

**Welcome remarks by her worship, Mayor Zandile Gumede at the
BRICS Young Scientist Forum held at Elangeni Hotel, Durban -
24 June 2018**

Programme Director, Dr Neville Arendse: Chief Director-Overseas Bilateral
Cooperation,

Reps from DIRCO,

Reps from Department of Science and Technology ,

DDG: Mr Daan du Toit,

Leaders of BRICS delegations,

Young researchers and scientists,

Partners,

Delegates,

Media,

Ladies and gentlemen,

I would like to take this opportunity to welcome you to this warm and wonderful city of Durban. It is such a great honour to host this wonderful delegation of young people lead by the Senior Official Technical Team from thr National Department of Science and Technology, that are eager to take our nations forward. The contibution and the involvment of the private sector is also noted.

The reality is that Science has everything to do with what we do in our daily lives. It is the noise of machines, cars, mills and factories, birds that sings in the morning – all have something to do in finding convenience in our day to day livehoohds.

Science and technology are the driving force in enhancing productivity, economic growth and socio-economic development. Our National Development Plan (NDP) has identified science, technology and innovation as a crucial weapon in the arsenal to free South Africans from poverty, underdevelopment and unemployment.

If we are serious about our future, it is crucial that we increase the funding of research, development, innovation and infrastructure development. We must finance the production of a new generation of patriotic scientists, including artisans and technicians. We don't need to rely on donor funding from foreign countries, we must develop our own funding mechanisms and models. And once these are in place they must be easily accessible to young scientists. We need to ensure that funding requirement are relaxed and conducive to young scientists.

I encourage all government departments, to invest more in human capital development through funding postgraduate education in the areas of scientific research, innovation and technology.

A generation of patrotic sciencists are those who will put their country and continent first. Are those sceintist who will not develop weapons to kill our women and children. We need a generation of scientists who will find solutions to our current challenges such as water, disaster, climate change and energy.

Programme Director,

We appreciate the fact that this program is organised in a month of June when we remember the class of 1976. A generation that fought against the apartheid system which included an oppressive education. In honour of the youth that fought in 1976, we need to also focus on indigenous knowledge and be translated into scientific language and form part of the prescribed knowledge.

In Africa; very few farmers are following the modern scientific ways to secure high production yields and sustainable food security. I want you to also note that these farmers in the fields are women. These ancient yet valuable methodologies used by these African female farmers should be documented somewhere, and published in various scientific journals of the world.

South Africa, especially, Ethekewini Municipality is very strict on "Gender Equity" matters, where it aims to improve transformation and eliminate discrimination in the workplace. In South Africa you don't only have to address the issues of gender inequality. One also needs to look at race factor, to accommodate those who were discriminated during the apartheid era.

The city of Durban has invested lot of funding and time in the last six years working closely with the University of KwaZulu-Natal and the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research. Most of the work has been based on developing technologies and tools to deal with the issue of climate change and other various socio-economic issues. To date I'm proud to

announce that we have produced at least **4 PhDs** and **14 Masters Degrees** and **60%** of these students are **Females**.

I'm happy to learn that the BRICS program has been extended to other local tertiary institutions, like DUT, UNIZULU, and MANGOSUTHU.

We need to reach a level whereby universities are teaching in isiZulu or seTsonga like we have with Afrikaans. Our children must be taught maths, science and technology in their mother tongue. I note the University of KwaZulu-Natal maybe implementing IsiZulu to be one of the compulsory languages within their curriculum.

Children whose primary language is not the language of instruction in school are more likely to drop out of school or fail in early grades. A Research that was conducted by UNESCO has shown that children's first language is the optimal language for literacy and learning throughout primary school. If we teach in our mother tongue, children are more likely to enrol and succeed in school.

I understand that there are hundreds scientific student who have enrolled in is this program, they will participate in various specialised learning exchange through the BRICKS countries.

I will then request our National Minister to facilitate a own local symposium where these young scientists share the knowledge amongst each other and also share that knowledge with the local traditional leadership using the local vernacular.

As parents we are more likely to communicate with teachers and participate in our children's learning. We will be able to help more our children with things such as home work. If our children come home and ask for couple of thousand rand to buy things like USB or Facebook, we will give them because we don't know what is that.

My point is let us ensure that we teach in our home language, we will see less drop out and more parent taking keen interest in education.

The previous colonial government of the apartheid ensured that it created universities such as Stellenbosch and University of Free State where their children learn everything in Afrikaans. The children who speak Afrikaans at home have an advantage of learning science in their mother tongue while African children are sitting outside protesting. The fact remains that the oppressive government wanted to ensure that we don't succeed in education, we end up being servants. They ensured that we don't enter into science field.

Your generational mission is to reverse that and ensure that more African people are leading in the field of maths and science. We must ensure that we advance in the field of water, energy and ICT. In the past, Africans, especially women, were only limited to collectors of water and wood. We didn't know that there was water engineering and science. We collected wood, we didn't know that we can enter into energy sector and start providing electricity and become professionals.

My new role as the C40 vice-Chair for the African Region has deepened climate change awareness within the eThekweni City Council. It has advanced our understanding of the underlying issues, deepened my passion for environmental justice and heightened the sense of urgency in responding to the issues of climate change.

There is a program that eThekweni will be launching in the near future called **Women for Climate** and my scientific team has identified the several Research Topics that are similar to this year's theme for the BRICS young scientist taking place this week:

- 1. Access to cheap clean energy.** This will be based in the rural women communities. Some rural areas have access to electricity, it is however not affordable to all. They still collect wood for cooking and boiling water and only use electricity for lighting. There is an opportunity to generate gas from cow disposal. This also addresses the issues of methane emissions from cow farms. It may also address the safety issue of women. **Young Entrepreneurs we look up to for solutions!**
- 2. Accesses to water.** Installation of water tanks in households to address water harvesting and reducing flooding. It's hard labour, there are issues about the distance travelled, safety and water availability and quality at source. Time spent away from home just for 20 litres of water. **Young and old women cannot be going through this in 2018!**
- 3. Air pollution and healthy families.** Durban holds 50% of oil refinery processing in the Country. Now and again we have seen sparks of asthma and pneumonia cases around these areas (homes and schools). We have set out air quality stations around these

areas and their action plan put in place to reduce these emissions. How does this affect the daily livelihoods of women? Women have to take leave of absence at work to take care of sick children. What about programs to Access efficient to health care? Just think about the impact on women careers and the general lifestyle. **We need clean and green jobs, medication is expensive, we need blue skies. I believe the young ones have the answers!**

I strongly believe in the country to country and city to city capacity building. There is a need to build a strong scientifically informed governance that will influence policies and shape the development of our cities to bring viable economic, sustainable service delivery to the vulnerable communities.

In line with the year of Mandela, let's remember his wise words when he said; ***"There can be no keener revelation of a society's soul than the way in which it treats its children."***

Mandela will be remembered as one of the greatest leaders of all time who gave youth generation's science and technology education that gives them the skills to expand their economic opportunity.

Let's us continue to emulate his passion and pride for the people of the world. Let us be the Legacy of Mandela.

NGIYABONGA

