



**Welcome Address by Mayor, Cllr Zandile Gumede  
on the occasion of  
Durban Business Fair – Umlazi Region  
Umlazi**

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- Programme Director,
- Minister of Communications – Hon Ayanda Dlodlo,
- Minister of Public Works – Hon Nathi Nhleko,
- MEC of Economic Development and Tourism – Hon Zikalala,
- Councillors,
- Captains of industry,
- Distinguished guests,
- Members of the media
- Ladies and gentlemen,
- All protocol observed,

Sanibonani!

Ladies and gentlemen, I am pleased to join you all this morning at this most important session.

My task this morning is to welcome all our esteemed guests and aspiring business people, to the first Regional Session of the Durban Business Fair.

Ladies and gentlemen, I would like to state from the onset that as government, we understand the importance of SMMEs in unlocking jobs and growing our economy.

One of the areas that our National Development Plan focuses on is that of Small, Medium and Micro Enterprises (SMMEs). They are seen as the key to future growth, transformation and job creation. SMMEs are promoted by many countries and multinational agencies all over the world, with the most important rationale being the role they play in the job creation process. But there are other reasons too, including: their differences in ownership structure, their impact on competition and market structure, and their role in innovation and entrepreneurship.

Their positive impact on employment has been observed in many countries - SMMEs are generally more labour-intensive than their large firm counterparts. But the employment effect is also linked to the entry of new firms, which normally begin life as a small firm.

In the recent past, estimates of South Africa's SMME sector's contribution to GDP, for example, range between 35% to 52%, and with contribution to total employment the estimates over between 39% and 60%. The difference between what constitutes the formal and informal sector, and what is meant by being formally or informally employed is critical in this regard.

To this end, it is for this reason that we have taken a decision to invest in SMME development initiatives that will enable start-ups to grow.

I would like to first bring to the attention of this house some of the important interventions we have made as government, especially as eThekweni metro to create an environment that is enabling for our business people to prosper.

I want to focus primarily on the interventions we made particularly in the area of Umlazi.

One of our most valued and prized investments in Umlazi are the multi million investment in the KwaMnyandu Node is a Township economic hub.

Since 2009 an investment of R450 Million by both private and public sector has been poured into the Node

Programme Director, through KwaMnyandu Node Development, our intention is to create a second Central Business District (CBD) in Umlazi to boost the township economy by enhancing the local economic opportunities for the locals.

Recently, we have invested more than R33 million, from National Treasury, to construct a first of its kind pedestrian bridge.

The pedestrian bridge consists of 14 Trading Kiosks and sitting area for the pedestrians.

The innovative idea of building kiosks on the pedestrian bridge which will operate seven days a week from 8h00-17h00, was used in order to enhance the safe access to the bridge and also to take advantage of the critical mass caused by the traffic of pedestrians who are expected to use the bridge

Ladies and gentlemen, The KwaMnyandu Node development framework is expected to generate and unlock more than R2 Billion economic activity, comprised of mixed-use investment.

In order to sustain the development momentum in the node, we have already approved the following projects;

1. **Land lease for expansion of Kwamnyandu Mall;** this expansion will also increase the value of local shareholding stake which is currently at 21.5% as well as creating more employment opportunities.
2. **Land sale adjacent to Kwamnyandu Mall;** Land sale to the Ingonyama Trust has been approved by council, negotiations to effect the sale are underway.
3. **Light Industrial Incubator:** This will provide economic infrastructure that will develop the residents is their core mandate.

We have already approved a R24 million Industrial Incubator to be constructed across the mall which also forms part of the node.

This business incubation facility will accommodate 20 small businesses in the following sectors Upholstery, Manufacturing of chemical detergents, steel fabrication and many others.

The Incubator will primarily focus on providing appropriate business accommodation then focus on building tailored development programmes for the incubators.

Programme Director, Enhancing township economies is high on the City's agenda and Township development is at the heart of the City's growth trajectory.

Our view is that there can never be any true radical economic transformation if our people do not benefit.

Most importantly, it is important for this house note these are just a few of the approved projects that we are doing in Umlazi.

There is a long list of coming projects which includes the likes of Umlazi V-Precinct Plan for R1,6m;

- Ezimbuzini Auto-Hub an investment of R32m;
- Glebelands NMT we will invest R15m and
- Old South Coast Road Upgrade at around R90m.

The implementation of these projects will be in line with eThekweni Municipality's Radical Economic Transformation Framework to develop township areas as productive nodes in construction and business services sectors

Programme Director, my passion for township economic development can be uncontrollable at times and therefore I can speak for day on end.

The municipality supports small businesses within the communities and the need to educate small businesses about the aspects and rules in order for them to survive in the ever-changing environment.

We also want to urge government from all levels to pay small business and service providers on time.

In this regard, we will have an opportunity to dwell deeper into the programmes we have done and plan to do in order to develop our communities.

We want to ensure that even those who do not attend the Durban Business Fair, will have access to the information that enables their business to grow.

For this reason, I will not take up much of your time and I therefore welcome all our esteemed guests and dignitaries to this regional fair.

This is an important opportunity to engage and share important business

skills that will allow our people improve their lives and fight the triple challenges of poverty, unemployment and inequality.

I thank you.