



## **Welcome address by Mayor, Cllr Zandile Gumede at the Essence Mayoral Reception – 28 September 2017**

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Programme director,

Bishop TD Jakes,

Rev Al Sharpton,

Members of the Diplomatic Corps,

Members of the media,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Sanibonani,

Ladies and gentlemen, I am pleased once again to welcome you to the Mayoral Reception. Tonight's event is the official welcome for all of you to the Durban Essence Festival.

We want to officially welcome all our international guests who are going to be part of the Essence festival Durban and those who are coming from outside this province.

This is our way of encouraging those who are at home, that **The Essence festival** is already in full swing. We have had a number of very important

conferences where we shared some important knowledge on how we can work together to drive the radical economic transformation agenda.

From the first day, this festival has been addressed by high profile Speakers from both the African continent and the United States of America.

We had a pleasure of being addressed by global figures both in the business and civil society, including the likes Dr Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma, Mr Vivian Reddy, Rev Al Sharpton, and many other key figures.

The City has come alive and we are confident that the legacy of the 2017 Essence festival Durban will extend for many more generations to come.

The second reason is that we felt it was important that we give a brief review of what has happened so far and to provide a brief outline of what is still in store for you.

I urge everyone to use tonight's platform to interact with one another. All stakeholders including the media will get an opportunity to learn more about this festival. We need you to help communicate to our people that the Essence festival is still far from over.

Over the next few days, our people can expect a number of platforms to be addressed by the likes of Bishop TD Jakes, Rev Al Sharpton, Jill Scott, Mzwanele Manyi and many others.

The most important factor is that most of these sessions I have mentioned above are free to the members of the public to attend.

Looking at the many sessions we have had so far, I am confident that this year the 2017 Essence festival Durban will leave a lasting legacy for our people.

In terms of the economic impact, we are confident that our numbers will surpass our conservative targets.

Last year, we received a combined total direct spend of R137.6 million, which resulted in a GDP contribution of R231.6 million into our economy.

In addition, it is estimated that the festival contributed towards the creation and/or sustainment of approximately 524 temporary and/or permanent employment opportunities in the local economy of eThekweni.

With this year's stellar combination of business, music, art and lifestyle industry heavyweights, we expect a significant increase in attendance by delegates and tourists (international and local) for 2017 Durban Essence Festival.

We expect to see a more significant return on investment with regards to eThekweni's (GDP), taxes as well as an increase in employment opportunities.

Some of the highlights that people can look forward to include:

## **ESSENCE EATS**

Essence Eats is a fun culinary element of the ESSENCE Festival Durban that delves into the everyday lives and kitchens of some of Durban's most fascinating cooking professionals, Celebrity Chefs and our locals.

## YOUTH EMPOWREMENT

The summit serves to enlighten the youth about the various business opportunities and provide them with a platform to learn and share ideas.

## **BEAUTY & STYLE**

The beauty and style stage will give upcoming designers and models an opportunity to learn from those who are experienced. It will feature exciting programmes such as lectures; fashion show, hair competition and exhibition.

## **ARTICULATE ART & BOOK FAIR**

The highlight of this year's ARTiculate Book & Art Fair will be a visual arts exhibition curated by Curate. A Space, with the inviting theme of *Carnevale*. This links the festival with Durban's sister city of New Orleans strong history of carnivals such as the Mardi Gras, which is one of that city's major tourist attractions as well as being a liminal space for its citizens who use this occasion to forget differences and celebrate as one.

## **LIFESTYLE & WELLNESS**

Expect to see 3000 fitness fanatics gathered at the Durban New Beach participating in a trendy fitness program packed into an early morning of

fun and fitness, led by trainers, dance instructors and aerobic workout instructors. Expect ten super cool workouts pitched at all levels of fitness.

## **AEROBICS MARATHON**

The aerobics marathon is one of the key features of the festival scheduled to take place at New Beach. Skilled instructors will facilitate fun and action-packed routines such as kick-boxing, step, dance, pilates, yoga and many more.

The session is to be facilitated by ESSENCE Durban Ambassador, Nomzamo Mbatha, will see experienced instructors such as Dennis Nzimande, Yolanda Sokhela, Mapule Ndlovu and other take turns to lead the crowd.

To end of the jam-packed week-long festival, two concerts have been planned. Namely; All Star Concert featuring Jill Scott, Nasty C, Babes Wodumo, Micasa and many more.

Fans of Jill Scott will be excited to know that the three-time Grammy Award winning singer-songwriter, New York Times bestselling poet, and critically-acclaimed actress will perform an exclusive one-night-only concert in the Durban ICC on Saturday 30 September as part of the Festival.

For gospel lovers, the charismatic world renowned and respected Bishop TD Jakes will appear live on stage in a not-to-be missed commemoration of gospel singing, praise, and worship on Sunday 01 October.

Joining him on stage for the first time in SA is our gospel super-group and established international brand, MTN Joyous Celebration.

These two gospel greats have previously worked together in the USA, and now bring the magic of their shared ministry to the Durban ICC.

The evening will also present the best of Durban`s gospel talents, including winners of the eThekweni Annual Gospel ID Competition, as part of the City`s contribution to this memorable occasion.

I thank you.