



**WELCOMING REMARKS BY THE EXECUTIVE MAYOR OF MOGALE CITY,
CLLR DANNY THUPANE DURING INTERNATIONAL LONGEVITY SUMMIT
HELD AT 26 DEGREES HOTEL, CoH WORLD HERITAGE SITE, MAROPENG,
MOGALE CITY ON THE 23-24th AUGUST 2023**

Programme Director,

Management and staff of the Cradle of Humankind World Heritage Site as well as the Gauteng Tourism Authority,

Leaders of the Longevity Movement in Africa and around the world who are with us today,

Distinguished guests:

On behalf of the Government of Local Unity in Mogale City, I wish to express our humble appreciation of this invite by the TAFFD and the Afrolongevity Institute. Ordinarily, true to African tradition, we should have come here bearing gifts for both the hosts and the visitors. But times are very hard for everyone, and what we can afford is our humble presence and good wishes. And so, Programme Director, we are here.

We are here mainly to tell you that you are welcome on the sacred site to which all of humanity traces her origins. You are in the **City of Human Origin**, a home away from home. You have come to reconnect with your roots and speak to the beginning and to eternity. Nothing is as precious as the act of finding oneself. We believe that your stay here will lead to finding your true self.

Programme Director, your summit coincides with the **15th BRICS SUMMIT** which is being held in neighbouring Sandton City. It is reported that a revolution is happening around the world and countries are asserting themselves as each country is confronted by unrelenting post-COVID national pressures. There are tectonic shifts in outlook and policy, new alliances, and realignments.

One of the issues being addressed in that Summit is about inclusion of new members into the BRICS community. Some of them are from Africa. Africa has a population of 1,4 billion people which is about 18% of the world population. Africa has the youngest members of the population in comparison to other countries, but life expectancy is reported to be at an average of 52 years. Infant mortality is also very high at 102 deaths for every 1000 births. African countries are called upon to look at their endowment in resources that does not help in the development of the continent. Hence it is not strange that we see a movement towards these new alliances as it happens in the tilt towards the BRICS community.

Your summit is here to address these challenges in a different way. It is a deliberate effort by those who take keen interest in things of human lifespan, its changes over the years and how it can be actively affected to enhance and lengthen it. On a lighter note, we want to say boldly and tease that you are interested in the craft of postponing death. You have come to this summit to plot against human mortality. I do not think there is anyone who can begrudge you for that.

Programme Director, we have had the fortune of sitting with a delegation led by Ms Brenda Ramokopelwa in our office and she took us on a journey of the work that is being done on the Longevity front. We are pleased that the voices of our African academics are being given space in the discourse on matters of longevity.

We want to commend the bravery with which these issues are being tackled. You are not afraid to be drowned out by the powerful voices of mainline health sciences that prescribe a specific line of life, how it should be maintained and how they promote reliance on their philosophy or death to those who do not.

You are not lost. You have come to a city named after the brave and last warrior chiefs of the African continent who stood gallantly in the last frontier wars in protection of his people's land against marauding colonialists. He unfortunately lost and was banished from this, our precious land of BaPo. Chief Mogale was as brave as you are! Mogale City encourages you to stay as brave, and venture into the unknown so that we can tackle the future differently.

We want to see collaboration between your Institute and the municipality bear tangible fruits in our city. We will work with the institute to see how we can bring your ideas to life.

We sit with the fortune of being chosen as the headquarters of the Gauteng Provincial Government's **Special Economic Zone** in the West Rand. We are the centre of the agricultural revolution that the government wants to spearhead in our province. It will involve a lot of Agri-processing as well. Therefore, your vision for future healthcare dovetails well with this SEZ which is looking at dynamic and new agricultural ventures.

We are also the Tourism headquarters of the province because almost all the tourism offerings that Gauteng markets are found here in the City of Human Origin, except an aggressive township and struggle tourism of Soweto which benefits Johannesburg. We offer the Cradle as well as tranquil venues with the Big Five of Africa's animals in most establishments. You will therefore bring an added ingredient of **medical tourism** onto our menu of offerings should our collaborative venture succeed.

Programme Director, we look forward to the outcomes of this Summit and believe that you have already experienced the hospitality of our city.

With these few words, we wish to welcome you to the City of Human Origin and wish you fruitful deliberations as you conclude your business.

I thank you.