



**Address by Her Worship, the Mayor, Cllr Zandile
Gumede on the Occasion of the 17th LIASA National
Conference**

11 October 2016

Inkosi Albert Luthuli International Convention Centre

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- Programme Director,
- President of Library and Information Association of South Africa, Ms Segametsi Molawa,
- Fellow Councillors,
- Representatives and members of the Association,
- Representatives from the different spheres of government,
- Municipal Officials,
- Conference delegates,
- Distinguished guests and dignitaries,
- Ladies and gentlemen,
- All protocol observed,

It is my pleasure to participate in the 17th Library and Information Association of South Africa Conference 2016 under the theme “Libraries in Action: Transformation and Development Towards 2030”.

Ladies and gentlemen, the transformation and development agenda places a huge burden of responsibility of libraries to take their rightful place in helping the country move forward and address the triple challenges of poverty, unemployment and inequality.

Article 19 of the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights clearly states:

“All human beings have the fundamental right to have access to all expressions of knowledge, creativity and intellectual activity and to express their thoughts in public”.

The Bill of Rights in our Constitution affirms this through its declaration that everyone has the right of access to information.

This, coupled with your theme for this conference implies that:

- Library collections and services should cater for all levels of literacy, ages, education and language preferences;
- The design of library buildings should facilitate ease of use by people living with disabilities;

- You should work towards bridging the digital divide by ensuring that relevant and appropriate information and communication technology resources and training are available;
- You help South Africa become a nation of readers;
- And most importantly, you must contribute to local economic development.

Programme Director, eThekweni Municipality has made major strides in ensuring that our people have access to libraries.

We have 96 branch libraries spread throughout our Municipality, two Mobile Libraries and a Housebound Service which caters for citizens in old age homes and frail care centre.

Two new libraries have recently been opened at Intshanga and Umnini.

We are at advanced stages of the development of three new libraries at Tshelimnyama, Amaoti and our flagship Durban Central Library, at a total investment of over R600 million.

This demonstrates our commitment to ensuring that our people have access to information.

Ladies and gentlemen, every year through our highly successful One City One Book initiative, we select one book that we encourage each and every citizen of eThekweni to read.

This year's book is "When the chalk is down: an odyssey" by B P Singh. This programme is in its fourth year now.

We hope to continue running this programme every year because we firmly believe that reading books is a tool for gathering knowledge and developing wisdom.

Some of our programmes that are aimed at encourage reading in our society include Storytelling, Creative Writing, Spelling Bee and Quiz Competition.

Through these programmes, we target learners in order to instill a culture of reading at an early age.

In November, from the 8th to the 13th, the City will be hosting the inaugural Essence Festival Durban which will incorporate Articulate Africa, a combination of a Book and an Art-Fair.

ARTiculate Africa seeks to become a leading hub for practitioners in knowledge and artistic production to connect with their audiences and buyers, while engaging in exchanges with their peers to drive continued engagement with these

activities within Africa and the African diaspora. Come and join us at this exciting festival.

Programme Director, as we deliberate on this theme we must pay particular attention to among other things:

- Libraries and their role in supporting education and life-long learning.
- Provision of study space, study collections, neo-literacy collections and ICT access.

- Strengthening and enhancing the skills of library and information service workers.
- Attracting more people to this profession.
- Making this a profession of choice and not a last resort.

One famous science fiction writer, Ray Bradbury, once posed a question: "Without libraries what have we? We have no past and no future."

With those few remarks ladies and gentlemen, please do enjoy the conference. We look forward to the outcomes of your deliberations.

Thank you!