

**SPEECH BY CLR MPHOS PARKS TAU, EXECUTIVE MAYOR OF JOHANNESBURG,
AT THE 2nd WORLD CONGRESS ON HEALTHY AGEING, SANDTON, 31 JULY 2015**

MMC for Health and Development, Ms Nonceba Molwele

Senior Government Officials

Researchers and Academics

Our Senior Citizens present here today

Various sponsors of the Conference

Business Community

NGOs

Ladies and gentlemen

Good morning

As the Executive Mayor of Johannesburg I would like to welcome you all to this conference. Today's gathering is a milestone: for the first time, this conference is held in the African continent, here in the World Class African City of Johannesburg. We thank you all for travelling from different parts of the world in order to form part of this Second World Congress on Healthy Ageing. We are humbled by your presence here today.

Through this congress we hope to enhance and deepen our knowledge and understanding of our senior citizens, the pillars of our society. Ladies and gentlemen, adult life is a blessing and allows our elders to spend quality time with their peers, recollecting together their problems and challenges, but also the pleasures and triumphs, of being grand-parents and sometimes great-grand-parents. Considering that adult life is a blessing, we should hold our senior citizens in high regard.

Ladies and gentlemen, as the City of Johannesburg we do hold the lives of our senior citizens, in high esteem and have in place, health and social development programmes, aimed at improving the quality of their lives. By involving our elderly in activities that keep them mentally and physically fit, we are, in that way, and as signified through the conference theme, “Bridging the Ageing Divide”.

Ladies and gentlemen, the City of Johannesburg’s community based programmes take place in various venues, for instance the City’s Seven Day Care Centres and in retirement villages. Some of the activities include:

- Social Support through luncheon clubs
- Bereavement support
- Nutrition: actual meals, and information on nutrition
- Support for a healthy lifestyle for senior citizens: exercise programmes, for example

- Support for those suffering from Alzheimers and other diseases of the elderly
- Action against abuse of the elderly. Economic empowerment: information about grants and the expanded social package programme
- An active life for senior citizens, for instance through handcrafts and excursions.

Ladies and gentlemen, we have many more programmes aimed at ensuring that our senior citizens are given all the help and support they need to continue to live dignified lives. For example:

- Since the beginning of my term as Executive Mayor of Johannesburg, we have established Seven Day Care centres in Diepsloot, Westbury, Leratong, Phiri, Alexandra, South Hills, and Orange Farm.
- As the City of Johannesburg we own 33 Retirement villages. Through the Pharmacy outreach programme, our Health Department has been providing chronic medication to 10 Retirement villages/Day Care Centres since October 2011 in order to support the outreach services that are provided by the Gauteng Health Department.
- The Health Department in the City has decided to pilot the pharmaceutical supplies outreach programme to the old age homes, retirement villages and the elderly day care that are in need as a means

of improving access to health care for the elderly people. 1 504 scripts were delivered to the elderly in their old age homes/day care centres in 2013/2014 financial year.

- We have made tremendous progress in reducing the number of senior citizens who are without shelter and food. For example we are assisting in placing elderly people in frail care and retirement villages. The City's senior citizens, including our centenarians are beneficiaries of the City's food programme and, where applicable, those of NGOs.
- Our senior citizens, living in a city where 4.4% of the population is 65 years of age and above, have access to health care services. This is a crucial aspect of their lives. For example, the City of Johannesburg's Department of Health visits the Day Care Centres and luncheon clubs on a regular basis, bringing medication to the elderly.
- We have made significant strides in reducing the number of older persons who are abused, abandoned and uncared for. For example, Elderly Forums in the regions, consisting of representatives of the City and from NGOs form part of a network aimed at preventing abuse and neglect.

In closing, let me take this opportunity to thank our Department of Health and Social Development, as well as Group Communications and Tourism and our respective sponsors for organizing this first event of its kind on African soil.

Once more, let me thank all of you for being part of this important congress on Healthy Ageing. I wish you well and hope that the exchange of ideas during the conference will broaden our understanding of our senior citizens and their lifestyles.

We also wish those of our senior citizens who are present in today's gathering well. Let us also celebrate their lives and times as well as the contributions they have made to the socio-economic development of our respective communities. Every elderly person should look back with pride at their achievements over their long lives, and we wish them health and strength to enjoy their sunset years. Lastly, let us also thank our senior citizens for their care and love for us. We are their children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren.