

**WELCOME REMARKS BY ETHEKWINI MUNICIPALITY MAYOR,  
CLLR. MXOLISI KAUNDA AT THE SALGA MUNICIPAL LEGAL  
PRACTITIONER FORUM, 14 MARCH 2024**

- Programme director
- Minister of Cooperative Governance & Traditional Affairs: Ms. Thembi Nkadimeng
- Minister of Justice and Correctional Services: Mr. Ronald Lamola
- SALGA President: Cllr. Bheke Stofile
- SALGA KZN Provincial Chairperson: Cllr. Arthur Ntuli
- Executive members of SALGA
- Amakhosi
- Coucillors
- Members of the media
- Ladies and gentlemen

Good morning,

On behalf of the people of eThekwini Municipality, we would like to extend a warm welcome to everyone in attendance. We are grateful to the

leadership of SALGA for once again choosing our city as the host of this important event.

This meeting comes at a time when eThekweni is facing one of the most destructive illegal industrial actions by employees affiliated to the South African Municipal Workers Union (SAMWU). When the strike began on 27 February, we sought legal advice in an effort to avert possible challenges that usually come with illegal strikes.

The city obtained a Labour Court interdict against striking employees which prohibited unlawful conduct, acts of violence and interference with the city's activities, services, and operations. However, we continued to see more destruction and vandalism on the city's infrastructure.

Furthermore, non-striking employees were intimidated, physically assaulted, and prevented from carrying out their duties. Sadly, as the strike action took a violent turn, it claimed a life of one of our dedicated employees. Yesterday, as the leadership of the city, we visited the family of the deceased employee to pay our respect and offer our condolences.

Ladies and gentlemen, we are sharing this today with the hope that this symposium will use the current situation in the city to reflect on some of

the challenges we face as municipalities and develop mechanism to deal with such incidents before they get out of hand.

For instance, we must intensify educational programmes to educate our employees, whether they are affiliated to a union or not – about the importance of balancing their rights to strike with ensuring the rights of others are not infringed upon as guaranteed by the country's constitution.

Honourable Ministers, as the leadership of the city, in line with our constitutional obligation to protect all our citizens, we have strongly condemned the lawlessness that has characterized this strike. We are happy that the law enforcement agencies have started the process of arresting people found to have been involved in any criminal act.

On our part as a city, we are implementing consequence management against the employees who have defied a court order and disciplinary procedures are ongoing. We wish to thank our Premier and the Minister of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs for their support during this difficult period. We are committed to the ongoing engagements with the union to find a lasting solution.

Colleagues, we must state that we are encouraged to see the topics that are going to be discussed in this forum. Aptly themed: ***“Building capable, resilient, efficient and effective municipal legal services through capacity building, knowledge exchange and peer learning,”*** we look forward to frank and robust discussions. More importantly, we hope this will boost the capacity of local government to handle legal matters with high levels of professionalism and integrity.

Ladies and gentlemen, this meeting provides a perfect platform for sharing best practices and exploring new ideas which are crucial in improving the delivery of quality services to our communities. Moreover, the knowledge and expertise from distinguished members of various panels will equip us with necessary tools to address some of the pressing legal matters we encounter as municipalities.

As you are all aware, local government is at the coalface of service delivery and we have a critical role to play in helping change the lives of our people for the better. The task of ending poverty, unemployment and inequality remains our key priority because we are closest to the people. If we all work together, we have a chance to build a more united and prosperous society.

In conclusion, we hope you are going to have a productive and fruitful engagement. We look forward to the outcomes of this meeting and see how we are going to make a difference in uplifting the quality of life of all our people. Again, welcome to eThekweni and we hope you are going to enjoy various tourism and culinary offerings the city has to offer.

I thank you.