ADDRESS BY ETHEKWINI MUNICIPALITY MAYOR, CLLR MXOLISI KAUNDA AT THE 74TH INDIAN REPUBLIC DAY CELEBRATION, 25 JANUARY 2023, GREYVILLE

- Consul General of India: His Excellency Consul General Anish Rajan
- Members of the Indian community in Durban
- Honoured guests
- Members of the media
- Ladies and gentlemen

Good evening

On behalf the people of eThekwini Municipality, we would like to greet you all and extend the warmest Durban welcome to everyone.

The 74th Republic Day commemoration is significant because it further entrenches the democratic rule in the largest democracy in the world. As a young democracy, South Africa looks up to you.

India and South Africa share a common history in fighting against colonial rule and our peoples' struggle for freedom. South Africans of Indian descent have continued to contribute to the development and economic transformation of this country.

At the height of the fighting against oppression, leaders like Dr. Monty Naicker and Dr. Yusuf Dadoo were in the forefront in the effort to unite the oppressed against state-sponsored discrimination and underdevelopment.

The Doctors Pact of March 9, 1947, led by Dr. Alfred Xuma, Dr. Naicker and Dr. Dadoo laid the foundation for future cooperation between Africans and Indians. Subsequently, we have seen many leaders, come through the ranks of the African National Congress (ANC) – reflecting the true diversity of this country.

Struggle stalwarts like Mahatma Gandhi whose non-violent approach to fight injustices was felt both in South Africa and India. It is for this reason

that our government has built a number of monuments named after Mahatma Gandhi in the country in recognition of his contribution to the struggle for freedom. These include the Gandhi Settlement which forms part of the Inanda Heritage Route.

Ladies and gentlemen, the task of growing the partnership between our two nations remains a priority for both our governments. Through our membership in BRICS, we have an opportunity to speak with one voice to influence the global agenda for the benefit of the global south nations.

Since South Africa assumed the role of Chair of this important body at the beginning of the year, we are keen to enhance economic growth and development of the BRICS countries. It is also our view that by strengthening people to people relations, we will unlock the potential to generate interest from citizens of both countries to learn more about each other, thereby promote tourism.

Consul General, eThekwini is home to the largest and busiest shipping terminal in sub-Saharan Africa and fourth largest container terminal in the

Southern Hemisphere – making it a gateway to many countries in the continent.

We want to use The Port of Durban as a catalyst to unlock maritime and oceans economy which will not only grow our economy but will also create much-needed job opportunities for our people.

Last year, the city hosted the World Maritime Day Parallel Event where international experts looked at ways to introduce new technologies for greener shipping and encouraging all of us to work towards ensuring we implement policies that promote green transition in the maritime sector.

This is important for us a coastal city and it fits perfectly to our Climate Change Action Plan which sets out ambitious emissions reduction targets of 40 percent by 2030 and 80 percent by 2050. We also want to learn from Indian cities like Mumbai and Chennai on how they deal with climate induced challenges.

As shown by the devastating floods in April and the widespread changes in weather patterns across the world, our inaction will only make the

current situation worse. In some areas, we may even begin to see the reduction in the yield of sustainable seafood because of changes in the marine ecosystem patterns.

Ladies and gentlemen, as we look forward to more cooperation and strengthening of economic ties between the two nations, we want to wish the people of India a Happy 74th Republic Day.

Lastly, we wish to express our sincere appreciation to the Indian Consulate for the invitation to be part of this important day.

I thank you.