

**Welcoming remarks by Cllr Mpume Sithole at Human Settlement
Development and Technology Innovation Conference held at MUT
Umlazi Campus, 05 October 2017**

Programme Director, MEC Ravi Pillay,

Chancellor and the Minister of Human Settlement, Hon Lindiwe Sisulu;

Chairperson of the Portfolio Committee – Hon Nocawe Mafu,

Vice Chancellor, Professor Marcus Ramakgale,

Director General, Mr Joseph Leshabane,

Government officials,

Academics and students,

Human Settlement entities represented,

Distinguished guests,

Ladies and gentlemen,

We would like to take this opportunity on behalf of the Mayor and people of eThekweni to welcome you to this wonderful occasion of the National Conference on Human Settlement. The occasion coincided with our provincial launch of transport month in Pinetown and Inanda and unfortunately the Mayor and other councillors couldn't be here to grace this wonderful conference.

We hold a strong view that this conference is critical to us as the sphere of local government because we are at the coalface of service delivery. People knock our doors and demand services and houses which we promised them. In the city like ours where we are faced with urbanisation, the backlog continues to increase and people are slowly becoming impatient. We must emphasise that we are not about to break our promises even though we may delay but it doesn't mean we have rejected our people.

This is why we believe that we need to work together with all the sectors in order to find innovative ways of dealing with issues of delivery of houses. We need to build research capacity and boost the scientific research in collaborations with centres such as universities in order to be competitive.

Programme Director,

While the Municipality has a proud record in delivering housing opportunity, much is still to be done to address the current backlogs. In the past 365 days since we entered into office, we have constructed 5003 new houses and 35 family units in the last year. Once again, eThekweni Municipality was a winner at the annual Govan Mbeki awards. The City was credited with the best Community Residential units, for the recently built family units in the Glebelands precinct. We have also won in the past few at our provincial Govan Mbeki awards in Seven Categories – this shows that despite the challenges but we are on the right track.

We have Cornubia which is one of the Presidential projects which is key and one of the highlights in the human settlement. It is an innovative project by the democratic government of South Africa that has been able to move us from a concept of building houses to realise the concept of human settlement. We don't just build you a house, but a home which offers you space for worship, playing, schooling, working and shopping. This is what our flagship project Cornubia is about.

Last week the Mayor officially opened the Cornubia Mall which contributes to the overall vision of the Cornubia Integrated Development by bringing communities close to job opportunities. Cornubia is a Catalytic Project of National Strategic Importance, on SIP 2 and is linked to the Durban-Gauteng Transport Corridor.

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Together with our private sector partners, the Municipality has embarked on a process of linking residents of Cornubia and surrounding areas to work opportunities in the greater uMhlanga region. Work preparation and skills development courses are being offered to job seekers who register with the various programmes. Numerous construction related employment opportunities

are also available, which also provides opportunities for SMME contractors to gain vital experience.

Schools and recreational facilities are designed to be accessible within walking distances of the residential areas, being developed on social clusters within or adjacent to housing. The first permanent primary school on the first social cluster in Phase 1 has been designed and the tender will be advertised within a fortnight. A multipurpose community hall is being simultaneously constructed and this will include a primary health care facility.

Discussions are underway with the Department of Education on the planning of a high school and a second primary school for Phase 1.

Cornubia is contributing to the integration of the city and the legacy of spatial and economic imbalances of historical planning by bringing communities close to job opportunities, social amenities, major services and public transport, embracing all aspects of human settlement and the natural, social and economic environments. It is designed to be pedestrian friendly and to include cycle lanes where possible in order to create a balanced and healthy community.

Without further wasting of time, I would like to thank you and welcome all of you to this wonderful and beautiful occasion. We wish you well in all your

deliberations and hope that this is not going to be a talk show but an opportunity to engage and find short term and long term solution for our people.

I thank you.