REMARKS BY ETHEKWINI MUNICIPALITY MAYOR, CLLR MXOLISI KAUNDA AT THE MEETING WITH THE DEPUTY BRITISH HIGH COMMISSIONER ON THE ROLLOUT OF THE VACCINE AND INTRODUCTION OF THE DEPUTY HIGH COMMISSIONER

It gives me pleasure to welcome you all to our beautiful city of Durban, the warmest place to be in the country.

Today marks one year since the discovery of the first case of COVID-19 in South Africa. It is therefore significant that we meet today to discuss, among others, the issue of the rollout of the vaccine to minimise the spread of this deadly pandemic.

We want to take this opportunity to commend our national and provincial government for handling this pandemic with the necessary care it requires. We also like to thank our citizens for heeding the call of adhering to all safety protocols to minimise the spread of this virus. Our gratitude also go to the frontline health workers who went all out to save our lives.

Deputy High Commissioner, it is a matter of public record that this pandemic has had a devastating impact on our lives and livelihoods. It has further exposed the high-levels of inequalities in our society. Therefore, as we reimagine the world post COVID-19, we must ensure that we build an inclusive economy where we all have equal opportunities.

The rolling out of vaccine has also given us renewed hope that in the next few months, we can begin to live a normal life. It has also brought a sense of optimism to our economy as it begins to show signs of recovery.

We want to assure you that as a country, we have a clear vaccine rollout strategy that is being implemented by the national and provincial government.

Our national government procures, distribute and oversee the rollout of the vaccine. We are pleased that already, the country has begun to inoculate frontline health workers who will be followed by essential workers, persons over 60-years and those over 18-years with co-morbidities. The final phase will target 22,5 million people over the age of 18-years. The target is to

vaccinate 67% of the population by the end of 2021, in order to achieve herd immunity.

Ladies and Gentlemen, it is important to indicate that the rapid spread of this virus has once again shown us that we are more connected as a human race and demonstrated that the boundaries we have created are superficial.

It has also become apparent that it is only through collaborative efforts that we can successfully defeat this common threat. We must work together if we are to find lasting solutions for the greater good of all citizens of the world.

At this point, let me take this opportunity to welcome the Deputy High Commissioner His Excellency, Adam Bye. We look forward to working with you and continue to strengthen cooperation between our countries and cities.

Our city is the gateway to many countries in the African continent and therefore it is important that we continue to strengthen relations so that your investors in our city can also take advantage of our great infrastructure.

In closing, on behalf of the people of eThekwini Municipality, we look forward to building and strengthening people to people relations between our counties and cities.

I thank you.