



**Address by Her Worship, the Mayor Cllr Zandile Gumede  
on the Occasion of the Gala Dinner: HIV and AIDS  
Programme Inaugural Research Indaba**

**04 October 2016 – 18h30  
Coastlands Hotel on the Ridge**

---

- Programme Director,
- University of KwaZulu-Natal Management,
- Representatives from the University's HIV and AIDS Programme, Student Services Division,
- Academia,
- Speakers in different topics,
- Stakeholders and partners,
- Distinguished guests and dignitaries,
- Ladies and gentlemen,
- All protocol observed,

## **Good evening! Sanibonani!**

Ladies and gentlemen, it is with great pleasure that I address you at this important HIV and AIDS Programme Inaugural Research Indaba Gala Dinner.

It is clear that the discussion on HIV and AIDS can never come to an end, nor can it be ignored because of its global impact. Let me state on the onset that eThekweni supports this research indaba because of its emphasis on the impact of HIV and AIDS on students. We are also proud that this initiative is driven by an education institution, a facility that is used mostly by our young people.

This then creates a platform for us to engage with our young people on matters pertaining to the pandemic because they could be infected or affected by it.

Also worrying is the issue of "blessers and sugar daddies". Earlier this year, Health Minister Honourable Dr Aaron Motsoaledi, announced a campaign that will target the 15 to 24 age group, as well as the men who are infecting and impregnating them.

This is mainly because the Health Department found that, on the socio-behavioural front, their chances of getting HIV/Aids are eight times more than of boys of the same age group. New HIV infections especially amongst adolescent girls and young women are unacceptably high.

The campaign aims to reduce infections in girls and young women, decrease teenage pregnancy, keep girls in schools until matric and increase economic opportunities for them so that they are not drawn into relations with older men.

Ladies and gentlemen, we need to formulate further initiatives that will enable us to fast track towards attaining the goals of ending HIV and TB infections by 2030 or at least to reduce new infections to 200 000 globally. The notion of the Fast Track Cities initiative is very important because the HIV and TB epidemic is highly prevalent in cities.

The attainment of the sustainable development goals in our Municipality is heavily reliant on healthy communities. Dealing decisively with HIV and TB will ensure the health of our communities who will contribute to our vision of economic development and high quality of life.

For eThekweni Municipality, this means achieving our vision of being Africa's most caring and liveable City by 2030.

It must be noted that significant progress has been made in the fight against HIV/AIDS. However, there is still a high rate of new HIV infections which is still a concern to our government.

Our Municipality, working together with other spheres of government and civil society, are committed reducing HIV and TB infections. In fact, the global community has a vision to eradicate AIDS by 2030.

In doing so, we want to involve our young people. One of the ways of reaching this goal is to make sure we reach the 90-90-90 targets by 2020.

### **This means that:**

**For the first 90**, we want 90% of all HIV positive persons to know that they are HIV positive because the only way an HIV positive person can get treatment is by getting tested and knowing that they are positive.

**The second 90** means we must put all people who need treatment on ARVs and make sure that 90% of them stay on treatment for a lifetime. Let us support our friends and relatives who are on treatment so that they can take their medication as they should.

**The third 90** means that for people who are on ARV, healthcare givers must provide good healthcare and the persons on ARV must take treatment every day so that the virus in their systems can reach such a low level that it becomes undetectable when the test is conducted. This is what we call viral suppression. If we do all of the three 90's well, transmission of infections will reduce drastically and we will have very few new infections.

Programme Director, eThekweni has about 650 thousand people living with HIV – approximately 617 thousand adults and approximately 32 thousand children are infected with the virus.

In spite of these high numbers, there has been a dramatic improvement in the access of HIV treatment in government facilities.

EThekweni has about 346 thousand patients who are taking antiretroviral treatment. This is the biggest antiretroviral programme provided by a municipal area in South Africa. This has led to improved quality of life and increased life expectancy.

We have reduced rates of mother to child transmission of HIV – from about 23 percent a few years ago to the current rate of less than 2 percent. We also have an improved TB cure and success rate from 48 percent a few years ago to around 80 percent.

There is a poor uptake of HIV testing by men and poor uptake of medical male circumcision by older men. Despite the provision of free treatment, a significant proportion of people infected with HIV present themselves at health care facilities with a CD4 count of less than 50 percent.

Ladies and gentlemen, our City remains optimistic that we will reach the 90-90-90 targets by 2020 and eliminate new infections for both HIV and TB by 2030. In closing, our Municipality is edging towards zero new infections by 2030.

Therefore, we will work hard over the next few years to contribute to the realisation and success of the 90-90-90 targets.

I call on our higher education institutions and students to work with government to reduce the impact of HIV/AIDS and TB in our communities.

**Thank you!**