



Making Headlines

Gauteng – Africa's first global city region

Gauteng has officially been declared a global city region. It is set to become the 12th largest metropolitan settlement in the world by 2015. Gauteng is already recognised as a global city region with a population of over 9,5 million people and the fourth largest economy in Africa. It contributes more than a third of the country's GDP.

On 29 August 2006, Gauteng mayors, along with Premier Shilowa, MECs, elected public representatives and stakeholders launched the strategy to build Gauteng as a globally competitive city region at a special sitting of the Gauteng legislature. The launch follows extensive consultative workshops with various stakeholders including business, higher education institutions, labour and civil society. The idea of a global city region is to improve the coordination and facilitation of planning and development across political and administrative boundaries. According to Gauteng Premier Mbhazima Shilowa:

this signifies a turning point in the history of [Gauteng]...and entails a new way of thinking about development in our province. A city region that can effectively compete in the global economy is the key to South Africa's growth and development, and our ability to address poverty, unemployment and under-development. After 120 years sub-Saharan Africa's most important city, Johannesburg, and its sister Gauteng cities, must play an even greater role in the economic future of South Africa and the continent.

A key challenge is to ensure that the three metropolitan municipalities – Johannesburg, Ekurhuleni and Tshwane – work together, along with smaller cities in the region.

Sources:

Business Day, IOL (Independent Newspapers Online)

Cape Metro in the balance yet again?

The Western Cape MEC for Local Government, Richard Dyantyi, has announced his intention to change the system of governance in the City of Cape Town from an executive mayoral system to an executive committee system. In general, under the executive committee system, political parties should be represented with places on the committee in substantially the same proportion as their representation in council. This could mean the ANC and ID joining the DA in government. The ANC lost the council to the DA-led coalition in the March 2006 elections.

The Constitution and the Municipal Structures Act grant the MEC the authority to change the type of government in a municipality (see *Bulletin* 2006 8(2) p.17). However, the Municipal Council has an important role in implementing the system of government. Both the MEC and Municipal Council are required to exercise their authority in accordance with the principles of accountable and co-operative governance. The MEC must also consider the constitutional obligation to support local government and not compromise or impede its ability to perform its functions.

Dyantyi said this was not an attempt to get the ANC back in power. Rather, his decision was motivated by, among other things, his "desire to have an inclusive government in the city of Cape Town, but also a stable government that is representative of about 91% of the electorate as compared to the current 51%."

However, the unilateral decision by the MEC to change the system of governance in this case calls into question the MEC's powers over local government as well as the manner in which this power is exercised. The political context surrounding the proposal has generated much debate.

Before the proposal is concretized, however, the Structures Act outlines the consultation process that Dyanti must follow. He has already given written notice of the proposed amendment to the City of Cape Town and SALGA in the Western Cape and must consult with them before the proposal is published for public comment. This consultative process aims to give all stakeholders an opportunity for input and will thus play an important role in what is set to be, judging by media reports and the political debate, a complex legal and political issue.

Sources:

IOL, *Mail & Guardian*, SABC News