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# Speech Delivered by the Executive Mayor of BCMM, Cllr Xola Pakati, during the ICT Learnership Certificates Handover

**04 April 2018**

**Programme Director, Cllr Toni**

**Speaker, Councillor Alfred Mtsi**

**Deputy Executive Mayor, Councillor Zoliswa Matana**

**Fellow Councillors from our City**

**Traditional leaders**

**Religious leaders**

**Municipal officials**

**Members of the Duncan Village community**

**Participants of the ICT Learnership**

**Ladies and gentlemen, good morning!**

It is with great pleasure and honour that we get to speak to you in this very crucial gathering which is an official certification ceremony for the young people who participated in our Information Communication Technology learnership programme.

This event is crucial because it marks one of the key points in our programme of skilling our youth and thus ensuring that their future career prospects are secured. It is also at the core of our programme of rolling back the frontiers of poverty in our metro and beyond.

The reality is that our metro has high poverty levels which are because of the rate of our unemployment. Despite a recent decrease in our unemployment rate as a city, the figures remain high and it is for this reason this learnership is important for us.

Statsa indicates that our unemployment rate as a city has decreased by 5.1 percent. This means that our official unemployment rate decreased from 34.1 percent to 29 percent. Our city has also seen significant improvements on the expanded definition of unemployment as it has decreased 33.7 percent. Whilst these numbers are high, the decreases show work in progress. We are taking major steps as a city with the sole intention of ensuring that our economy is properly industrialised so that it can create the necessary jobs.

What is sad in our situation is that unemployment in our city is particularly high amongst our young people. This ICT Learnership is part of the interventions that we are deploying in ensuring that the fortunes of our young people are turned for the better.

I want to briefly reflect on some of the main projects we are doing in our attempt to deal with this challenge of young unemployment which can best be described as a ticking time bomb. We have signed a Memorandum of Agreement with Harambee which will see many activities that are designed to assist our youth people towards being employed. A hub has been created at our Library in Town where the youth will benefit from high quality work readiness programmes.

We are in the finalisation stages with the Services Seta regarding a massive learnership that will see the placement of 1000 young participants in our municipality.  People participating in this learnership will get a stipend for 12 months and they will also gain exposure to the different aspects of waste management in our city.

Our municipality has given bursary support to 101 students in the critical fields of engineering, finance, planning, economic services, information technology and agriculture at a value of R12 million. Some of these bursary beneficiaries who have completed their studies are working for the municipality whilst others have successful careers in the private sector. We have recently taken a decision of ensuring that these beneficiaries are well placed in the municipality so that our investment is not lost.

We are continuing to roll out the Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) programme which continues to provide relief to many of our households. We are busy trying to address all concerns that people have on the programme so that it does not become a subject of infighting in our communities.

Our support to young people in our metro is also directed to those who are emerging entrepreneurs. The Supplier Development Programme that our city develops is in good standards. We have held a Digital Skills Training with the intention of helping SMMEs to leverage opportunities associated with electronic-commerce. We have a training on Plumbing for 50 emerging Contractors. Our city continues to host the East London Fashion Walk where designers from all the regions in the City showcased their talent.

**Fellow Councillors,**

This ICT Learnership for us falls within this broad programme that we have been consistently embarking upon which is meant to develop our young people and better their chances. Fundamentally it also falls within our vision of creating a well-governed, globally connected, green and innovative city as encapsulated in our Metro Growth and Development Strategy(MDGS), vision 2030.

Our intention is therefore to create a smart-city, and this can only happen when we have the requisite technological capacity both in terms of infrastructure and the human resource. This learnership therefore assists us to better manage the disruptions of the 4th industrial revolution, thus exploiting all its benefits.

In gearing ourselves to be a smart city we had to procure training services from the Academy of Training and Development for this ICT Learnership programme. The young people who completed the programme will now be receiving a **National Certificate: Information Technology, System Support** which at NQF level 5. The programme enrolled 30 learners and today about 24 of them will be graduating.

This gives us great joy as this is life changing for the families of these learners but also for the institutional capacity of our municipality. The reality is that we have been battling with regards to the availability of technicians to support our administration.

We have now alleviated this challenge as we will place all of these graduates in our Information Technology and Support unit as interns for a period of two years. They will gain experience but will also be assisting our municipality in being technologically smart. This therefore means that they will help in our network support, desktop support and assist in running our newly launched citizen engagement mobile application.

**Honored Graduates,**

We want to congratulate you and we are here to celebrate with you with the hope that you are fully aware of the responsibility that now vests on your shoulders. You are now going to be responsible for the management of a network of a very complex institution of service delivery.

I am urging you to take this responsibility with the seriousness that it deserves, and I also want to implore you to continue with your studies in this critical field you have chosen. You must also optimally use the skills you have acquired for the benefit of your communities.

I want to thank you for choosing this difficult but exciting career path. Do well in helping us build this smart city.

As I conclude, let me once more congratulate you and wish you all the best in your future endeavours.

I thank You!