ADDRESS BY ETHEKWINI MUNICIPALITY MAYOR, CLLR CYRIL XABA AT THE PEWG MEDIA ROUNDTABLE, 11 JUNE 2026

- Programme Director
- Co-Chair of the PeGW: Mr Mike Mabuyakhulu
- Acting Executive Director for Corporate Services: Mr Sihle Mkhize
- PeWG Secretariat
- Members of the Media
- Ladies and Gentlemen

Good morning

It gives me great pleasure to be part of this crucial meeting and to report to the public on the progress we are making as a city through the Presidential eThekwini Working Group (PeWG) to accelerate service delivery and grow the city's economy.

Working together, we have been able to stabilise the city, and we are beginning to see positive results, as demonstrated by the sharp increase in business confidence and the revitalisation of the tourism sector.

During the 2025 festive season, the city recorded approximately 1.2 million visitors, with accommodation occupancy increasing to 77%, up from 72% in 2024. Tourism spending during this period also rose from R2.2 billion to R2.7 billion, representing a 24% increase. The city was recently ranked 14th among the world's best places to travel in 2026 by Time Out Worldwide, demonstrating that our tourism sector is firmly on an upward trajectory.

We attribute this sharp increase in visitor numbers to, among other factors, the opening of all 23 bathing beaches. This was made possible by the extensive work undertaken to repair and upgrade sanitation infrastructure across the city, improving licence compliance, capacity and effluent quality.

For the first time in five years, all our bulk water reservoirs remained stable throughout the festive season, with the Durban Heights, Wiggins and Midmar Treatment Works operating at full capacity. This resulted in communities in the north, south and central regions enjoying an

uninterrupted water supply, and I am pleased that this trend has continued beyond the festive season.

This achievement is thanks to the investment we made in the Northern Aqueduct, as well as the refurbishment and upgrade of the Ntuzuma Pump Station, both of which have significantly stabilised water supply in northern areas. We are also making excellent progress with the Southern Aqueduct upgrade, with several work packages already completed. We are confident that this R1.2 billion project will be completed by December this year, bringing much-needed relief to the 1.2 million residents living in the south of Durban.

We are also making significant strides with the Lower uMkhomazi Bulk Water Supply Scheme. Last week, we introduced the contractor who will commence with the second phase of the Water Treatment Works. This is the final phase of the R11 billion project, which includes a storage dam, a water abstraction point and a water treatment plant.

Upon completion, the project will produce 100 megalitres of water per day. Of this amount, 75 megalitres will be supplied to eThekwini Municipality.

This volume will be sufficient to supply all areas in the south, from Isipingo to uMkhomazi. The water currently being supplied to these areas will then be redirected to the central, northern and outer western regions to further stabilise supply.

Although the project was delayed by legal processes, Umgeni-uThukela Water has committed to ensuring that, by the end of next year, we will begin receiving water from this scheme.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Our efforts to rejuvenate the inner city are well on track as we continue to rehabilitate major road networks within the CBD. Roads already completed include Sandile Thusi Road, Smiso Nkwanyana Road, Masabalala Yengwa Avenue, Soldiers Way, Market Road and Margaret Mncadi Avenue. Currently, we are refurbishing Dr Pixley Ka Seme Street previously known as West Street.

Significant progress has also been made in repairing and upgrading road infrastructure damaged by recurring floods. Completed projects include:

- The R20 million Tshelimnyama Bridge
- The R40 million Phoenix Industrial Park Bridge
- The R47 million Coedmore Bridge Road upgrade
- The R70 million Blundell Road Bridge in Shallcross

In addition, numerous stormwater projects have been completed across KwaMashu, Ntuzuma, Inanda and Umlazi.

All of this has been achieved during Phase One of the PeWG, which we refer to as the Stabilisation Phase. Our technical team will provide further details on the milestones achieved during Phase Two, which we have termed the Catalytic Growth Phase. This phase focuses on:

- Strengthening partnerships to unlock infrastructure investment
- Reducing the cost of doing business and cutting red tape
- Strengthening manufacturing and industrial zones
- Inner-city regeneration

With regard to strengthening industrial and manufacturing zones, I am pleased to report that our teams are working tirelessly to support 61 designated industrial areas comprising approximately 27,000 businesses.

These businesses generate around R9 billion annually and contribute more than 50% of the City's total revenue base.

For example, we are undertaking significant infrastructure improvements in Prospecton, where substantial investments are being made in roads, electricity, water and sanitation infrastructure. As a result of this work, Toyota has committed R10 billion towards expanding its investment in the area. This industrial node alone generates more than R1 billion annually in rates revenue for the city.

We have also addressed several service delivery challenges in the Phoenix Industrial Park, which has unlocked additional investment opportunities. A few weeks ago, I visited Tiger Brands in Umbilo, where management indicated that they will soon announce plans to expand their investment in the area.

Other industrial nodes, such as New Germany and Springfield, are also receiving focused attention.

To accelerate the implementation of catalytic projects, we have established a One-Stop Shop to centralise approvals related to planning, transport, infrastructure and compliance. This structural reform is designed to streamline processes and improve efficiency.

The One-Stop Shop will provide:

- A single point of entry for investors
- Integrated approval processes
- Defined turnaround times to ensure certainty and predictability

We are confident that this initiative will accelerate the implementation of catalytic projects valued at R217 billion.

This effort will be supported by an investment of R588 million in the next financial year towards bulk infrastructure for the following catalytic projects:

- Durban Film City
- Durban Waterfront
- Oceans Umhlanga
- Brickworks
- Westown/Shongweni
- Giba Business Park

We are encouraged that more than two-thirds of catalytic projects across all regions are already under implementation.

For example, in northern Durban, construction has commenced on the R25 billion Sibaya Precinct Development. This mixed-use development, comprising retail facilities, a hospital, residential units and a private college, is expected to create 70,000 sustainable jobs.

Significant progress is also being made on the newly launched R3.6 billion Birchwood Estate development, which is expected to create 2,500 jobs.

In Cato Ridge, cranes are already on site at the R10 billion Insimbi Ridge Development, which forms part of the Inland Port Development aimed at decongesting the Port of Durban. This project is expected to create 5,000 sustainable jobs.

In terms of financial management and governance, I am pleased to report that we have secured an unqualified audit opinion for five consecutive years.

Consequence management continues to be implemented against individuals involved in corruption and maladministration. Irregular expenditure is showing a downward trend, while our collection rate remains within the National Treasury benchmark of 93% to 95%.

We are also among the few municipalities that are not in arrears with Eskom and Umgeni-uThukela Water for bulk electricity and water purchases.

Without the collaboration of all stakeholders through the PeWG and the District Development Model, these achievements would not have been possible.

This demonstrates that when we work together as social partners, we can achieve remarkable results.

I thank you.