



**Address by Her Worship, Mayor Cllr Zandile Gumede on
the Occasion of the Oceans Economy Business Event**

**02 September 2016 – 18h00
UShaka Marine - Aquarium**

- Programme Directors,
- Captains of Industry,
- Businesswomen,
- Speakers in different topics,
- Stakeholders and partners,
- Distinguished guests and dignitaries,
- Ladies and gentlemen,
- All protocol observed,

Sanibonani!

It is an honour for me to join you all tonight, as we gather to take stock and celebrate the achievements of women in the struggle for total liberation of our country.

Ladies, it is important that before I begin my brief message of support to this programme, I first thank you all for coming. It is important that we take initiatives of this nature very seriously as they speak directly to the objective of advancing the Women's agenda.

Furthermore, it is pleasing for me to join be a part of this women's month celebration. Equally, more than the fact that we support the noble objectives that this event is hosted under, it also gives practicality to our call to make Women's Month go beyond the month of August.

To us, every day of the year should be dedicated to celebrating the achievements women have recorded in liberating this country. Furthermore, I am pleased by the fact that this event is set against an objective of finding ways to include women in a male-dominated sector, the oceans economy.

Programme director, we meet here today to discuss the possible ways in which women can be empowered economically. We are of the view that whatever men can do, we can do better! As women of South Africa we have come a long way from the adoption of the Women's Charter in 1954.

However, even though we celebrate these achievements of the past, we need to prepare ourselves for the challenges that lie ahead. Women must work hard towards their integration into the mainstream economy.

Programme director, in keeping with theme of this gathering, allow me to touch on some of the important element of the oceans economy and the role that women must play.

We cannot rest and pretend that all is well when we are still the hardest hit in terms of all societal challenges.

Ladies, the struggle for economic freedom demands that we unite and create our own generation's Lillian Ngoyi's, Dorothy Nyembe and the likes.

We must draw inspiration from them, but history on its own is not going to liberate us.

We remain indebted to the wisdom of President Zuma and his cabinet, for the inception of an idea like Operation Phakisa.

This document has enabled us draft a framework of how we can approach and capitalise on the wealth that lies beneath our oceans.

It is for that reason that we say women should lead direction in all four key areas of exploring Operation Phakisa, as per lined out in the document.

We need more women to take up leadership roles in the areas of marine transport and manufacturing, off-shore oil and gas exploration, aqua-culture work streams and marine protection services and governance.

Ladies, these are some of the areas that have been identified as critical in our government's strategies of significantly boosting our economic growth rate.

It cannot be business as usual when women remain the lowest represented group in strategic decision making bodies.

The oceans have the potential to contribute up to 177 billion rand to the gross domestic product and create just over one million jobs by 2033.

We need to have more women in key strategic positions, both in government and the private sector. We must demand our rightful place in the decision making tables. Not because we are in the majority, but also because we are the most affected by these decisions.

Programme director, with those few words, I would like to thank the organisers for extending an invitation to my office. I believe that we must be afforded this platform annually so that we can measure the progress made by women in the maritime sector. Our Municipality will continue to support the empowerment of women in all sectors.

Thank you!

