EXCO REMARKS BY ETHEKWINI MUNICIPALITY MAYOR, CLLR MXOLISI KAUNDA, 23 FEBRUARY 2021

- Deputy Mayor
- Speaker
- Chief Whip
- Chairpersons of Committees
- EXCO Members
- City Manager and top Management of the Municipality
- Members of Media
- Ladies and Gentlemen

Good Morning

Let me welcome you all to this EXCO meeting which coincides with the release of the 2020 Matric results in the province. These results are so significant in that they demonstrate the resilience of human spirit as our learners succeeded in the face of this unforgiving COVID-19 pandemic.

We would like to congratulate our national and provincial Departments of Education for the effort they have put in ensuring that the class of 2020 successfully sits for exams despite the challenges posed by this global pandemic.

Although the results for last year have dropped by a small percentage, we are pleased that our learners, teachers and parents put their shoulder into the wheel and overcame all challenges that threatened to disrupt schooling during this difficult period.

As the Municipality, we have already set our plans in motion to assist academically deserving students who come from struggling families to further their studies. We have also activated our annual programme to provide bursaries to students in areas that have been identified as scarce and critical skills in the country.

Colleagues, another significant event which occurred last week was the release of the crime statistics which once again identified a number of areas in our municipality as crime hot spots for sexual offences, murder, robbery and carjacking.

Our major concern is that Inanda and Umlazi have, for the second time in a row, recorded the highest incidents of rape in the country.

This calls on all of us to intensify the plans we have put in place to fight the scourge of crime. We must strengthen our collaboration with community crime fighting structures by building trust between police and residents. Community members ought to feel comfortable and confident to approach the police when they witness crime without fear of being victimized.

You will recall that last year we officially launched the community safety forums and the fusion centre to strengthen our efforts of building safer communities.

As the crime statics paint a bleak picture about the crime situation in our city, we need to reflect on how we can make these crime-fighting initiatives more effective. Therefore, all our units that are charged with the responsibility of creating a safe environment in our city must meet urgently to analyze these statistics and develop proactive measures to fight crime in the municipality.

A targeted and comprehensive plan is critical because the statistics indicate that most murders occur in public places such as streets, open fields, liquor outlets, parking areas and abandoned buildings. This implies that if we can increase police visibility, eradicate bad buildings and clean our open spaces, we can make a meaningful contribution in the fight against crime.

At this point, let me remind you that as a city, we have embarked on a journey to resuscitate our economy through our economic recovery plan. We are pleased that at our Economic Council Meeting last week, nine workstreams presented their plans to revive our economy. However, these sector plans will not yield positive results if crime continues to escalate.

With these remarks, let me welcome you all and I trust that we will have fruitful engagements that will take our city to new heights.

I thank you.