

2011 cities' report to help boost development

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Pretoria - The much-anticipated 2011 State of the Cities Report is expected to look at issues that hinder the progress of development in municipalities and how these can be addressed in the overall objectives of the government.

The report, which will be released on 20 April, will reflect on progress achieved during the first decade of a transformed and democratic local government system by comparing trends and statistics in the largest municipalities of South Africa.

Briefing media on the report, South African Cities Network (SACN) CEO Sithole Mbanga said it will outline at least 10 key challenges that will be faced by the next generation of municipal leadership, including political, economic, financial and social issues.

Mbanga said public transport, land use, the review of policy that will credit and recognise achievements by larger municipalities and analysis of municipalities' capacity to deliver are some of the issues that the report addresses.

However, he said the report does not offer solutions to the challenges, but suggestions that will steer more debate.

The SACN is primarily driven by nine member cities, which are Buffalo City (Eastern Cape), City of Cape Town, City of eThekweni, City of Tshwane, Ekurhuleni, City of Johannesburg, Mangaung in Bloemfontein, Msunduzi in Pietermaritzburg and Nelson Mandela Bay.

The organisation's main objectives include mobilising the capacity of cities to support local government and national development, strengthening linkages between cities and other spheres of government.

The SACN has released two State of Cities report in 2004 and 2006.

Mbanga said: "Our 2004 report focused on providing a first-of-its kind overview of how the nine largest cities in the country had performed between 1996 and 2001 against the thematic ideals of productivity, inclusivity, sustainability and good governance.

"The second edition in 2006 was wider in its scope and provided a clearer picture of the trends in urban performance and the dynamics that shape cities in South Africa."