REMARKS BY ETHEKWINI MUNICIPALITY MAYOR, CLLR CYRIL XABA AT THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY COMMEMORATION OF SRILA PRABHUPADA'S MILESTONE VISIT TO SOUTH AFRICA, 5 OCTOBER AT KENDRA HALL.

- Programme Director
- Deputy Minister Forestry & Fisheries: mr Narend Singh
- Dr Thelma John David: Consul-General of India (Durban)
- Disciples of Srila Prabhupada:
- His Grace Sruta Kirti dasa
- His Grace Ksudhi dasa
- His Grace Medhavi dasa
- His Holinness Bhakti Brhat Bhagavat Swami
- His Holiness Bhakti Sarvajna Gauranga Swami
- Prof Brij Maharaj: Deputy President of Hindu Maha Sabha
- Distinguished religious leaders in our midst
- Respected members of ISKCON

Good afternoon and Hare Krishna

It is an honour and a privilege for me to stand before you today as we commemorate the 50th anniversary of Srila A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada’s historic visit to South Africa. We are indeed overjoyed that you have chosen the city of Durban to celebrate this significant milestone.

Fifty years ago, Srila Prabhupada's arrival on our shores marked not only the beginning of the Hare Krishna movement in South Africa, but also a new chapter in our collective spiritual awakening. His teachings of devotion, compassion, simplicity, and service to humanity resonated deeply with people across racial, cultural, and social divides, especially during a time when our country was still under the shadow of apartheid.

Today, we celebrate not only his physical journey to South Africa, but also the enduring legacy of his message which is rooted in love, peace, equality and unity. His emphasis on the principle that our bodies are eternal souls connected to the Supreme, remains a profound reminder of our shared humanity.

Across the world, Srila Prabhupada's teachings have inspired millions of people, reminding us that spirituality knows no borders. His establishment of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON) temples in over 100 countries stands as a testament to the universal appeal of his message of devotion and peace.

His mission continues to grow through temples, schools, and humanitarian projects that promote both spiritual growth and social upliftment. This movement has empowered communities through education, ethical living, and service, embodying the spirit of Ubuntu, that “I am because you are.”

As we look to the next fifty years, may we draw strength from Srila Prabhupada’s vision to build communities grounded in faith, guided by compassion, and dedicated to the service of all living beings. Let this anniversary be not just a remembrance, but a renewal of purpose.

As the City of eThekwini, we are proud to be home to a vibrant ISKCON community that continues to uplift society through social welfare, food distribution, cultural education, and spiritual development. The Hare Krishna movement’s initiatives, such as the “Food for Life” programme, have reached thousands of underprivileged citizens, providing nourishment not only for the body but also for the soul.

Your work aligns with our city’s vision of being the most caring and liveable city. You have shown through your actions that faith is not merely a private

pursuit, but a public good, transforming communities and offering hope to the marginalised.

As we commemorate this golden jubilee, we are called upon to reflect on the timeless wisdom that Srila Prabhupada brought to us. A wisdom that transcends generations and speaks to the challenges of our modern world - the need for unity, environmental stewardship, moral leadership, and inner peace.

On behalf of the people of eThekwini, I extend heartfelt congratulations to ISKCON South Africa for fifty years of dedicated service, cultural enrichment, and spiritual inspiration. May this anniversary reignite our commitment to serve humanity, honour our shared values, and continue building bridges of understanding among all faiths and communities.

May Srila Prabhupada’s vision continue to inspire us toward a society rooted in love, service, and truth.

Hare Krishna.

Thank you.