ADDRESS BY ETHEKWINI MUNICIPALITY MAYOR, CLLR CYRIL XABA, AT THE CHINESE INVESTMENT BREAKFAST, 12 NOVEMBER 2025

- Programme Director
- Consul General of the People's Republic of China in Durban, His Excellency Mr Li Zhigong
- Deputy Mayor: Cllr Zandile Myeni
- Speaker of Council: Cllr Thabani Nyawose
- Whip of Council: Cllr Sinegugu Sishange
- Chairpersons of Committees
- EXCO Members
- CEO of Transnet Freight Rail Infrastructure Manager: Mr Moshe Motlohi who has joined us virtually
- CEO for the Durban Chamber of Commerce and Industry: Ms Palesa Phili
- Mr Paulo Franco of FPT
- Mr Selvan Pillay: Transnet Port Terminals Durban
- Chinese Business Leaders represented by Mr Tan Long: Manager of COSCO Shipping South Africa, Ms He Dan and Ms Simangele

Tshabalala who is the Director of Public Relations and Transformation at NPC,

- Esteemed Guests
- Members of the Media
- Ladies and Gentlemen

Good morning. Sanibonani.

It gives me great pleasure to extend a warm welcome to all of you and to thank you for taking the time to attend this important engagement despite your busy schedules.

This meeting forms part of our ongoing efforts to strengthen our partnership with Chinese investors in KwaZulu-Natal, particularly here in Durban. Our goal is to build on our existing cooperation, identify new areas for investment, and develop tangible solutions to challenges that may hinder progress.

We gather here fully aware of the deep historical bonds between our two nations. From China’s support for South Africa during our struggle for

freedom, to our shared role in BRICS where we continue to champion South–South cooperation — our relationship has always been rooted in solidarity and mutual respect. Our shared values of eradicating poverty and inequality remain as strong as ever. It is therefore imperative that we continue to strengthen economic ties for our mutual benefit.

In recent months, we have welcomed several delegations from cities across the People's Republic of China, all seeking to deepen economic relations with eThekwini Municipality.

Just last month, I had the privilege of leading a delegation to various cities in China to position Durban as an indispensable strategic partner for Chinese businesses in South Africa. Beyond being a port city, Durban serves as an economic gateway linking Asia, Africa, and the Global South. Our strong and multi-layered relationships with key Chinese cities provide a unique framework for partnership across logistics, manufacturing, digital trade, and green technology.

As South Africa prepares to host the G20 Summit, Durban stands at the forefront of shaping discussions around reducing inequality through job

creation and shared prosperity. For Chinese enterprises, our message is clear: partnering with Durban is the most strategic way to scale your African operations.

Ladies and gentlemen, Durban is not just a South African city — it is a continental asset. We are the gateway to Africa. Durban is home to the busiest container port on the continent, handling over 60% of South Africa's shipping and serving as the primary entry point to a 300-million-person consumer market in the Southern African Development Community (SADC) region.

We are also the terminus of major road and rail corridors connecting the coast to the industrial and mining heartlands of Gauteng and further into landlocked countries such as Botswana, Zimbabwe, and the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Moreover, Durban is a logistics hub for the continent, with a concentrated cluster of port terminals, warehousing facilities, distribution centres, and manufacturing parks — all dedicated to ensuring seamless supply chain management.

I am pleased that with us today is Mr Moshe Motlohi, CEO of Transnet Freight Rail, who will share insights on how South Africa, and particularly Durban, is positioning itself as a regional logistics hub through the rail revitalisation programme.

We also welcome Mr Selvan Pillay from the Transnet National Ports Authority, who will provide an update on ongoing investment opportunities and infrastructure development at the Port. Additionally, we are joined by private sector partners working with us to develop a dry port in the Cato Ridge area. Mr Paulo Franco from FPT will share their vision for transforming this area into a vibrant logistics hub for our city.

As the leadership of eThekwini, we remain committed to partnering with the private sector to position Durban as a destination of choice for investment. Together with our partners, we are focused on removing bottlenecks and creating a seamless ecosystem within the logistics sector.

Our partnership philosophy is grounded in the principle of shared prosperity. We continue to be a proactive partner through initiatives such

as our Single-Window Facilitation Unit, which provides dedicated support to investors navigating regulations, securing permits, and connecting with local partners.

We also value stability and predictability which are essential ingredients for long-term partnerships — demonstrated through our enduring sister city relationships with several Chinese cities. We believe that for business to thrive, communities must also benefit. Therefore, we will work with you to ensure that investments lead to job creation, skills development, and sustainable economic growth for the people of eThekwini.

In conclusion, we invite the Chinese business community to see Durban not merely as a destination, but as a partner. Together, let us build bridges, transform our ports, enhance digital platforms, and develop industries that will define the next chapter of Africa’s growth. We have no doubt that by working together, we can turn our strategic partnership into shared prosperity.

We look forward to a robust and constructive engagement that delivers meaningful outcomes for the people of both our nations.

I thank you.