ADDRESS BY ETHEKWINI MUNICIPALITY MAYOR, CLLR MXOLISI KAUNDA AT THE LAUNCH OF AUTOSOBRIETY PROGRAMME ON 23 MARCH 2021

- Honourable Nikhil Seth, the UN Assistant Secretary General
- Chairperson of the Human Resource and Governance Committee: Cllr Mpume Sithole
- Mr. Andre Muller, the Corporate Affairs Director of Pernod Ricard
- Ms. Estrella Merlos, the Global Leader of the UNITAR Road Safety Programme
- Our Acting City Manager, Mr. Sipho Cele
- Mr. Musa Zulu, our local motivational speaker and ambassador for Road Safety Programmes
- The Executive Committee Members of the Driving Schools Association;
- UNITAR Officials
- Representatives of the Department of Transport
- Members of the Media

Good afternoon

It is an honour and privilege to be part of this important event today – the launch of the Autosobriety Programme which is delivered in collaboration with United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) And Pernod Ricard.

We therefore would like to extend our warmest Durban welcome to all of you who took time from your busy schedule to be part of this launch.

From the onset, we wish to convey our profound gratitude to everyone for various contributions towards the success – not only of this Launch, but also of the Road Safety Programme as a whole.

We salute the United Nations, led by Honourable Nikhil Seth today for trusting us with their Road Safety Programmes in South Africa and other countries in the continent of Africa.

We are delighted that we have managed to form strong partnerships with the private sector and are grateful to the sponsor, represented by Mr Andre Muller for partnering with us to fight the scourge of road crashes and fatalities. This gives practical meaning to our call for sector-wide collaboration to end road crashes because road safety is our collective responsibility.

Let me also take this opportunity to express our appreciation for the role played by Mr. Musa Zulu who allowed us to record his educational video which is a testimony against drunken driving. Mr. Zulu's tireless work in this field is remarkable and his consistent message of promoting behaviour change is key to road safety. Siyabonga Mageba!

As a city, we are encouraged that the Driving Schools Association has shown enthusiasm and are supportive of this Programme. It is only when we work together with a unity of purpose that we can end road carnage.

Ladies and Gentlemen, Durban is unfortunately one of the cities in the country which are highly impacted by road crashes because of the following reasons:

- We are located in the second most populous province, after Gauteng.
- Durban also attracts the highest number of visitors, especially during holiday seasons, particularly the Festive Season.

Furthermore, our city:

- Has the third highest number of registered vehicles in the country which is growing annually;

- We have the country's busiest port which handles a huge traffic volume of freight and logistics trucks. These trucks are passing through major national and provincial routes, particularly the N2 and N3, to and from the Durban harbour.

Therefore, we have no doubt that a decline in road crashes in this province will have a positive impact on the overall national statistics.

In 2019, our City recorded about 5500 alcohol related road fatalities, which makes 8% of the total road traffic fatalities in the country. This is very high by any standards especially because Drunken Driving is against the law and subsequent fatalities are avoidable. To save lives, we must continue to build national consciousness on road safety and ensure that road users do not lose their lives from largely avoidable crashes.

We are pleased that the overall objective of the Autosobriety Programme is to contribute towards the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals (SDG 3.6) which states that the global roads accidents be reduced by half (50%) by 2030.

We are especially pleased because such programmes will contribute to the reduction of trauma cases in our health facilities as the world is currently grappling the COVID-19 pandemic.

Following today's launch, there is going to be Training of Trainers which will be targeted at training instructors from Driving Schools. Once Driving Schools Instructors have been put through their paces and properly skilled, they will in turn train members of the public who use their driving schools. This programme is targeting at least 5000 learner drivers.

Colleagues, through this collaboration we are confident that the public will be reminded that drinking and driving is one of the leading risk factors causing road traffic crashes. On the other hand, we do hope – in the long term, that this Programme will also benefit municipal drivers and help improve their driving skills.

As part of our ongoing road safety campaigns, we will be intensifying our focus on pedestrians who, sadly – continue to become victims of road accidents because of walking on the roads and crossing freeways. We are also aware of

the need to educate our people against littering the freeways while crossing pedestrian bridges.

With these remarks, allow me to formally launch the Autosobriety Training Programme, which will turn the tide on road crashes and fatalities in our city. Working together we can do more.

I THANK YOU