EXCO REMARKS BY ETHEKWINI MUNICIPALITY MAYOR, CLLR MXOLISI KAUNDA, 17 FEBRUARY 2021

- Deputy Mayor
- Speaker
- Chief Whip
- Chairperson of Committees
- EXCO Members
- City Manager and Senior Management
- Ladies and Gentlemen

Good Morning to you all.

It is an honour and privilege to welcome you today on a month where we celebrate the release from prison of our founding democratic President, uTata Nelson Mandela. This month, we also commemorate the birth and the demise of Dr Langalibalele Dube, the founding President of the ANC.

In honour of these liberation heroes, we must renew our commitment to the residents of eThekwini Municipality that we will continue with our efforts to make eThekwini Africa's Most Caring and Liveable City by 2030.

While we continue to bear the brunt of the COVID-19 virus, we remain confident that we will defeat this invisible enemy and help return the lives of millions of our people back to normal.

Having faced the gruesome second wave of the pandemic which claimed more lives – prompting President Cyril Ramaphosa to implement a stricter lockdown at the beginning of January, we are now being warned about the imminent third wave. Therefore, we must remain vigilant and the message is clear: observe social distance, always wash or sanitise hands and continue to wear masks. We want to issue a warning to those who seem bent on flouting health protocols that the law enforcement agencies will deal with you.

When we gather in large groups, we not only put ourselves at risk – but we expose our family members with comorbidities to the dangers of this virus.

Ladies and gentlemen, we are deeply concerned by the intimidation and threats suffered by the waste management workers in Umlazi. We are

calling for an end to criminal acts and urge those involved to seek different ways to express their grievances.

The piling up of rubbish on the streets not only poses a health risk to the community – but robs the residents of Umlazi of their basic human right to live in a healthy environment and to have access to basic services.

These violent actions put extraordinary strain on the already stretched budget of the municipality as we are forced to utilize metro police escorts for vehicles services these areas.

We also want to emphasise that waste management cannot be the sole responsibility of the city. So, we urge our residents to play their part by ensuring we keep our neighbourhoods clean and educating children to practice clean hygiene from a young age.

We want to congratulate the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education for the smooth return to school on Monday for thousands of pupils in the province after a prolonged break due to COVID-19. The Municipality must

work with the Department to ensure that schools continue to receive the necessary services provided by the city.

The opening of schools is important because it is only through education that we can build a highly skilled and globally competition workforce. Thus, it is in the city's interest to contribute towards educating young people. We are proud of our continued financial support for deserving students in the fields of engineering and architecture among others.

We also commend the official opening of the Anthony Lembede Mathematics, Sciences and Technology Academy in La Mercy yesterday. Named after our struggle stalwart and the founding President of the ANC Youth League, the academy will help channel our young people to career paths that are relevant to our economy.

Education remains the only hope we have for the complete liberation of our people. To this end, we should work tirelessly to build capacity for the youth and make sure we equip them with necessary skills for the Fourth Industrial Revolution.

Ladies and gentlemen, the Municipality remains committed to creating a safe and secure environment for all our residents – thereby, realising the goal of making a better life for all.

In conclusion, we want to wish uNgangezwe Lakhe, Isilo Samabandla, uZwelithini KaBhekuZulu good health and long life as he recovers from a health scare widely reported in the media.

I thank you.