REMARKS BY ETHEKWINI MUNICIPALITY CHIEF WHIP, CLLR SIBONGISENI MKHIZE AT THE MEDIA LAUNCH OF KZN KWANDE FEST CREATIVE ECONOMY, INNOVATION AND BUSINESS WEEK, 11 MARCH 2021

- Programme Director
- MEC for EDTEA, Mr Ravi Pillay
- Senior government officials present
- Distinguished Guests
- Members of the Media
- Ladies and Gentlemen

Good morning.

It is a distinct honour and privilege for me to welcome you all to this inaurgural launch of the KZN Kwande Fest Creative Economy, Innovation and Business Week.

This is an important platform where the creative industry players gather to share their expertise and knowledge towards achieving sustainable growth in this sector.

MEC, as eThekwini Municipality we are fully behind this initiative as it also seeks to revive the creative sector which has been hardest hit by the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

As we launch this programme today, we are mindful of the hardship faced by this industry as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. However, we must also celebrate our creatives, who against all odds – have displayed high-level of discipline by constantly engaging government and share ideas on how we can cushion the industry and its practitioners during this difficult period.

As the leadership of eThekwini Municipality, we recognise the important role the creative sector plays in enriching our communities. It is for this reason we have always invested in arts and culture initiatives to bolster social cohesion and improve mutual understanding amongst our citizens.

As a preferred tourism destination in the country, we also regard the creative sector as an important element of our tourism packages in the city. As a result, we are currently engaged in a process of ensuring that our economic recovery caters for the creative sector.

To the organisers of this important programme, it is critical to build a vibrant and sustainable industry. Therefore, our engagements must be robust and responsive to a range of challenges affecting this industry. As a province and the city, we want to see this industry playing a meaningful role in the economic recovery of our country.

Part of the discussions we should be having is how do we reimagine the creative sector post COVID-19. Therefore, as practitioners and stakeholders we must engage on how we can take advantage of technology to improve our business.

This launch gives us hope that the potential to grow business in the arts sector is within reach. We trust that through this platform you are going to establish relationships and networks that will have a positive outcome to your business.

Once again, let me welcome you all to this media launch and urge you to work together to create a sustainable arts and culture industry for future generations to come.

Thank you for your attention.