



**Address by Cllr Sibongile Nhlapho on the occasion of
the Opening Night of 20th Poetry Africa 2016**

**10 October 2016 – 18h00
Elizabeth Sneddon Theatre**

- Programme Director,
- Prince Mangosuthu Buthelezi,
- Professor Cheryl Potgieter from the University of KwaZulu-Natal,
- Creative industry experts,
- Representatives from the Centre for Creative Arts,
- Academics,
- Participants,
- Stakeholders and partners,
- Distinguished guests and dignitaries,
- Ladies and gentlemen,
- All protocol observed,

On behalf of eThekweni Mayor, Cllr Zandile Gumede, it gives me great pleasure to join you for the Opening Night of the 20th Poetry Africa 2016.

EThekweni Municipality is proud to host the 5-day festival that brings together some of the world's finest poets and musicians to our award-winning City of Durban, with artists from Africa and beyond.

We are particularly proud that this festival will give local poets an opportunity to showcase their work to an international audience.

This means growth and global exposure. In the pasts, some poets who have performed on this platform have been invited to showcase their talents in similar festivals around the world.

Programme Director, I am sure you will agree with me that eThekweni is now home to many creative festivals countrywide. We are very proud of our association with the 20th Poetry Africa 2016.

I want to reiterate that eThekweni is serious about the development of the creative industry, so much so that this sector has integrated itself within the economic landscape and its contribution to the Gross Domestic Product has grown over the past few years.

In South Africa, the creative economy contributed R90,5 billion directly to the country's Gross Domestic Product in the 2013/2014 financial year and accounts for more than 500 000 jobs, contributing 3,6 percent to total employment.

As the 5th eThekweni Council, we pledge our commitment to alleviating poverty and accelerating job creation through the creative industry and other related sectors.

EThekweni has become increasingly recognised as a creative centre in recent years, especially within the arts, culture, film and design fields, with innovation playing an intrinsic role in each sub-sector.

Programme Director, ladies and gentlemen, our City's forward thinking has resulted in creative and design precinct developments in eThekweni. These include the Rivertown Precinct, Station Drive Precinct and Smart Space which is not yet complete.

To show that Durban is serious about the development of the creative industry, our City won the rights to host the Loeries Creative Week for three years since 2015.

Our City has seen approximately 3000 creative people including visitors, exhibitors, international media and tourism as well as creative industry role-players descending on Durban as part of this programme to recognise the best talent in the creative world.

Also, our Municipality provides financial support to Poet in a Suit programme by Mxolisi Mtshali. This programme is an innovative and contemporary poetry event. Our City also supports the Poetry Africa programme.

Unlike the days when the most common jobs were to become a nurse, teacher or police officer, in today's world young people have the world as their stage and they can use their artistic talents and creativity to build thriving careers and businesses.

In closing ladies and gentlemen, our City believes that the creative industry is a hidden gem. It is an industry that is rich with talent but it needs to be nurtured and developed in such a way that the industry propels to greater heights.

Through our various programmes, we pledge to support the growth of the creative arts industry.

Thank you!