
State of the **Cities** Report

2004



Published by the South African Cities Network

First edition 2004
ISBN: 620-31150-9

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Acknowledgements

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Design and layout: Magenta Media

The report benefited substantially from expert advice from the following:

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Photographs: Paul Alberts, Adil Bradlow, Cape Argus, David Goldblatt (cover), Louise Gubb, Hendri Pelser, John Robinson, Garth Stead, Lori Waselchuk, Paul Weinberg, Graeme Williams. Thanks to South and Trace Images.

Administrative support: SACN secretariat

Principal funder: The contribution and support of the Cities Alliance is gratefully acknowledged.

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PREFACE



The South African Cities Network (SACN) was launched in Johannesburg in October 2002. The SACN is a network of South African cities and partners that encourages the exchange of information, experience and best practices on urban development and city management. It is an initiative of the Minister for Provincial and Local Government and nine city municipalities, in partnership with the South African Local Government Association (SALGA), and national and provincial government departments. With the names of their historical urban centres, the nine cities are: Buffalo City Local Municipality (East London); City of Cape Town Metropolitan Municipality (Cape Town); Ekurhuleni Metropolitan Municipality (Gauteng's so called East Rand), eThekweni Metropolitan Municipality (Durban); City of Johannesburg Metropolitan Municipality (Johannesburg); Mangaung Local Municipality (Bloemfontein); Msunduzi Local Municipality (Pietermaritzburg); Nelson Mandela Metropolitan Municipality (Port Elizabeth); and City of Tshwane Metropolitan Municipality (Pretoria).

South Africa's economy, like that of many developed and fast-developing nations, is now essentially an urban economy. This means it is ever more dependent on whether the economies of its largest cities work well. Consequently, the goals of the SACN are to:

- Promote good governance and management of South African cities
- Analyse strategic challenges facing South African cities, particularly in the context of global economic integration
- Collect, analyse, disseminate and apply the experience of city government in a South African context
- Promote a shared-learning partnership between different spheres of government to support the governance of South African cities.

The activities of the SACN are designed to update city leaders and decision-makers on current and emerging changes and trends in urban policy across the world and in South Africa; promote innovation and strategic thinking between cities and other spheres of government; foster cooperation and exchange of best practice; generate options and make recommendations to members; mobilise the capacity of cities to support local government and national development; and, strengthen linkages between cities, towns and rural areas. The core programme of the SACN focuses on city development strategies. This includes building the capabilities of South African cities to analyse their comparative competitive advantages in the global economy, adopt a 15 to 20 year development plan for the city, align public sector investments, and mobilise stakeholders and resources for implementation. Within this framework, the SACN has a number of specific programmes and projects focusing on urban renewal, metropolitan economic development, transportation, HIV/Aids mitigation, and city development indicators

Instruments for information exchange and networking include peer review; research; quick briefs and special reports; seminars and workshops; training and capacity building; documentation of best practices and innovations; electronic database and thematic reference groups. Further information on the work of the SACN is available at www.sacities.net.

WHY THIS REPORT NOW?

This is the first report to be issued by the SACN on the 'State of South African Cities'. The report takes a hard look at the forces that have transformed the country's largest cities over the decade since 1994 and asks, if the current trends continue, whether cities can expect positive or negative things in the years to come. As part of the process of celebrating 10 years of democracy, the Office of the President has led a 'Ten Year Review' to assess what has been achieved over the last decade, and to define the strategic challenges for the future. Substantial preliminary research and thinking was released in October 2003 in the publication *Towards a Ten Year Review*. This document invited other stakeholders, including other spheres of government, civil society, trade unions, universities, and the private sector, to contribute their own sector reviews during the course of 2004. It is envisaged that together these assessments will "help inform the nation's evaluation of itself in the First Decade of Freedom". This State of South African Cities Report is the South African Cities Network's contribution to the Ten Year Review.

The report does three things. First, it tries to read which way the winds of city change are blowing. The report consolidates available data from many sources into a 'statistical almanac' covering the nine SACN cities. Using this data it describes and analyses key trends currently affecting these centres. It looks at how these trends are likely to evolve over time and considers what strategic challenges and opportunities they are likely to bring. Second, the report assesses how city stakeholders are responding to these winds of change and acknowledges the important efforts that city leaders and decision makers are already making. Third, the report discusses the implications of current trends and responses for the future of South African cities. The report speculates on how various trends may unfold, and what the likely medium to longer-term outcome of these may be. Through description and analysis of trends it hopes to set up a strategic agenda for further research, planning and action that will decisively improve the future prospects of life in South African cities.

This report makes a distinction between 'municipalities' and 'cities'. While it refers to the cities by means of the municipalities' names, it is not only about municipal concerns. When it describes what is going on in 'Msunduzi', 'Nelson Mandela' or 'Tshwane' this report therefore refers not only to things happening inside council offices, but also to broader urban developments and dynamics that municipalities have traditionally not been solely, or even directly, responsible for. The best example of this is development in the urban economy. The report is also not only for municipal councillors and officials. It certainly addresses municipalities. But it also speaks to other entities responsible, in one way or another, for city development, including national and provincial government, business, communities, and a wide variety of civil society structures.

I wish to express my appreciation to those who were involved in this State of the Cities report, and to all colleagues involved in working tirelessly towards making our cities better places for all our people to live, work and play.

Andrew Boraine

Chairperson

South African Cities Network