

Media Statement

For immediate release

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Non-Financial Census of Municipalities 2017 attest that Local Government is lending a hand in improving the lives of the people

The South African Local Government Association (SALGA) welcomes the Non-Financial Census of Municipalities 2017 as released by Statistics South Africa (Stats SA) which points to improved service delivery in the year period 2016/17 and increasing numbers of people receiving services from municipalities.

There is empirical evidence that municipalities are delivering services and are continuously working to improve the quality of life in the communities they serve. The Non-Financial Census report comes against the gloomy picture painted in the Auditor General report on municipal audit outcomes 2016/2017. This indicates that despite the financial accountability challenges, municipalities are hard at work lending a hand to the people of South Africa and gradually improving the quality of their lives.

The AG report assists in identifying faulty lines and highlights that vigorous provision of services by the local government might not be sustainable based on the approach undertaken in providing such services. Therefore, the AG report affords municipalities an opportunity to identify where they can improve their service offering in terms of leadership, governance, financial health and reporting.

The improved services mean the municipal expenditure is actually being directed towards the provision of services (service delivery). Therefore, municipalities are not necessarily misusing funds in the pretext of irregular expenditure but are just not reporting expenditure correctly in ensuring reliable financial statements, credible reporting on performance against predetermined objectives and compliance with laws and regulations. This dimension confirms that capacity must be developed within local government if we are to realize institutional resilience.

SALGA reiterates that the AG's report cannot be read in isolation from Stats SA's Non-Financial Census of Municipalities which consecutively point to the ever-increasing number of consumer units receiving services from Local Government and the General Household Survey which provides the latest statistics on education, health, the labour market, dwellings, access to services and facilities, transport, and the quality of life in South Africa.

The Non-Financial Census of municipalities provides information that serves as a framework for policymakers and key stakeholders for analysis, planning and monitoring in terms of service delivery of water, electricity, solid waste management, sewerage and sanitation.

Non-financial census of municipalities, 2017

- The number of consumer units receiving services from municipalities increased between 2016 and 2017. The highest percentage increase from 2016 to 2017 in the provision of services was recorded in the provision of sewerage and sanitation (3,8%), followed by solid waste management (2,6%), and water and electricity (both 2,1%).
- The provision of water increased by 2,1% between 2016 and 2017 nationally.
- There were 3,5 million indigent households in 2017, as identified by municipalities, of which 2,6 million (75,4%) benefited from the indigent support system for water, while 2,1 million (59,5%) benefited from free basic electricity provided by municipalities.
- 2,2 million (62,6%) indigent households benefited from the indigent support system for sewerage and sanitation, while 2,5 million (71,9%) benefited from the indigent support system for solid waste management.

SALGA calls for municipalities to use the Census to identify gaps and monitor progress regarding the implementation of service delivery, such as the rolling of free basic services and poverty alleviation towards building a responsive, accountable, effective and efficient developmental local government system. Local government will continue to work with citizens and communities to

find sustainable ways to meet their social, economic and material needs, and improve the quality of their lives.

The full statistical release is available on the Statistics South Africa website: www.statssa.gov.za

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