

**Southern Africa Internet Governance Forum – Welcome Address
by City of Durban, 28 November 2018, Marine Protea Hotel**

Programme Director,

Chairperson of SADC,

SADC Secretariat,

Member state of Ministers of Communications,

Media,

Ladies and gentlemen,

Sanibonani,

This gathering takes place after the reconfiguration and merging of Communications and of Telecommunications and Postal Services into a single Ministry of Communications under new Minister Stella Ndabeni-Abrahams. We congratulate the young and energetic Minister of Communications – Ms Ndabeni-Abrahams.

We welcome the move by President Cyril Ramaphosa and we believe that this move is going to ensure that we have better alignment and coordination on matters that are critical to the future of our economy in the context of the Fourth Industrial Revolution.

We are excited about hosting this powerful annual event which draws multi-stakeholders from the SADC region to participate in the development of democratic internet policies for our region. This shows how serious we take issues of innovation and fourth industrial revolution including the internet of things.

Everyone agrees, technology and the internet of things (IoT) has transformed the way we live our lives and co-existing without our gadgets, a screen full of applications, and an internet connection is near impossible these days.

Innovation is changing the way we think, act and live. Business needs to innovate to survive.

As the world's population keeps on growing, and concerns about diminishing resources and climate change increase, solutions for a more sustainable city are emerging. By 2050, the world will have more than 10.2 billion people living on it, with over 70 percent of them living in cities, according to data from the United Nations.

But as the size of cities increase, so do the number of challenges: from housing to climate change.

Durban' is so relevant at this point in time where issues of sustainability are becoming more critical. Innovation lies at the heart of a future city, which goes beyond just building smart cities.

Durban is perfectly positioned to become a future city. Within the Municipality, there are a number of exciting initiatives looking at smart and sustainable solutions for water, energy, housing and infrastructure. In addition to this, the city has a pool of young talent that are coming up with innovative solutions to challenges being faced.

This programme of equipping the youth with the skills and providing them with opportunities to innovate and become problem solvers, is held annually by EThekweni Municipality and Innovate Durban. The solutions developed through this process can really contribute to improving the development of the city and its people. We, the Municipality, support such initiatives because of the impact that it has.

We have recently launched Innovate Durban which is our own legal entity, fully supported by the Municipality and its partners. The Municipality is proud to have spearheaded this initiative since inception four years ago and will continue to support its efforts in promoting innovation in the region.

Programme Director, we looking forward to engagements and hope to have a successful conference. We also invite you to take your time to enjoy the offering of Durban from our beach promenade, Moses Mabhida iconic stadium, rivers, warm oceans and mountains. This is the only city where you can mix business with pleasure.

With those remarks, you are all welcome.