

**Welcome Address by Mayor Cllr Zandile Gumede,
On the KZN Sports Awards 2017**

15 September 2016 – 18h00

Inkosi Albert Luthuli International Convention Centre

- Programme Director,
- Honourable Premier of KwaZulu-Natal, Mr Willies Mchunu,
- MEC for Arts, Culture, Sport and Recreation, Mrs Bongzi Sithole-Moloi,
- KwaZulu-Natal MEC's
- Members of Parliament,
- Other Mayor's present and Members of Executive Committees,
- Councillors,
- Head of Department of Sport and Recreation, Mrs Rohini Naidoo,
- All senior Government officials,
- President of the KZN Sports Confederation, Mr Thami Mchunu,
- Presidents and Chairpersons of Sports Federations and Clubs,
- Our sports veterans,
- Our athletes, coaches and administrators,
- Members of the media,
- Distinguished guests and dignitaries,
- Ladies and gentlemen,
- All protocol observed,

Sanibonani! Good evening!

Ladies and gentlemen, welcome to KZN Sports Awards 2017!

Tonight's occasion is about recognizing sporting excellence of our athletes, officials and entities in the sport and recreation.

With the City of Durban's vision of being Africa's leading sports and events capital, we are proud to host the KZN Sports Awards 2016.

We are very excited that we are having these awards after announcement by MTN 8 Cup. We are proud that Moses Mabhida has been selected to host the 2017 Cup Final. This will cup final will be taking place during the weekend of ESSENCE festival and I encourage all of you to buy tickets.

Yesterday, I was in Mophela Primary School at Hammersdale on the west region of the city. I was there to bid farewell to primary school soccer team that is going to be representing South Africa in the USA at the DANONE Cup. I was so happy to see these young men who are led by a woman coach. These kids don't even have a proper soccer field with grass. They play on the dust but they were able to beat schools with all the facilities in the country. South Africa has talent, we need to go out there and find it. We need to reach to these talented kids before drug lords and sickness find them.

We must develop them now so that we will have a winning Bafana-Bafana. We have pledge to support them with proper soccer field that will be named after them so that future generations could be inspired at a young age.

Programme Director,

Thank you for hosting these awards during the Heritage Month, sport is part of heritage and culture. This month we must encourage diversity and also encourage the participation of all races in different sporting codes. We must encourage other races to participate in the indigenous sports. We want to teach our fellow Indians and Whites things like umlabalaba, amagende, u-RGogo, umagalobha kanye nokushaya induku.

Chess is similar to Umlabalaba but it doesn't get the same recognition – it is important that we promote it across all cutlures and sell to international community.

This will promote diversity and unity amongst our cultures. If we learn about one another through sports we will be able to be achieve unity in our diversity.

Our government is working towards transformation in sport which is very critical in reflecting our 23 years of democracy. Our country is a rainbow nation and therefore, this must reflect in participation of citizens in the different sporting codes that we have.

We must be the drivers of transformation in sport. By doing so, we will promote social cohesion and unity. Our City invests in sports development for the youth.

Among the programmes we have embarked on to ensure sports development, is the formation of the KZN Academy.

This development structure has seen a number of our young soccer players being selected to play for teams in the Premier Soccer League and abroad.

We also have the annual South African Local Government Association Games where youth have an opportunity to further develop their sporting skills.

These initiatives show that we are serious about sports development and grooming our young people into recognised sports men and women.

Ladies and gentlemen, in welcoming you, I would like to congratulate the recipients of tonight's sport's awards. May they continue to excel in their sports careers.

I Thank you