

Enquiries: Sivuyile Mbambato
Tel: 012 369 8000
E-mail: smbambato@salga.org.za



Physical:
Block B, Menlyn Corporate Park,
175 Corobay Ave, Waterkloof
Glen Ext II, PRETORIA 0181

Postal: PO Box 2094,
PRETORIA 0001

MEDIA STATEMENT

For immediate release

Issue Date: 13 November 2023

SALGA WELCOMES MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS' RELEASE OF WHITE PAPER ON CITIZENSHIP, IMMIGRATION, AND REFUGEE PROTECTION

The South African Local Government Association (SALGA) welcomes the release of the White Paper on Citizenship, Immigration, and Refugee Protection by the Department of Home Affairs. The White Paper, unveiled by Home Affairs Minister Dr Aaron Motsoaledi on Sunday, 12 November 2023, marks a significant step towards a complete overhaul of the migration system in South Africa.

During the media briefing, Minister Motsoaledi highlighted the challenges faced by the department in accounting for the number of people in the country, emphasizing the inability to fully track undocumented migrants.

The changing population dynamics and geographic boundaries imposed by unmanaged migration have sparked renewed calls for more to be done to manage migration and local government has jumped to the fore to be part of the solution to see South Africa effectively manage migration.

SALGA supports Minister Motsoaledi's calls to review the Border Management Authority Act to align with the Immigration, and Citizenship Act as a new policy framework.

SALGA President, Cllr Bheke Stofile says, "Illegal migration presents unique challenges to municipalities and affects the processes of the municipalities differently. There are municipalities with highly fluid populations, particularly those with international borders whose capacity to render services is severely strained by the increased numbers. This ranges from spatial planning, economic growth, safety and security, and provision of services to other constitutional requirements that are expected from the local government sector."

In March 2023, SALGA hosted a National Migration Summit, where stakeholders across all spheres of government gathered with the common purpose; of coordinating all partners to effectively manage migration and agree on a government cooperation agreement. These recent developments attest that action is being taken from all levels of government beyond conferences and summit gatherings.

The Summit laid the foundation for better coordination among relevant partners and identified key multisectoral programs for effective migration management. In harnessing economic opportunities presented by migration, SALGA was mandated to support the preparation of municipalities to be globally competitive and advance the African Continental Free Trade Agreement, and turn migration into a developmental opportunity as opposed to a threat.

SALGA is encouraged to see action to address some of the issues that were identified, and this includes the strengthening of the Border Management Authority (BMA) as a key initiative to mitigate the challenge of accounting for undocumented migrants.

Last month, SALGA President Cllr Bheke Stofile, participated in collaboration with Home Affairs Minister Dr. Aaron Motsoaledi and relevant sector departments, Traditional and Khoisan leaders, and municipalities, in an international migration workshop. The workshop focused on building consensus and adopting a whole-of-government approach to manage international migration, clarifying the roles of all stakeholders.

SALGA applauds the Department of Home Affairs for the collaborative efforts and other stakeholders for demonstrating the will to address the complexities of migration and looks forward to continued cooperation for the successful implementation of the proposed reforms outlined in the White Paper. To this end, SALGA will lead consultations with municipalities on the White Paper to mobilise and consolidate views and deepen a common understanding.

END

Issued by: South African Local Government Association

For media enquiries, please contact:

Sivuyile Mbambato, Email: smbambato@salga.org.za; Mobile: 073 897 8519

Tebogo Mosala | Email: tmosala@salga.org.za | Mobile: 084 666 7699