**Address by Premier of KwaZulu-Natal Nomusa Dube-Ncube during the opening ceremony of the BRICS Summer School held at the Durban University of Technology on 21 November 2022**

Programme Director;

Distinguished Guests;

Ladies and Gentlemen;

**Good Morning**

It is my singular honour to address this gathering of the BRICS Summer School South Africa which is a platform for young people of our country to define their place within the BRICS system and within the world.

You are holding a Summer School in one of the best summer cities on the face of the earth, and in the most beautiful province of KwaZulu-Natal at the Durban University of Technology (DUT), one of our premier academic institutions.

We thank the National Youth Development Agency (NYDA) which, in collaboration with the South African BRICS Youth Association (SABYA) and DUT are hosting this BRICS Summer School from 21 – 25 November 2022.

We were pleased to learn that among the objectives of this Summer school are to:

* Provide BRICS youth with an understanding of BRICS and its role in a changing global landscape;
* Strengthen youth cooperation between BRICS youth on various issues affecting youth and identify common interests for further collaborations; and,
* Develop a cohort of young BRICS policy makers and influencers who are key players in the new era of development.

This is indeed one of the most inspired gatherings which will ensure that commitments made at BRICS and other multilateral institutions are implemented at national and local level. Internationally, this platform can become one of the springboards for collaboration between young people on a practical and common agenda dealing with the issues facing the world today.

**THE VOICES OF YOUNG PEOPLE SHOULD BE HEARD**

Young people’s voices should be heard, not only in identifying the challenges troubling us all. Young people should also be enabled to lead in thinking about solutions to questions about poverty, inequality, climate change, peace and security, gender, digital migration among many others.

I am pleased therefore that this BRICS Summer School has lined up a number of experts in various subjects, all which are of great relevance to the growth and development of our continents and countries. The objectives of the Summer School are to develop a cohort of BRICS youth who will play a critical role as advocates and aspirant policy makers who will be key players in the developmental affairs within BRICS countries, in the interest of BRICS countries and people.

Over the next few days, some of the subjects which will be covered include an Introduction to BRICS, the role of the New Development Bank in the new era of development. It also includes the Reform of Multilateral Institutions, alternative financial systems in the new era of development, Climate Action and the Industrial Revolution in the BRICS Countries.

These are pertinent questions of our time, and which, I have no doubt will be discussed and light shed on them in the next few days.

**Programme Director**, in this regard, I note that in their most recent meeting of 22 September 2022 held in New York on the margins of the 77th Session of the United Nations General Assembly(UNGA), the BRICS Ministers of Foreign Affairs and International Relations joined the call made by the UN against racism in the world.

In particular, the Ministers acknowledged the UNGA’s resolution on *“Combating glorification of Nazism, neo-Nazism and other practices that contribute to fuelling contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance*”.

This underlines the fact that at the heart of the BRICS bloc is precisely to promote a world of equals, in which the colour or origin of the person or country, does not determine how far we can go in the world. This makes it more urgent for BRICS to play its role in agitating for the reform of institutions and instruments of global governance so that they become inclusive, representative, participatory, reinvigorated and democratic.

This Summer School comes as South Africa is again to assume the Chairship of BRICS in 2023, which coincides with the holding of the 15th BRICS Summit.

**REFLECTING ON THE BRICS HELD IN DURBAN**

We welcome the delegates who come from BRICS countries and the Global South who are here as this time, as we prepare to take this strategic role of BRICS next year. We always look forward to the hosting of BRICS in our country.

The first BRICS Summit held on African soil was ground-breaking in the decisions it took which have since defined and consolidated the influence of BRICS.

The gathering in Durban in March 2013 focused on the theme *“BRICS and Africa - Partnership for Development, Integration and Industrialisation*”. The program adopted was ambitious in its intentions, which was the *Promotion of development and Reform of multilateral institutions.*

Among the many decisions, the Durban BRICS Summit declaration reaffirmed the bloc’s commitment to international law, multilateralism and the central role of United Nations, based on an inclusive approach.

Ladies and Gentlemen, crucially, the eThekwini declaration fulfilled expectations by announcing the establishment of the BRICS Development Bank. This was a major step towards financial independence and institutional co-operation for BRICS countries. This decision aimed at mobilising resources for infrastructure and industrialisation projects in BRICS and other emerging and developing countries, with emphasis on the African continent.

Another key outcome of the Summit was the establishment of two new structures to be known as the BRICS Think Tanks Council and the BRICS Business Council. I mention these three - establishing the BRICS Bank, the BRICS Business Council and the Think Tanks - as some of the most ground-breaking BRICS Summit decisions ever.

The Business Council is meant to link state and private sector entrepreneurs, while the Think Tanks are to take time to think, research and innovate to find solutions to intransigent problems. The Business Council has the potential to drive collaboration which addresses inequality of access for instance in the provision of vaccines and their manufacture which is currently dominated by countries of the North.

