Keynote Address by His Worship, the Mayor, Cllr James Nxumalo,
On the Occasion of the Municipal Women’s Day Celebration

14 August 2015-08h30
Moses Mabhida Stadium

• Programme Director,
• Deputy Mayor Cllr Nomvuzo Shabalala,
• Members of the Executive Committee,
• City Manager Sibusiso Sithole,
• Deputy City Managers,
• Fellow colleagues,
• Distinguished guests,
• All protocol observed,
Sanibona Mbokodo Sanibona! It is my pleasure to welcome you all to this event, which is a very important occasion in the calendar of our Municipality. It is an event through which we recognize our women employees - who are also our mothers, our sisters and our colleagues. This is our way of showing how much we appreciate the work you are doing in our Municipality.

We are here to celebrate, YOU, the ambassadors of our Municipality and drivers of service delivery in eThekwini. Your hard work, commitment and determination contribute to the development of our City and its people. And for that we say thank you.

Programme Director, we are celebrating 15 years of local government transformation, since the establishment of the eThekwini Metro, which resulted from the amalgamation of seven separate councils after the local government elections on 5 December 2000.

We are proud of the strides we have made towards the emancipation of women in our institution. In spite of this, women continue to face many challenges such as gender discrimination and abuse at home, in the workplace and in communities where they live.

As an employer, we should take the lead in ensuring that we actively promote women empowerment in all our programmes. This year’s national Women’s Month is celebrated under the theme: "Women united in moving South Africa forward.”
We are prioritising the development and empowerment of our women employees, and we are determined to fully implement our robust employment equity plan, to make sure that our employee profile mirrors the Municipality’s demographics.

Twenty-one years into our democracy, we find that male employees still dominate the Municipality’s approximately 23 000 strong workforce, with women making up 34 percent while their male counterparts account for 66 percent of the total workforce. This means that females are under represented by 16 percent. The employment of people living with disabilities stands at 0.58 percent, which is outside of the provincial target of 2%.

If you compare male and female employment figures of June 2014 to June 2015, there has been a slight increase of 1 percent in female employments, pushing the figures from 33 percent last year to 34 percent this year.

In June 2015, the employment of males stood at 14 513 while females stood at 7539. According to the provincial employment equity target, males should be at 15 579 and females should be at 9454. Ladies, our employment equity targets are moving may be slowly but we are not far from achieving our goals in balancing gender equity in our Municipality.

Programme Director, I am pleased to highlight that in the last financial year, there has been 120 female promotions, higher
than the 92 male promotions that took place during the same period. This reflects transformation in our workforce.

Our Municipality is also in the process of drafting a strategy that promotes women development and leadership. This strategy will focus on women talent development, and once implemented it will increase the number promotions among women employees.

Programme Director, this year marks 59 years since the 1956 women’s march to the Union Buildings in Pretoria where women protested against pass laws which restricted their freedom of movement. The march was an act of defiance against an oppressive system.

In 1994, during the first State of the Nation Address by South Africa’s first democratic President, Dr Nelson Mandela, he cautioned the first democratically elected Parliament that: “Freedom cannot be achieved unless women have been emancipated from all forms of oppression. Our endeavours must be about the liberation of the women, the emancipation of the man and the liberty of the child.”

Ladies, our Municipality is committed to your development and we want to see you grow within the different ranks of our organisation. Through this gathering, we are showing our appreciation for the role that women continue to play in building and shaping our communities. It is also a gesture of appreciation to you, in recognition of the importance of the role
women played in the national democratic revolution, and a role that you continue to play as home and community builders.

As we prepare for the local government election in 2016, I urge you to continue accelerating service delivery and improve the lives of the people of eThekwini.

Together, with women as our equal counter-parts, we move eThekwini forward.

*Malibongwe igama lamakhosikazi!*

Thank you.