REMARKS BY THE ETHEKWINI MUNICIPALITY MAYOR, CLLR CYRIL XABA AT THE TRAIN SET #300 MANUFACTURING CELEBRATION AND ISIPHINGO SHOPPING CENTRE OPENING, 28 OCTOBER 2025

- Programme director
- Minister of Transport: Ms. Barbara Creecy
- MEC for Transport and Human Settlements: Mr. Siboniso Duma
- PRASA Representatives
- Stakeholders
- Officials
- Distinguished guests
- Members of the media
- Ladies and gentlemen

Good morning. Sanibona.

On behalf of the people of eThekwini Municipality, we would like to extend the warmest welcome to everyone. Today's event is significant because it takes place at a time when we are close to concluding the National

Transport Month where we showcase the significance of the transport sector in growing the economy.

From the onset, we wish to express our appreciation to the Department of Transport, SANRAL and all the entities involved in the major project that is transforming the provinces road network. The multi-billion rands investment into upgrading the N2 and N3 has brought renewed hope to local communities who have been employed during the construction phase.

We have no doubt that once complete, this road infrastructure will help drive economic growth not only for eThekwini, but for the whole country – ensuring smooth movement of goods between the Durban Harbour and the rest of the sub-Saharan Africa region.

Ladies and gentlemen, we are excited to be part of today's launch of the Train Set #300 because we recognise the pivotal role the rail sector plays in promoting economic growth and supporting trade. Rail remains one of the most efficient and cost-effective modes of transport, whether moving goods or people.

Therefore, this milestone of the 300th locally manufactured passenger train set marks a significant achievement for the local industry. This accomplishment demonstrates that we have enough capacity as a nation to manufacture our own infrastructure.

It is our hope that this new addition will improve the travel experience of all users of rail transport. More, importantly, this should make the work of transporting residents much easier for the South African Passenger Agency of South Africa (PRASA) which is tasked with managing and providing passenger rail services.

Programme director, we are also delighted that the Minister's visit will also see the official opening of the Isipingo Shopping Centre which is yet another demonstration that Durban is open for business. We must state that the growth we are witnessing in the retail sector is due to our efforts to create a conducive environment for investors. As a city, working with all relevant stakeholders, we want to make it easy for business to invest in eThekwini Municipality.

As leadership of eThekwini Municipality, we welcome government's commitment to resuscitate rail transport so that people employed in places

such as the new Isipingo Shopping Centre and the public can save when they travel.

It will be remised of me not to commend the minister for the issuing of the Request for Information (RFI) for regional speed trains linking the cities of Durban, Johannesburg, Polokwane, Musina, Pretoria and Mbombela.

As the city of Durban, we welcome this move because it will grow the economy of the city, particularly the tourism industry. We have no doubt that, upon completion, thousands of people will travel from Johannesburg to Durban weekly to have a good time in our city.

Honourable Minister, we are also working closely with Transnet to enhance the efficiency of the port and ease congestion. Among the initiatives we are collaborating on include the development of the dry port in Cato Ridge, establishment of truck staging areas and building of a second access road to the port. We are pleased that a memorandum of understanding has already been signed between the municipality and Transnet Port Terminal. Our teams have also commenced with the process of rezoning land for the implementation of these projects.

In closing, we want to take this opportunity to thank all the partners who continue to work towards building a reliable and safe public transport system that prioritises passenger safety. Together, let us develop a transport system that is modern, inclusive, and able to transform the city's public transport experience.

With these remarks, let me once again congratulate the Department of Transport and PRASA for this great milestone of reaching 300th locally manufactured train set.

I thank you.