ADDRESS BY ETHEKWINI MUNICIPALITY MAYOR, CLLR CYRIL XABA ON THE OCCASION OF VOLVO TRUCKS SOUTH AFRICA'S 20TH ANNIVERSARY, 19 AUGUST 2026

- Programme Director;
- Senior Vice President of Volvo Trucks International, Mr. Per-Erik Lindström;
- The Managing Director of Volvo Trucks South Africa, Mr. Stuart Potter;
- Distinguished Guests, Management, and the hardworking Employees of Volvo Trucks;
- Members of the Media;
- Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good morning.

It is a distinct honour to stand before you today to celebrate a truly remarkable milestone – the 20th anniversary of Volvo Trucks' local assembly operations here in Durban.

For two decades, this facility has been a cornerstone of our city's industrial capability. To witness your evolution from a modest operation assembling four trucks a day to a sophisticated plant capable of producing up to 14 trucks daily and over 3,100 units annually is a testament to the power of partnership and the spirit of innovation.

This anniversary is not merely about celebrating the past. It is a powerful statement of confidence in the future of our City, of KwaZulu-Natal province, and of South Africa. Investments from global giants like Volvo are the very lifeblood of our socio-economic development. They build vital industrial capacity, create high-quality jobs, and foster a culture of excellence and skills development that our people need to thrive.

Volvo contributes directly to solving the mobility and logistics needs of our country and continent. The trucks assembled right here in Durban move goods across borders, connect markets, and enable trade that sustains livelihoods. In a region where efficient transportation is often the difference between economic success and stagnation, Volvo's presence ensures that our logistics sector is powered by reliable, world-class vehicles that keep our economies moving.

Continued investments by global automotive groups such as Volvo ensure that South Africa remains at the forefront of technological advancement. Through these partnerships, we access the best and latest technologies available, positioning our country competitively in the global automotive landscape. As the world steadily moves towards New Energy Vehicles and self-driving vehicles, we see immense potential for collaboration. Perhaps an opportunity might arise for joint ventures that develop mobility solutions tailored to address Africa's infrastructural and transportation challenges, connecting our people, goods and services more efficiently and sustainably.

This continued commitment by Volvo aligns with the vision of our city, province, and nation. The work being done here directly supports the country's Master Plan for the Automotive Sector, which seeks to dramatically increase local content, double employment, and drive transformation across the value chain. Volvo's investment is a direct contribution to achieving these ambitious national goals.

Locally, this vision is mirrored in eThekwini's own automotive sector strategy. Our city is South Africa's second-largest industrial and economic hub, and we are determined to maintain this status and even improve our positioning by attracting sustainable investment in high-impact sectors.

Our Economic Development Incentive Policy specifically prioritises the automotive sector, offering significant rebates to stimulate investment and job creation. This policy, alongside strategic initiatives to support Black-owned SMMEs in the supply chain, demonstrates our commitment to a more inclusive and resilient industry.

We also recognise that to attract and retain investment, we must create an enabling environment. That is why the municipality is making substantial investments to bolster infrastructure in our key industrial nodes such as Pinetown, Prospecton, and others. We are upgrading roads, improving utility reliability, and enhancing logistics connectivity to ensure these areas remain suitable for investment. Our investments collaborate national investments which are seen in the N2/N3 national road networks upgrade to address the congestion challenge whilst enhancing our networks to world-class standards.

By doing so, we encourage new investors to choose eThekwini and give existing investors the confidence to continue expanding their operations.

Why choose Durban?

Our city is a strategic investment destination, serving as the premier gateway not only to the Southern African region but to the entire African continent.

We possess unmatched strategic assets, including the Port of Durban, South Africa's largest port. We are also home to the Dube Trade Port Special Economic Zone ,host to the King Shaka International Airport, which connects you to global markets and a continent of immense opportunity.

Our message is clear: eThekwini is a city that works with its partners to build a prosperous future.

The recent 46th Ordinary SADC Summit of Heads of State, which ended on Monday, and came hard on the heels of the SADC Industrialisation Summit held late last month – both hosted by our City – attest to the region's laser-focus resolve to address the socio-economic, infrastructure, connectivity, mobility and transportation, as well as digital gaps that derail our sustainable development.

As a city, we are aligned with this regional vision and welcome partners who share our determination to bridge these gaps and unlock the full potential of our people. Thus, we are deeply proud of this local assembly operation by Volvo. It stands as a powerful symbol of what we can achieve when a global industrial leader and a local community come together with a shared vision.

To the management and staff of Volvo Trucks South Africa: thank you for your hard work and dedication over the past 20 years.

We look forward to the next 20 years of growth, continued investment, innovation, and shared success.

Happy 20th Anniversary.

I thank you.