WELCOMING REMARKS BY ETHEKWINI MUNICIPALITY MAYOR, CLLR MXOLISI KAUNDA AT THE OFFICIAL OPENING OF THE ANTHONY LEMBEDE MATHEMATICS, SCIENCES AND TECHNOLOGY ACADEMY, 15 FEBRUARY 2021

- Programme Director: HOD for Education, Dr. Nzama
- KwaZulu Natal Premier: Mr. Sihle Zikalala
- Minister of Public Service and Administration: Mr. Senzo Mchunu
- MEC for Education: Mr. Kwazi Mshengu
- Cllr Tembo Ntuli, Deputy Chairperson of the Community Services Portfolio Committee
- AmaKhosi
- The Business Sector
- Ladies and Gentlemen

Sanibonani. Good morning.

We are greatly honoured to be part of this important occasion – the official opening of the Anthony Lembede Mathematics, Sciences and Technology Academy which has been named after a hero of our struggle.

We want to commend both the national and provincial government for collaborating on this ground-breaking project. We believe this is the most appropriate way of paying homage to a leader who was passionate about education.

As the founding President of the ANC Youth League, uBabu Lembede must be rejoicing today to see that his long-held dream of improving the lives of the black people and Africans in particular, through education is being realized. Investment in education will ensure that our nation has a brighter future. It also gives our youth a sense of purpose in life – giving them much-needed incentives to become self-reliant and be agents of change.

It is important to indicate that today's event is also significant because it takes place three days after we celebrated the birth of Dr Langalibalele Dube, the founding President of the ANC. At the same time, we commemorated the

release from prison of our founding democratic President, uTata Nelson Mandela. We are therefore encouraged by this initiative because it gives us an opportunity to pause and reflect on the heroic deeds of many of our struggle stalwarts who sacrificed for freedom.

Inspired by their vision for a better life for all, we commend the strides government is making to provide equal access to education. We are making this investment in education because we strongly believe that education is the only weapon we have to address the triple challenge of poverty, unemployment and inequality which is engulfing our country.

Programme Director, as the eThekwini Municipality, we pledge our full support to the establishment to this academy as it will produce graduate who are not only globally competitive, but who will also make a meaningful contribution to the digital transformation the world is going through.

We are therefore pleased that our government is leading the way through the establishment of institutions such as this academy which will channel our young people to career paths that are relevant to our economy.

This is in line with the call President Cyril Ramaphosa made when he was addressing the 108th anniversary of the ANC last year when he implored all of us, government and private sector to ensure that our education system effectively prepares our youth for the society and economy of the future.

For this reason, we are going to be working closely with this academy as we roll out centres of excellence that will provide work readiness programmes to our youth in eThekwini.

Our city has hundreds of thousands of unemployed young people, including some with tertiary qualifications who remain unskilled in jobs they have qualified for. Therefore, we are confident that this academy and the centres of excellence that we are going to establish will bridge this gap and ultimately create a pool of skilled youth that will be able to participate in our major infrastructure projects in the city and the province as artisans.

Working with the provincial government, we will ensure that this academy achieves the purpose for which it has been created in honour of the long struggle waged by uBaba Lembede and other liberation heroes.

Referring to Lembede's ability to inspire the youth in the early years before the formation of the Youth League, Madiba once wrote: "One night in 1943 I met Anton Lembede…the moment I heard Lembede speaks, I knew I was seeing a magnetic personality who thought in original and often startling ways."

We therefore challenge our youth to emulate uBaba Lembede by using their energy to better themselves through education.

I thank you.