

SAPOA Meet the Mayor Dinner hosts eThekwini's Zandile Gumede

"As a city, we are working harder to ensure that we make our citizens happy," said eThekwini Municipality Councillor Zandile Gumede at a recent SAPOA Meet the Mayor Dinner. "The importance of property development sector is a critical feature during these crucial times when the overall economy is facing challenges."



SAPOA executives meet the executive mayor of eThekwini Municipality in Durban

SAPOA senior executives, including president Peter Levett, CEO Neil Gopal, SAPOA board members, regional council members and captains of industry, met with the executive mayor and her mayoral committee in Durban. SAPOA KwaZulu-Natal regional chairman Edwin van Niekerk set the tone for the evening by highlighting some of the key focus areas, such as precinct management and inner city rejuvenation on which SAPOA would like to collaborate with the city.

Job creation and economic growth

According to the *2015 SAPOA eThekwini GDP Report*, SAPOA members contributed approximately R18bn to the provincial economy. The research stressed that the commercial property sector accounted for about 9% of all jobs or about 240,000 in 2014 in KwaZulu-Natal. Furthermore, approximately 223,000 employment opportunities were maintained by property construction activities.

It is for these reasons that SAPOA president Peter Levett said, "Cities and how they are governed and managed must be at the heart of the national economic jobs and growth debate." Levett further highlighted the importance of intergovernmental relationships. "We are inseparable and have to work together. It is through our interaction with the various cities and government departments that we will have the ability to solve problems collectively and jointly make a difference," he said.

Key focus areas in eThekwini

The executive mayor highlighted the municipality's key focus areas, including reshaping the landscape of Durban, the development of black property agencies, youth and women, catalytic projects and inner city rejuvenation. She further acknowledged that the inner city is facing various challenges, and that, through the city manager Sipho Nzuza, the municipality has established a multi-disciplinary team and have allocated resources to deal with the maintenance and

improvement of the inner city environment. She further called upon SAPOA to partner with the city in making KwaZulu-Natal's economic hub an inclusive city. "We want to restore our image and make this city attractive and conducive for investors and for our people. This radical clean-up campaign requires partnership with institutions like yourselves for it to deliver the intended results," she said.

The mayor recognised the pivotal role that organisations such as SAPOA can play in achieving these objectives. "The private sector is important for our economic transformation projects, especially our radical economic transformation plan. The eThekuni Municipality, would like to work with SAPOA in developing programmes that will open doors for black-owned professional agencies. Major property developments are taking place in the north of Durban but we would like to engage with you on how we can work together to bring investments into Durban central district and to the South of Durban."

About the catalytic projects, she said, "The eThekuni Metro has identified 25 catalytic projects currently being planned for implementation in the city, which will result in huge economic and social impacts. I am confident that these projects will inject renewed interest in Durban as an investment location."

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