

International Migration workshop

13 August 2008

Key note address by the Executive Mayor of Johannesburg, Councillor Amos Masondo, on the occasion of the International Migration workshop, Constitution Hill, Braamfontein – Johannesburg

Programme Director

Madam Speaker: Clr Nkele Ntingane

Chief Whip of Council: Clr Bafana Sithole

MMC for Community Development: Clr Nandi Mayathula-Khoza

Executive Mayors and Speakers

Members of the Mayoral Committee

Fellow Councillors

Chairperson of the South African Human Rights Commission: Antoine Meyer

Deputy Chairperson of The Hague Process: Mrs Zonke Majodina

Dr Landau: University of the Witwatersrand

City Manager: Mr Mavela Dlamini

Managers and Officials of Council

Representatives of Non Governmental Organisations

Representatives of Academic Institutions

Distinguished Guests

The Media

Ladies and Gentlemen

Programme Director, it is indeed a great honour and privilege for me to share this day with you and to be part of this very important occasion – the International Migration Workshop.

We note with pride and a great sense of excitement that the third Hague International Migration Workshop is being held in Johannesburg.

Humans are known to have migrated extensively throughout history.

Historical migration of human populations is said to have begun with the movement of *Homo erectus* out of Africa across Eurasia about a million years ago. *Homo sapiens* appear to have colonised all of Africa about 150 000 years ago, moved out of Africa 70 000 years ago and had spread across Australia, Asia and Europe by about 40 000 years ago. Migration to the Americas is said to have taken place about 15 000 to 20 000 years ago.

Today, migration is a fairly well known international phenomenon.

In the past few years the developing world has experienced rapid rates of urbanisation and migration. In Africa alone, urban growth rates, according to the UN Habitat, has grown by up to 10%. One of the major driving factors of urbanisation and migration has been the powerful force of globalisation. Whilst the latter contains within itself certain positive elements, it has also led to an uneven development and the exacerbation of inequalities within and amongst cities and led to a greater sense of social exclusion.

It is estimated that by 2050, the world's population will have grown by another 3.5 billion, the same number as lived on the entire planet in 1950. This is according to Allianz

Knowledge Partnersite's site, edited by James Tulloch, published on 21 July 2008. Are we too many? The Population Crisis and Population Growth?

In addition, Programme Director, the site states that "over 200 years ago, Thomas Malthus warned against unchecked population growth and spoke of 'the perpetual struggle for food and land'. At the time, world population was less than a billion people".

Now, the United Nations predicts that "the world population will likely grow from 6.7 billion today to 9.2 billion in 2050". According to a World Wide Fund (WWF) report, if humanity reaches 9.1 billion people by 2050, it will be using the biological capacity of two Earths.

At the opening of last year's International Migration Workshop in Porto Alegre in Brazil, the Chairman of the Board of The Hague Process, His Royal Highness, Prince Constantijn of the Netherlands, quoted very interesting statistics to illustrate the extent of migration on the population of the world's major cities.

Despite the perception that people have, that migration is a particular problem of the so-called "South" he listed the "Top 25 cities" with the largest percentage of foreign-born residents. Dubai, with 82% of migrants tops the list but the interesting fact is that seven of the "Top-10 cities" can be described as belonging to the "North" – namely Miami (51% foreign-born), Amsterdam (47%), Toronto (44%) as well as Vancouver, Auckland, Geneva and The Hague. Interestingly enough – no African or Asian capital features on this "Top-25 list."

According to United Nations report of 5 October 2005 based on regional consultation meetings with stakeholders and scientific reports from leading international migration experts there are different types of migration which include:

- Daily human commuting;
- Seasonal human migration (mainly related to agriculture);
- Permanent migration, for the purposes of permanent or long-term stays;
- Local;
- Regional;
- Rural to urban, more common in developing countries as industrialisation takes effect – (urbanisation);
- Urban to rural, more common in developed countries due to a higher cost of urban living; and
- International migration.

Ladies and Gentlemen, one can assume that we are here because we identify closely with the theme of this Workshop, "Migration, Urban Inclusion and the Empowerment of All City Residents, Global Insights Into the Health and Housing Agenda". This Workshop comes at a time when we in the City of Johannesburg have just experienced an outbreak of attacks on foreign nationals. It also takes place when many multilateral institutions and bodies are examining and discussing this complex matter.

Programme Director, the discovery of gold in 1886 laid a basis for the founding of the City of Johannesburg. Since its early development Johannesburg has had in the composition of its population a broad cosmopolitan character. This was reflected in the recruitment of skilled

workers from the British and Australian coalmines, the Chinese labour, the African mineworkers from the then German East Africa, as well as the local labour constituted of Africans from the so called native reserves and neighbouring territories.

Johannesburg, much like the country – South Africa, was conceived as a colonial enclave and a preserve of whites. The introduction of institutionalised racism, - Apartheid, meant that blacks were regarded as temporary sojourners in the white cities or towns. That they were here to work in the mines, industries and provide services.

The philosophy of Apartheid also meant the imposition of "forced removals" of Africans, Coloureds and Indians to the periphery of a City such as Johannesburg. This added the Apartheid spatial form to the complex problem of racism.

The majority of governments, both national and local have tended to adopt an official position that opposes the inflow of foreign nationals into their designated territories. But despite the seemingly rigorous immigration controls the "migration industry" "has appeared in both sending and host countries". This includes recruiters, specialised travel agencies and lawyers.

Programme Director, what is also generally known is the following:

- Official surveys, census and registration instruments largely underestimates the dimension of international migration.
- In countries with restrictive access policies the main method used by unregistered migrants is legal entry and overstay (South Africa and Thailand).
- In other countries access is relatively easier but the absence of migration policy makes registration very difficult or even an impossible task (Brazil, Senegal, Mexico and Russia).
- Migrants tend to find employment in the low paid sectors and take job positions eschewed by locals or end up entering a limited range of activities in the expanding informal sector e.g. construction, services and domestic work.
- A growing number of migrants consider the city where they settle as a transit point. This means amongst others that they want to return home or want to move to another destination of greater economic activity.
- There are different types of migrants with different types of motives: looking for better paying jobs in both in the formal and informal sector; domestic workers; single women migrating to support the family left back home and women joining their husbands, asylum seekers and students.

An undesirable consequence of migration is xenophobia. Xenophobia is typically used to describe fear or dislike of foreigners or people different from oneself. Foreigners (and even internal migrants) in many countries have been subjected to a variety of attacks (both verbal and physical) and other human rights abuses.

Migration policy is generally set at national government level. This is primarily so because migration is seen by many states as a security issue. This is further complicated by the fact that many migrants do not register and they avoid revealing their presence. This tends to make many local governments to absolve themselves from any responsibilities with regard to proactive supply of infrastructure and services.

The City of Johannesburg is adopting a progressive approach with regards to ensuring that migrants to this City feel that they are part of an 'inclusive city'. The City, through its

Community Development Department, developed a City-Support Strategy for migrants in just under 24 months. This Strategy is informed by the City's Human Development Strategy (Council's strategic framework for addressing poverty, inequality and social exclusion).

In August 2006, the City hosted a three-day workshop on Migration and Urban Governance in partnership with the South African Migration Project (SAMP), the South African Cities Network (SACN) and the Municipal Development Partnership for Eastern & Southern Africa (MDP). During that workshop as a City, we said that one of the key outputs of our Strategy would be the establishment of a City Migrants Help Desk to assist in addressing some of the issues affecting foreign nationals. The Desk was indeed established.

The Helpdesk provides the following services:

- Advice on how to access government and other services;
- Co-ordinate the City's support for migrants;
- Provide relevant information;
- Ensure Community networks; and
- Together with foreign nationals identify and address key concerns and challenges.

We know that migration can have positive dimensions:

- skilled migrants who maintain ties with their countries of origin may also stimulate the transfer of technology and capital.
- Return migration may increase the positive effects that migration can have on development. 'Receiving' countries are therefore not the only ones to see positive changes in their economies.
- 'Sending' countries also reap benefits when migrants send remittances to their families back home.
- These benefits also apply to circular migration between urban and rural areas within a particular country.
- Migrants also contribute to enhancing the richness and cultural diversity of a city.

New forms of artistic expressions as well as the contribution they make to enhance competitive sports help to collectively create a better and more vibrant social-scape for a city. The increasingly cosmopolitan nature of many of our cities provides a basis to more effectively promote the concept of 'strength in diversity' as we seek to build more inclusive cities.

Like urbanisation, it seems migration can and should be managed. It cannot be completely controlled let alone halted.

Local government in South Africa, including the City of Johannesburg, is committed to ensuring that all those who live within its jurisdiction and abide by its laws have a decent quality of life.

It is important that Local governments continue to grapple with the challenges of migration, diversity and urban governance. This should be so in spite of their limited financial resources and sometimes even a limited management capacity.

Local governments need a sound theoretical framework as well as actual practice to manage diversity and promote integration amongst residents in their own areas of jurisdiction.

The City's long-term goal is to ensure that "Social exclusion is addressed through the building of prospects for social inclusion amongst all people who live in Johannesburg.

The population of Johannesburg is currently growing at a rate of between three and four percent every year. According to estimates the number of people living in the City will grow by some 3, 5 million people in the next 25 years. This is not just in relation to this City alone, more and more people across the globe, especially in developing countries, are settling in urban centres.

These figures illustrate, in part, some of the challenges facing the City of Johannesburg in its effort to provide housing and other services.

In our Growth and Development Strategy we committed ourselves to the concept of sustainable human settlements where people have access to a wide range of accommodation opportunities. We also made a pledge that the City of Johannesburg will strive to be inclusive and ensure that the poor are taken out of poverty and helped to climb the ladder of prosperity.

As part of our multi-pronged approach to solving the housing problem, the Housing and Development Planning and Urban Management Departments are stepping up the formalisation of the City's 182 informal settlements.

During the 2008/2009 financial year, the City will formalise fifty (50) informal settlements.

The City has also embarked on a mixed income-housing programme, which is in line with both the national and provincial policies to ensure integrated and inclusive human settlements. By the year 2011, the City would have built 50 000 for mixed-income groups.

In terms of health care access and availability to the general public, no formal documents are required resulting in availability of free primary health care and environmental health services including access to HIV/AIDS VCT, management of ART (antiretroviral treatment) down referrals and referrals for ART's to all without discrimination.

Before I conclude, Programme Director, I think it will be fitting for me, on behalf of the residents and citizens of Johannesburg, to convey our unreserved apology and perhaps to clarify the following:

- The attacks on foreign nationals in South Africa is something that makes us bow our heads in shame. This is the shame not only to our democracy but indeed to the whole continent.
- These unfortunate outbreaks threatened to undermine progress made by our continent in forging social cohesion and in the strengthening of the bonds of human solidarity. In fact, in Johannesburg, we have had a long history of peaceful co-existence between South Africans and foreign nationals. For years, we have stayed, worked, played and worshipped together. Ours has been and will continue to be an inclusive country.
- We condemn all criminal activities. We also condemn all violent attacks especially the abuse of women and children, which can never ever be justified.
- We will continue working with organisations of civil society and members of the Diplomatic Corps to address this and other related problems.

We are grappling with endeavours aimed at providing humanitarian support and the re-integrating of displaced persons back to communities.

I trust that this Workshop will create a renewed awareness about migration issues and how they affect local government. I trust that it will enable us to exchange information on practical actions to combat the effects of migration and to share our experiences of best practice.

Let this Workshop consider each question put before it carefully, debate and finally arrive at satisfactory conclusions.

Programme Director, please allow me to thank our partners, Un-Habitat, the Human Rights Commission, The Hague Process and the International Centre for Migration and Health.

Once again, on behalf of the City of Johannesburg I would like to welcome you to this Workshop.

Thank you