WELCOMING ADDRESS BY ETHEKWINI MUNICIPALITY MAYOR, CLLR MXOLISI KAUNDA AT THE LAUNCH OF THE POINT BRANCH COURT, 26 MARCH 2021

- Programme Director: Cllr Thanduxolo Sabelo Chairperson for Human Settlement and Infrastructure Development and Ms. Moodley, Regional Head of the DOJ&CD
- Minister of justice and Constitutional Development: Mr. Ronald Lamola
- Minister of Public Works: Ms. Patricia de Lille
- KwaZulu-Natal Premier: Mr. Sihle Zikalala
- Deputy Minister of Justice and Constitutional Development: Mr. John Jeffery
- DOJ&CD Director General: Adv Mashabane
- South African Women Lawyers Association, represented by: Chief Magistrate, Mr. Ngubane
- Distinguished Guests
- Ladies and gentlemen

Good Morning

We are honoured to welcome you all to our beautiful city on this important occasion of the official launch of the Point Branch Court.

On behalf of the people of eThekwini, we would like to thank the Department of Justice and Constitutional Development, led by Minister Lamola for this great initiative of making justice accessible to all. What makes this launch even more significant is that it takes place during the Human Rights Months – when we honour and celebrate those who sacrificed with their lives for us to be free.

On the 21st of March 1960 the people of Sharpeville took to the streets to protest pass laws which stripped the Black majority of their dignity and they demanded equal rights for all citizens. In response, the apartheid government used brutal force and murdered 69 people in cold blood. This was clearly a deliberate violation of human rights of the oppressed people of this country.

The apartheid government had a propensity of violating peoples' rights all over the country. Here in eThekwini, our people had their fair share of these violations. Not far from this venue, there is KwaMuhle Museum which was the office of the infamous Department of Native Affairs. This was the department responsible for documenting all African workers in the city of Durban, making sure they were systematically humiliated and degraded in the process.

Ladies and gentlemen, we are pleased that today we have one of the most progressive Constitutions in the world which protects our Human Rights. We also have an independent Judiciary and courts that uphold and enforce this Constitution.

It is for this reason we are delighted and fully support the official launch of this court as it strengthens our constitutional democracy; and its institutions. We are confident that it will play a critical role in safeguarding the rights of our most vulnerable citizens, especially women and children.

While the country is in the grip of the devastating COVID-19 outbreak, we continue to witness the increase of another pandemic in the form of Gender-Based Violence (GBV). Therefore, today's event could not have come at a better time as we are confident that this court will be one of the key instruments in stemming the tide against GBV.

Honourable Ministers and Premier, the initiative we are launching today fits perfectly with our vision of rejuvenating the point precinct as part of our inner-city regeneration programme. This bold initiative seeks to create a business-friendly environment and fight crime and grime in the inner-city.

Through this programme, we have already attracted an investment of over R 4 billion for the following projects:

- The construction of the MSC Cruise Terminal;
- The Point Watermain Project which entails the refurbishing of water infrastructure to ensure constant water supply in the precinct;
- The building of a new hotel and retail mall along the newly extended Prominade.

We are also happy to inform you that plans are at an advanced stage to establish a Government Mall where different spheres of government will deliver services in an integrated manner in line with the District Development Model approach. To enhance our crime prevention strategies, all law enforcement agencies such as SAPS, Metro Police, Immigration Services and Customs will be housed in the same building.

With these remarks, let me once again welcome you and commend our government for this initiative which further demonstrates that we are a caring government. We have no doubt that this will go a long way in bringing justice closer to the people.

I thank you