WELCOMING ADDRESS BY ETHEKWINI MUNICIPALITY DURING THE 8 ASIDE MEETING, 11 MARCH 2021

- KZN Growth Coalition Chair: Mr. Moses Tembe
- Acting City Manager: Mr. Sipho Cele
- The entire business delegation present
- Deputy City Managers
- Heads of Units
- Ladies and Gentlemen

Good Morning

It gives me pleasure to welcome you to this important meeting which takes place a few weeks after the council passed its 2020/21 adjustments budget.

We are confident that this adjustments budget will go a long way towards cushioning our residents from the devastating impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. We have clearly indicated that the substantial amount of this

adjustment will go towards improving service delivery by investing more resources on infrastructure.

Let me also take this opportunity to formally inform the meeting that our Deputy Mayor who was also part of this committee tendered her resignation last month. It is important to share with you that before the Deputy Mayor accepted the deployment into the city, she indicated that she wanted to pursue her PhD studies and a career in the private sector. Hence, we accepted her resignation because we also believe in growth and progression.

Colleagues, we continue to work diligently to sustain and rebuild the economy of the city through our economic recovery plan. As a city, we regard this platform, which brings together the city and the leadership of organized business as critical in turning around the economic fortunes of our city. Therefore, we appreciate the opportunity to continuously engage with you to unlock the economic potential of our city.

We remain committed to rooting out fraud and corruption whenever it shows its ugly head. Recently, we published an audit report on COVID-

19 expenditure which revealed potential irregular spending and financial losses. This report has been referred to our investigation and integrity unit for further investigation. We have given the unit one month to conclude this exercise. This is an indication that we have indeed declared a zero-tolerance on fraud and corruption.

As the meeting progresses, our senior officials will be taking you through on some of the plans we have put in place to accelerate service delivery, particularly the issue of water supply, refuse collection and energy security.

The officials will also update you on the progress we are making to unlock major investment projects in the city. At this point, let me also report that as the city, we were able to attract a foreign direct investment of over R3.4 billion during this difficult period of the COVID-19. This is an indication that our economic recovery plan is beginning to yield desired outcomes.

With these few remarks, let me welcome you all to this meeting and I trust that we will have fruitful engagements.