



**Address by Her Worship, the Mayor, Cllr Zandile
Gumede on the Occasion of the Matrix KZN 2016**

30 September 2016 – 18h00

Durban City Hall

Address by Mayor Cllr Zandile Gumede at the Matrix KZN 2016

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- Programme Director,
- MEC for Education in KwaZulu-Natal, Honourable Mthandeni Dlungwane,
- Executive Director of Umvithi – Rural Youth Development Foundation SA,
- KwaZulu-Natal Department of Arts and Culture Senior Manager, Dr Raj Govender,
- University of KwaZulu-Natal Deputy Vice Chancellor, Professor Cheryl Potgieter,

- Education experts,
- Learners,
- Stakeholders and partners,
- Esteemed guests,
- Ladies and gentlemen,
- All protocol observed,

Ladies and gentlemen, most importantly our Grade 12 learners, good evening! Sanibonani!

Zingane zami, ngaze ngakujabulela ukuba nani namuhla ntambama!

Tonight we honour our Grade 12 learners who perform remarkably well despite the circumstances facing the schools they attend.

Most of the schools can be referred to as previously disadvantaged schools.

When we talk about disadvantaged schools we refer to schools that are under-resourced.

With the little that is available to them, these learners make the most of it and perform well in their studies.

Ladies and gentlemen, these children have made education their priority. As government, we are doing all that we can to ensure that every South African child gets a primary and secondary education.

Even though we have celebrated 22 years of democracy, we cannot deny the visible legacy of the apartheid regime in our education system.

Our Government is working hard to reverse the effects of the past, especially where education is concerned.

Learners, the transformation of disadvantaged schools will not happen overnight. However, as challenging as it is, it must not stand in the way of performing to the best of your ability.

You have performed well throughout the year and you will soon face the toughest examinations in your schooling years.

I am confident that you will do exceptionally well despite the hardships.

Learners, we encourage you to remain focused as you move to the next chapter in your lives, where you will be going into training for different career paths.

Some of you will be entering the job market. Make the right choices and put your education above everything else, because education is the only key to a better life.

Although education is not the primary mandate of the Municipality, we believe that we have an important role to play in promoting and facilitating a conducive environment for learning and teaching at all levels of education.

More so the City is interested in developing the skills levels of our young people so that they can become productive future employees especially in technical skills which are in demand.

It is this democracy that led to the transformation of a government that seeks to repair and address the imbalances of the past.

I am pleased that eThekweni Municipality has set aside a significant portion of its 2016/17 budget for youth programmes.

Despite challenges, our Municipality is committed to the plight of young people so much so that close to 1 billion rands will be directed to youth development initiatives through various Units within our Municipality.

To demonstrate our commitment to youth development and empowerment, we have set up a Youth Office which facilitates all youth programmes in our City.

The development of skilled youth is critical in our economy. We will facilitate the training of 10 000 youth as artisans over the next three years.

We have partnered with local universities in training programmes to ensure we have the skills required for economic growth.

Last year, we introduced the Mayoral Student Financial Relief Fund which offers bursaries to learners who come from disadvantaged backgrounds to ensure access to education.

This fund provides deserving learners with registration fees so that they can access education, which constitutes lifetime empowerment of a young person. This year, we have provided assistance to the tune of R5.4 million to over 500 learners.

We will continue to invest in youth development. Also, more than 12 thousand young people are benefiting through the skills development programmes.

About one thousand youth are being recruited to assist in identifying water leaks in light of the current drought situation. They will also educate communities on saving water efficiently.

Furthermore, approximately 110 young people will be trained in the fashion design sector.

A hundred young people will be recruited for Business Admin Learnership programme and 100 will be recruited for a Contact Centre Training.

Youth living with disabilities will be prioritised for both these programmes.

Programme Director, the youth office has proposed a Township Economy Revitalisation Programme that aims to assist micro-business owned by young people. Our City is ascertaining the viability of this programme.

These programmes, ladies and gentlemen, demonstrate that eThekweni is serious about developing and empowering our young people. We want to partner with the youth to help them realise their dreams.

In closing, I wish to take this opportunity to wish the learners all the best for their final examinations and their future endeavours.

Ikusasa lakho lisezandleni zakho!

Ngiyabonga!