Welcome Address by Cllr Diana Hoorzuk
On the Occasion of the Presidential Senior Citizens Day

23 December 2015-10h00
Savannah Park Sports Ground

• Programme Director,
• Honourable President, Mr Jacob Zuma,
• Ministers, Deputy Ministers and Members of Parliament,
• MECs and Members of the KwaZulu-Natal Legislature,
• Members of the eThekwini Municipality Executive Committee,
• Fellow Councillors,
• Representatives of the Masiqhakaze Women’s Organisation,
• Stakeholders and sponsors,
• Government and Municipal officials,
• Community leaders,
• Our senior citizens,
• Distinguished guests,
• Ladies and gentlemen,
• All protocol observed,
Ladies and gentlemen, I am deeply honoured to have received this opportunity to welcome you to our beautiful City on this special occasion. On behalf of eThekwini Mayor Cllr James Nxumalo and the City leadership, we feel honoured to host the Presidential Senior Citizens Day where we celebrate elderly people in our communities.

As we celebrated 21 years of democracy this year, we are proud of the numerous interventions and programmes that have been achieved by our democratic government in providing services to the people and transforming lives. However, South Africa as a nation is still faced with multitudes of challenges and social ills that threaten the democratic gains of our government.

Most of our vulnerable citizens including the elderly are still ill-treated in our communities. Poverty is still defined along racial lines and the triple challenges of poverty, unemployment and inequality still exists. Therefore, we need to work together as government, civil society, non-governmental organisations and many other social groups in order to overcome these challenges.

Ladies and gentlemen, our Municipality has programmes that are specifically developed to cater for the wellbeing of senior citizens in eThekwini. One such programme is Operation Sukuma Sakhe, which seeks to bring all government services closer to the people at ward level. Through this programme, our City has made numerous interventions towards the betterment of the lives of elderly citizens.
Our City also has a Vulnerable Groups office which caters for the needs of women and children as well as people living with disabilities and senior citizens.

Through our “Back-to-Basics” programme and the hands-on approach we have adopted, the Municipality is intent on taking government to the people, thus establishing direct community engagements. There are various community outreach programmes whereby the Municipal leadership visit communities and outline the Municipality’s programmes and plans of alleviating poverty as well as discuss social issues.

Taking care of senior citizens is of paramount importance for our government. It is for this reason the eThekwini Municipality has dedicated programmes that address the needs of elderly persons. It is our way of ensuring that challenges related to senior citizens are prioritised because we are a caring Municipality.

Ladies and gentlemen, in closing, I wish to once again take this opportunity to welcome you to our award-winning City. To our senior citizens, enjoy this special day. Government appreciates your valuable contribution to community development. Therefore, we are committed to ensuring your wellbeing.

**Lastly, I wish you all a safe and joyous holiday season and a prosperous 2016! Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!**

**Thank you!**