ADDRESS BY ETHEKWINI MUNICIPALITY MAYOR, CLLR CYRIL XABA AT THE RESURGENCE CONFERENCE 2025, 22 SEPTEMBER 2025, DURBAN ICC

- Programme Director
- Chairperson of Economic development and Planning: Cllr Thembo Ntuli
- All Councillors present
- City Manager: Mr Musa Mbhele
- Senior Management of the Municipality
- Rev. Dennis Dillon: Convener, RESURGENCE / Publisher, New York Christian Times (Faith and Economics)
- Mr Ndaba Mandela: Chair, Mandela Institute for Humanity (Leadership and Pan-Africanism)
- US business delegation
- Local businesses leadership
- Delegates
- Ladies and Gentlemen

Good morning. Sanibona.

It is a great honour for me to address this second annual RESURGENCE Conference 2025. Allow me to thank the Chairperson of the Portfolio Committee on Economic Development and Planning, Cllr Thembo Ntuli and the City Manager Musa Mbhele for leading the teams that organised this prestigious event.

Let me also acknowledge the efforts of Rev. Dennis Dillon of ensuring the full participation of the US delegation in this conference.

As you all know, this is the second edition of the Resurgence Conference, and we are pleased that the experience we gained last year will make us deliver a successful event. Our teams have put comprehensive plans to ensure that you enjoy your stay in Durban.

Ladies and gentlemen, since eThekwini Municipality is the economic powerhouse of the province of KwaZulu-Natal, with a contribution of 59% to the province's GDP, we are committed to ensure that our growth and development strategy continues to positively impact the whole province.

We are also a major contributor to the national economy, accounting for approximately 7% of South Africa's GDP. Due to our strategic position as a port city, which is home to the largest and busiest shipping terminal in sub-Saharan Africa, we are a key economic player not only in the country, but in the region.

However, considering the huge disparities that still exist in our society, stemming from the legacy of colonialism and apartheid, more effort needs to be put to boost the economy of this country so that we can eradicate the triple threat of poverty, unemployment, and inequality.

This should not be a difficult task, considering that we have a diverse economy which includes strong manufacturing, finance, logistics, and tourism sectors which are supported by our port and extensive transportation infrastructure which makes us to be strategic gateway for continental and international trade.

We are confident that the partnership we have forged through this platform of resurgence will assist us to share knowledge and best practices on how

we can leverage these sectors for the benefit of our people both in the country and African diaspora.

Aptly themed, ***"A Thicker Slice of the Economic Pie: Access. Connect. Thrive,"*** this theme is a clarion call to all of us that we must be resolute in building an economy that serves all our people. We must be unapologetic in ensuring that those who were previously excluded by the brutal apartheid system are allowed to participate meaningfully in the mainstream economy.

Therefore, we must empower black people and Africans in particular, women, the youth, and people with disability with necessary skills and tools to contribute to growing the economy.

We must state that it is our hope that deliberations over the next two days will result in real deals being sealed and strategic partnerships being established. This conference must be etched in our memories for the transformation it will bring to the lives of ordinary people. In the next few years, we want to hear testimonies from entrepreneurs who would have benefited from this initiative.

It is encouraging to know that already there are local entrepreneurs who are currently being mentored by US-based businesspeople. This gives practical meaning to our commitment of creating partnerships that work.

Ladies and gentlemen, I am excited about the economic prospects of this city. The business confidence is on an upward trajectory both locally and internationally. Working together through resurgence, we must unlock more opportunities.

In the past two weeks, I attended two conferences in India and Russia on how we can build vibrant and competitive global cities. It was interesting to see that everyone was keen to know how the city of Durban is handling issues of climate change, urban renewal, and digital transformation. This demonstrates that we are fast becoming a key player in the global community and our efforts are being recognised.

Now that we have our fellow brothers and sisters from the United State with whom we share a common history, the message that Durban is open for business will spread far and wide.

City Manager it would be remiss of me not to congratulate you and your team which worked diligently to ensure that Durban continues to host the Africa's Travel Indaba for the next five years. I received the news while I was abroad, and it fills me with an immense sense of pride. Such events are crucial in attracting investment and showcasing Durban as a globally competitive city.

With these remarks, let me wish you wonderful stay in our warm city of Durban and I am confident that you will have a fruitful 2025 RESURGENCE Conference. Let us work together to drive sustainable economic growth both locally and in the African diaspora.

I thank you