**DIRECTORATE:**

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|  P Private Bag X454, PIETERMARITZBURG, 3200  **Provincial Communication** Moses Mabhida Building, 330 Langalibalele Street, Pietermaritzburg, 3200 **Tel**: 033 341 4830 **Fax:** 033 341 0986  |

**REMARKS BY KWAZULU-NATAL PREMIER THAMSANQA NTULU AT THE DUNDEE JULY HORSE RACING EVENT IN DUNDEE**

Programme Director;

MEC for Sport, Arts and Culture, Mntomuhle Khawula;

Economic Development, Tourism and Envrionmental Affairs MEC, Rev Musa Zondi;

UMzinyathi District Municipality Mayor, Cllr PMS Ngubane;

Ndumeni Local Municipality Mayor, Cllr S Ndlovu;

Councillors;

Traditional Leaders;

Dundee July Sponsors;

Horse owners and trainers;

Male and female jockeys

Designers;

Government Officials;

Distinguished Guests;

Good afternoon, Sanibonani

We are very excited to be here this afternoon, to witness yet another exciting event in the calendar of major sport in KwaZulu-Natal. Our delight is anchored on witnessing what started as just a mere small traditional sport, umtelebhelo some 19 years ago, blossom into a fully-fledged horse racing that attracts thousands of people, punters, fashionistas, businesspeople and local communities.

The Dundee July is now a force to be reckoned with. It has put this small town, local and district municipality on the national and even global map.

I was happy to hear that all local hotels, B&Bs and lodges are fully booked, in fact even as far afield as Newcastle there is a good occupancy rate because of this event.

The hosting of Dundee July contributes and immensely stimulate the regional economy of the province.

The Dundee July Traditional Horseracing, which is taking place here at Endumeni Racetrack in Dundee is now in its 19th year and continues to grow annually.

The traditional horseracing industry has a significant impact on tourism, especially in Umzinyathi (Dundee) and Amajuba (Newcastle) areas.

We are encouraged by the attendance figures that we see today, and this is testament to the fact that the sport is growing, and so does the economy of the region. This is what the 7th Administration will be focusing on, to grow regional economies of the Province, such as Umzinyathi, Margate, Ulundi, Mzumbe and many others.

By growing such economies, we are ensuring that the circulation of the rand is localized there for a week or so before money moves out to the cities. This will also decrease the migration of people to the urban cities, which as we know has positives but many negative effects.

Attendance figures in the 2023 Dundee July reached over 30 000 patrons and the industry contributed an annual GDP of R 81 million in constant 2023 prices, supported 372 employment opportunities and resulted in further capital formation of R 160 million. This years’ event promises to even be better and bigger

We want also to position KwaZulu-Natal as a Sport Mecca. As you know this event, the Dundee July comes hot on the heels of the Durban July which had a significant positive impact on the Gross Domestic Product of the Province and eThekwini Metro. That event at Greyville Racecourse attracted over 50 000 spectators and pumped over R 600 million into the economy of the Province, creating over 11 000 jobs in the process.

We want the Dundee July to reach that status. We will make sure that in the coming years it does. But we will do so making sure that it is still grounded on its founding principles to be a Traditional House Racing, with Umtelebhelo and other traditional gimmicks still being the anchors, because those are the differentiating factors that make this race so unique and attractive.

I want also to take this opportunity and further announce that, as part of growing sport in the province, we will be hosting the Premier’s Cup The KZN Premier’s Cup tournament is the pedigree of pre-season soccer extravaganza that has stood the test of time. It provides much needed football feast for the beautiful game lovers across the length and breadth of our majestic province.

This year’s tournament scheduled for the 27th and 28th of July at Prince Mangosuthu Regional Sports Complex in Ulundi, promises to be even bigger and better. We expect the matches to be played before capacity crowds and the presence of professional players will serve as an inspiration for young boys and girls to pursue sport as part of their overall development.

As I conclude, I would like to register our appreciation and sincere thanks you to all the sponsors for believing in this event and made it possible. We hope you derive value in your brand exposure and marketing.

To the event organizers, the local communities, businesses people who came out in numbers, may your day be profitable. Importantly we say thank you to all of you, for coming out in Numbers to support this event.

Let us grow KwaZulu-Natal together, through sport.

Thank you