MESSAGE OF SUPPORT BY ETHEKWINI MUNICIPALITY MAYOR, CLLR CYRIL XABA AT THE HOME COMING CELEBRATION FOR FIRST FEMALE AND KZN-BORN PRESIDENT, 27 JULY

- Programme director
- Deputy Minister of Higher Education: Dr Nomusa Dube-Ncube
- Speaker of the KZN Legislature: Ms Nontembeko Boyce
- MEC for COGTA: Rev Thulasizwe Buthelezi
- Newly appointed President of the South African Funeral Practitioners Association (SAPFA) and Icebolethu Group CEO: Dr Nomfundo Mcoyi-Zondo
- SAPFA National Executive Committee, led by General Secretary: Mr Legae
- SAFPA KZN Chairperson: Mr Magudulela and the entire Provincial Executive Committee
- Members of SAPFA
- Distinguished guests
- Members of the media
- Ladies and gentlemen

Good afternoon. Sanibona.

As the leadership of eThekwini Municipality, we are delighted to be part of this prestigious occasion to celebrate the milestone the South African Funeral Practitioners Association (SAFPA) has achieved of electing the first female President.

What makes this celebration even more special for us is Dr Nomfundo Mcoyi-Zondo hails from KwaZulu-Natal and, in particular, from the city of Durban. She is indeed the daughter of the soil who continues to make us proud.

We heartily congratulate you Dr Mcoyi-Zondo and SAPFA for this great achievement.

We celebrate this momentous occasion as a way of expressing our appreciation and thank you for putting both the city and province on the map.

The immense effort you have put to your work has seen Icebolethu grow in leaps and bounds as a major brand in the funeral industry in the country. It is also your strong leadership and vision that has made you achieve great success as an entrepreneur – becoming a role model to young and old and inspiring young girls to want to be business leaders in future.

Last year, we joined you in celebrating the 15th anniversary of Icebolethu which demonstrates that hard work and perseverance are key in achieving business success.

Therefore, we have no doubt that the SAFPA will be greatly enriched by your wisdom and business acumen. As a first woman president, you have opened doors for the next generation of women leaders, and you are fulfilling one of the pillars of the Freedom Charter which advocated for freedom and equality.

While the Freedom Charter was a political statement, it served as a blueprint for our Constitution which guarantees equality and social justice which are key factors in ensuring gender parity in all spheres of our society.

Ladies and gentlemen, it would be remiss of me not to mention the significance of this event taking place during the month of July, where we celebrate one of our struggle icons and the country's founding president uTata Nelson Mandela.

Madiba was an advocate of women development because he understood that empowered women are integral in building a prosperous nation. He was correct when he said, I quote: "Freedom cannot be achieved unless the women have been emancipated from all forms of oppression."

We are certain that as a trailblazer, Dr Mcoyi-Zondo is going to use this influential position to remove all the systemic barriers faced by women in the industry and help it grow to even greater heights.

With these remarks, again we want to say congratulations to Dr Mcoyi-Zondo and the whole funeral practitioners' fraternity for the role you play in providing an important service with respect and dignity. We look forward to seeing your leadership help grow and transform this industry for the benefit of all South Africans.

I thank you