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Press Release

The planned improvements worth R2.9 billion of the East London's Port is long overdue as the current infrastructure is outdated such as, the grain elevator which is not being utilized for some time now as it's broken.

The United National Transport Union (UNTU) have agreed with investors that the improvements for the port infrastructure will unlock the economic potential of the city. "UNTU has urged community leaders to engage with Transnet to ensure that the port services are utilised to make it economically viable. This will benefit the business sector while creating jobs and eradicate poverty," says Mr. Steve Harris, General Secretary of UNTU.

The East London metropolitan area has about 1.4 million residents and is the second largest city in the Eastern Cape. The Port of East London is the only river port in South Africa and is situated between the Nahoon River in the North and the Buffalo River in the South.

According to Mr. Harris the Eastern Cape is the largest pineapple-producing region in South Africa where approximately 80 000 tons are harvested per annum of which 90% are exported.

Xola Pakati, Deputy Executive Mayor of Buffalo City Metropolitan Municipality (BCM), said they want larger vessels as to enable them to dock in the port of East London for cargo purposes. Exporters in East London are now forced to use the Ports of Port Elizabeth and Ngqura, which results in increased logistics expenses. The development forms part of the metro's 10-year growth and development strategy, which is championed by Pakati.

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Pakati said upgrades to the port would be informed by volumes in trade and that the city was in talks with exporters who are utilizing ports in Mozambique because of congestion at the Port of Durban – to consider the Port of East London as an alternative once the infrastructure redevelopment has been implemented.

For further enquiries please contact Mr. Harris on 082 566 5516.

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