

Welcome remarks by Mayor Zandile Gumede – on the occasion of the Launch of Forbes Woman Africa Leading Women Summit 2019 function held at Durban ICC, 16 November 2018

Master of Ceremonies –

MEC and leader of government, Hon Sihle Zikalala,

Chief Editor of Forbes Woman Africa, Renuka Methil,

Managing Director of ABN Group, Roberta Naicker

Distinguished guests,

Members of the media,

Ladies and gentlemen,

Sanobonani,

A very good morning to all of you and thank you for coming to this important launch of Forbes Woman Africa Leading Women Summit that will be held in March 2019. We are grateful that you are bringing to this city that is led by a woman mayor.

We are excited that we will be hosting such an event in our city. We are grateful to the provincial government and Forbes for bringing it here, we don't take it lightly that we will be hosting such an important event. We will pull all stops in ensuring that it becomes a success.

What is interesting is that the date that has been chosen for the summit coincides with international women's day. According to United Nations

website, the theme for International Women's Day 2019 is "**Think equal, build smart, innovate for change**".

This is a call to women in the globe to focus on innovative ways in which we can advance gender equality and the empowerment of women, particularly in the areas of social protection systems, access to public services and sustainable infrastructure.

The achievement of the ambitious Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) requires transformative shifts, integrated approaches and new solutions. This will assist us in advancing gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls.

We are optimistic that by hosting an event such as Forbes Woman Africa Leading Women Summit will empower us to face some of challenges that causes inequality in society especially between men and women. If you go through the Forbes Billionaire 2018 that was released early this year, the gap between the really rich and the merely rich continues to widen.

What is interesting is that Forbes also listed 259 newcomers who made their fortunes in everything from tech and aerospace to private aviation and wedding dresses. This means that there is a window of opportunity for us as women through smart and innovative solutions that are presented to us by the fourth industrial revolution.

We are looking forward to this summit and we will make it a spectacular. We know that Forbes Africa events brings together Africa's top leaders, policymakers, innovators, experts and change-makers to explore the landscape of today's ever-evolving world.

Durban remains the warmest place to be in Africa and it is the only city where you can do business with pleasure. We will make this event a historic event.

With those few words, I thank you and welcome you.