We should also not forget it was also here at the BRICS summit where the bloc set a path to the implementation of projects under the Programme for Infrastructure Development in Africa (PIDA), the AU NEPAD Africa Action Plan, the AU/NEPAD Presidential Infrastructure Championing Initiative (PICI) and the Regional Infrastructure Development Master Plans.

The lack of development in Africa is best described as being the lack of infrastructure to enable Africa to grow, develop and prosper. We have no doubt that as you gather as the BRICS youth, here will be planted the seeds of a future in which we work harder to do business together, and work better to bridge the infrastructure in our continents, countries, provinces and municipalities. We are to work harder, together, to fight the scourge of racism, to build a new financing system that favours Africa and the developing world for the sake of our youth and our future.

**THE ROLE OF YOUTH IN BRICS**

Programme Director, within the BRICS countries, youth are a significant group. To date, the BRICS countries have launched a number of initiatives aimed at reaching out to and integrating young people into society.

Last month in KwaZulu-Natal we launched the first Mobile Digital Analytics Skills Lab at Orient Heights in Pietermaritzburg. The Mobile Digital Skills Lab project targets learners to become part of the Connected Smart Province and the Fourth Industrial Revolution. If Africa is to prosper, young people of our continent must as soon as possible, start working on Robotics, Drone Technology, Mechatronics Space Technology, Internet of Things, Data Analytics, Multimedia Production l and 4D Technology.

Our Provincial Executive Council approved the Digital Transformation Strategy alongside the Nerve Centre Optimization Strategy as part of the drive towards digitization and the building of a Smart Province that is alive to the demands of the Fourth Industrial Revolution.

We want the youth leaving school to be better prepared to contribute towards a prosperous and equitable South Africa. The La Mercy Mathematics, Science and Technology Academy has been completed and is now fully functional. At least 16 Special Schools have been provided with Information, Communication and Technology (ICT) to promote e-learning. More than 500 laptops were provided to school principals and 26 schools are already implementing the pilot robotics and coding curriculum.

In our province we already have young people undergoing training in Digital Skills, Drone Technology, in smart technology and in intelligent transport systems to fight crime, monitor and recover accidents and save lives. This training is being launched in the whole province, district by district in order to reach scale very quickly towards having smart people, using smart technology in a Smart KwaZulu-Natal. The initiative has secured partnership with the South African Space Agency and NASA to help create smart solutions through the use of smart technology to find missing bodies that were washed away by the floods.

**FUNDING YOUTH ENTREPRENEURSHIP**

We are prioritizing local emerging contractors to drive radical economic transformation and as we want to be biased towards women with 30% set asides for women, youth and black- owned SMMEs. The aim in KZN is that by 2024, 50 % of government spend will be on women-owned businesses.

Our provincial government also announced the Youth Empowerment Fund in 2018 with seed funding of R50 million. Operation Vula Fund and EDTEA have disbursed equipment with a combined value of R300 million to more than 1000 SMMEs.

The introduction of the Youth Business Development Fund to the value of nearly R100 million to 53 youth owned companies has changed lives and created close to 500 jobs. Business funding was approved to 447 women-owned businesses, which represents 43% of the total successful applications lodged with Operation Vula Fund.

**YOUTH FUND SUCCESS STORIES**

One of the success stories of the fund is Nathi Mbhele, founder of AdNotes Digital that provides WIFI network targeting the rural community. The company supplies internet services through Wireless internet Network infrastructure including Television White Space (TVWS) Fibre Optics and Satellite Networks. This is an example of a company that is innovating in the space of data and internet connectivity mainly targeting rural areas.

Adnote has secured long-term deals with MTN and Telkom and are modelling the KwaZulu-Natal broadband roll out in 3 districts. Through government support, the company has successfully expanded beyond the borders our country. The project employs 55males and 20 females.

Mr Albert Mkhwanazi of Khethi Bet Pty Ltd is involved in the Manufacturing industry situated in the Ilembe District. Through the Youth Fund the enterprise was granted a Rolling machine, bending breaker and share machine. The company is currently working at Dunlop, Macrotec, Sizabantu – Aquelle doing piping, tiling and broilers. Through the Intra-Africa Trade Fair held in Durban in 2021, Khethi Bet Trading secured a contract with a hospitality group based in Ghana. TIKZN facilitated the exporting of their geysers to Ghana starting with an initial order of R2m.

We are also pleased to say that through the MERSETA, we have finalised Phase 3 of our Artisan Development Project having signed a Memorandum of Agreement as the Office of the Premier with training Providers. At least 892 learners have already been placed with 9 companies for Skills programmes and 114 apprentices placed with 11 companies.

As we recover from the recent floods and the impact of Covid-19, we have identified 15 priority sectors which are Agriculture, Industrial Development, Health Innovation and manufacturing, Clothing and Textiles, Creative Industries, Informal sector, Investment and Trade, Infrastructure Development, Tourism, Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR), ICT and Innovation and Finance. These are some of the focal areas as we seek to grow our economy create jobs and address poverty.

In conclusion I would like to wish you a successful BRICS Summer School and may this interaction lead to the achievement of a better Africa, a better South Africa and a better KwaZulu-Natal.

I thank you!