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## ***MEDIA STATEMENT***

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### **SALGA welcomes the gazetting of the final White Paper on Citizenship, Immigration and Refugee Protection as an important step toward overhauling the migration system in South Africa**

The South African Local Government Association (SALGA) has welcomed the Cabinet approval of the final White Paper on Citizenship, Immigration and Refugee Protection.

The Cabinet approved the final White Paper on Wednesday, 10 April 2024 and has been published in the Government Gazette number 50530 on 1 April 2024.

In recent months, the Department of Home Affairs (DHA) conducted public hearings in all nine provinces, including several radio and television interviews on the White Paper which SALGA has participated in all provinces. The outcome of the engagements is that the policy positions adopted in the White Paper enjoy wide support from the SALGA.

SALGA led consultations with municipalities on the White Paper to mobilize and consolidate views and deepen a common understanding at the local level. The final White Paper is reflective of duly considered local government submissions.

SALGA applauds the DHA for the collaborative efforts and other stakeholders for demonstrating the will to address the complexities of immigration. The White Paper is underpinned by the realization that South Africa has different pieces of legislation dealing with citizenship, immigration, and refugee protection, namely the Citizenship Act, Immigration Act, and Refugees Act, as amended. In practice, these pieces of legislation are not in harmony with each other, and piecemeal amendments were made without any policy framework. The changing population dynamics imposed by unmanaged immigration have long sparked calls for more to be done to manage immigration. Local government, being the receiver of all immigrants, jumped to the fore to be part of the solution, inspired by the vision to see South Africa effectively manage immigration.

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 address migration issues and the common agreement was a whole of government approach to managing migration.

SALGA fully supports the White Paper on Citizenship, Immigration, and Refugee Protection as an important step towards overhauling the migration system in South Africa. The white paper will ensure a coherent approach to managing immigration issues in South Africa without the contradictions with various legislative pieces.

**Ends**

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