

All protocol observed,

Media,

Ladies and gentlemen,

Good morning - sanibonani,

We are grateful to be part of this august occasion dedicated to women of city – imbokodo. I want to thank you for leaving the comfort of your beds on a Saturday just to be with us this morning. I heard that some of you will be running tomorrow on the Spar Walk, I wish you the best of luck.

We proud as eThekweni metro to be hosting this breakfast, which will be followed by the 3rd Social Cohesion Conference from 19-20 June 2017.

Last week we were part of the provincial social cohesion events – which were held in KwaMashu. We appreciate the provincial government for bringing such occasion in our shores. We hold a firm view that in future we should have such events jointly.

Social cohesion is an integral part of the nation building project. It is part of our radical economic transformation project. We must never divorce economic freedom from Social Cohesion.

The Freedom charter says, " our country will never be prosperous or free until all our people live in brotherhood, enjoying equal rights and opportunities; that only a democratic state, based on the will of all the people, can secure to all their birth right without distinction of colour, race, sex or belief."

Our Constitution stipulates that neither the state nor any person may discriminate against anyone on the basis of race, gender, sex, pregnancy, marital status, ethnic or social origin, colour, sexual orientation, age, disability, religion, conscience, belief, culture, language or birth. However, the historical legacy of discriminatory legislation means that there is still much work to be done to turn these constitutional principles into reality.

Social cohesion as the degree of social integration and inclusion in communities and society at large, and the extent to which mutual solidarity finds expression among individuals and communities. Social cohesion will only be achieved once all the inequalities are eliminated and people live and treated as equals. It means we need to change the face of disease and poverty from being a black person who was historical oppressed. We need to work together as citizens to improve the living conditions for all.

In our local government Manifesto, as the ANC we promised that by working together with our People – we will do the following:

- 1.Ensure that municipal programmes strengthen the social fabric of our communities.
- 2.Honouring and celebrating collective heritage sites in municipalities.
- 3.Upgrading community arts centres and libraries in all municipalities.
- 4.Organising sport and recreational activities that are promoting a culture of dialogue as part of efforts to build a social compact for local growth and development.
- 5.Organising cultural activities where people from diverse backgrounds express their cultural identities and belief systems.

This is the reason why we as the Mayor has called upon the city to refrain from doing events that will not have impact. We are moving away from events to programmes with clear measurable achievements. We want to look back after events and say we have achieved this in terms of economy and social cohesion.

We must have joint programmes that unite us as people of this city and province, this in keeping with spirit of corporative government.

In line with celebrating the year of deepening Unity and cohesion. The year 2017 was declared the year of President OR Tambo – we will be building a biggest Statue of President OR Tambo infront of the City Hall.

President OR Tambo is a symbol of unity for the people of South Africa and continent. He was the most influential leader in the African continent. He is indeed a symbol of social cohesion.

As the people of OR Tambo we must never allow people to sow seeds of divisions amongst the Africans. We are ONE Africa! We must say no to xenophobia! We must fight for our unity.

In line with Social Cohesion, we are undoing the spatial planning of the Apartheid. The housing allocation in places like Cornubia will be spread across all races and cultures. Our communities and children must have parks and sporting facilities where black and white will play together. We are promoting multi-cultural festivities so that we learn about each other cultures – we must stop looking down upon our cultures. As a result we have Ladysmith Black Mambazo and Cell-C Sharks as our brand ambassadors. We will be seeing more Rugby games being played in Townships as part of this social cohesion process.

The ultimate goal should be economic freedom. Once we are all economically free – we will easily achieve Social Cohesion.

This year's conference is themed "Black History" and led by this theme, we will seek to explore the role black people played in the construction and reconstruction of our country. This we will do in order to affirm and

recognise the role various black institutions and organisations played, especially given that such contribution has always been marginalised and nullified by the narratives pre 1994.

With those few words, I would like to welcome you.