



## **Ethiopian Cities Association (ECA) study tour to the South African Local Government Association (SALGA): Deepening knowledge on Local Government Associations.**



From 8 to 14 May 2022, a delegation of representatives from the Ethiopian Cities Association (ECA), an alliance of 86 Ethiopian cities working towards improving the living conditions of the urban Ethiopian population, participated in a study tour to the South African Local Government Association (SALGA) in Tshwane.

The tour was held as part of the Uniting Local Government in Ethiopia (ULGE), a European Union (EU) funded project implemented by VNG International. The Centre for Local Capacity Building (CLCB) was the local host partner for the study tour.

The knowledge-exchange event focused on peer-to-peer learning, which aimed to expose and deepen the touring party's understanding of local government associations, local government institutions and networks of cities in South Africa in the following areas:

- Municipal member engagement,
- Communication and knowledge management,
- Lobby and advocacy,
- Stakeholder engagement,
- Independency and sustainability of a local government association.

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The touring party, the ECA delegation, received a warm welcome from SALGA at its national headquarters in the City of Tshwane. The schedule picked up pace when the ECA delegation visited the Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (COGTA) in Tshwane and was treated with a briefing by the National Treasury.

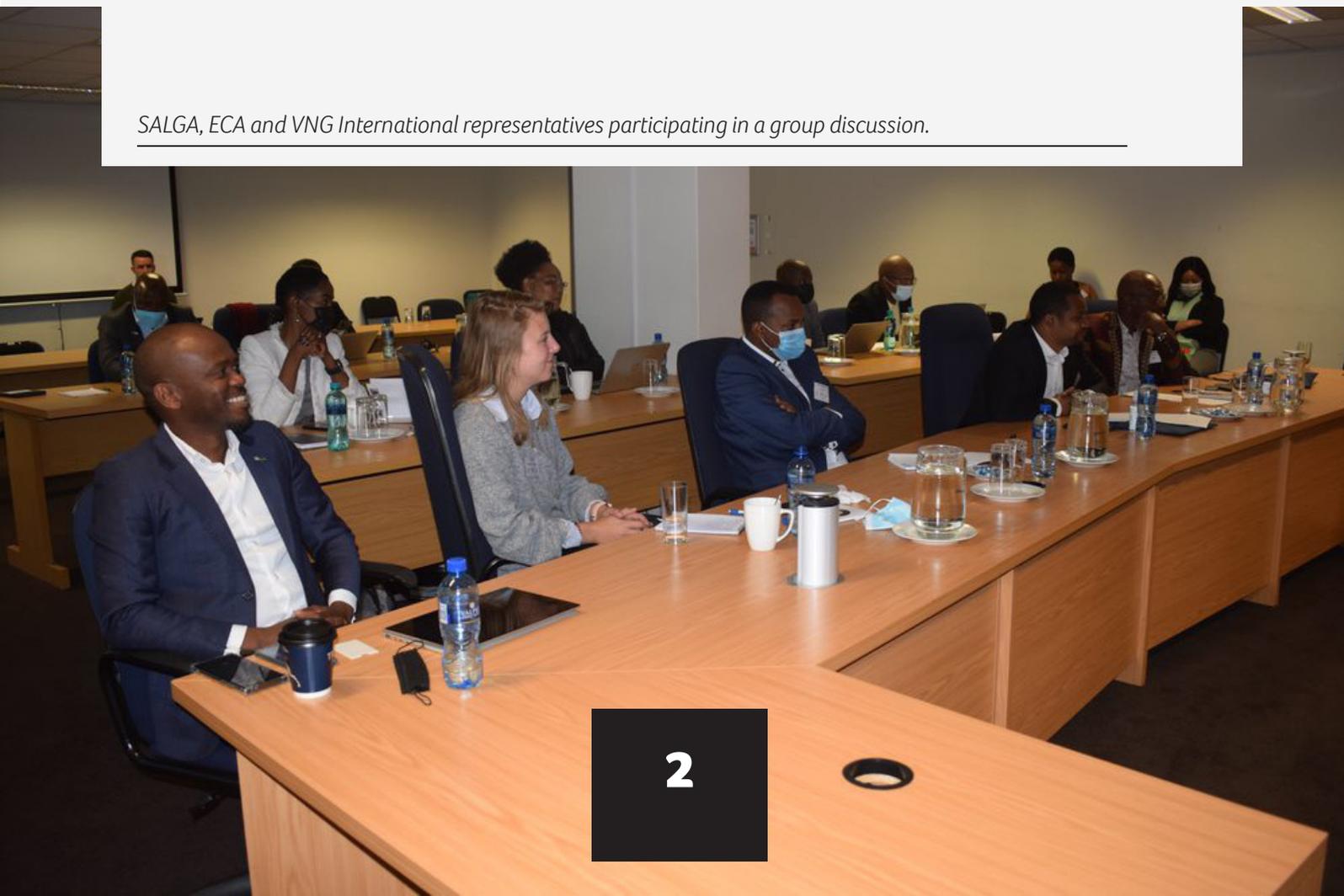
The tour concluded with a visit to the council office of the City of Johannesburg Metropolitan Municipality, which allowed the ECA delegation to network and foster working relationships with local government professionals in the city.

## ECA study tour highlights Day one

In his opening message, SALGA Chief Executive Officer (CEO), **Xolile George**, said he was pleased to welcome the ECA delegation and said the study tour was a powerful way of sharing knowledge between SALGA and its Ethiopian counterpart as well as a timely opportunity to meet, network and exchange experiences about local governance.

“Equally for us we do appreciate and look forward to sharing lessons on many areas of common interest,” he said.

*SALGA, ECA and VNG International representatives participating in a group discussion.*



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ECA Board Chairman, **Tsegaye Tuke Kia**, said the organisation looked forward to the knowledge-exchange opportunity and that the knowledge transfer would translate to improved outcomes for the ECA and its member municipalities.

“From this visit our members look forward to sharing experiences. It is important for us and our cities. We will gain knowledge from SALGA,” he said.

SALGA Chief Operations Officer (COO), **Lance Joel**, delivered a presentation that gave an overview on the background of SALGA and its member municipalities and the socio-political landscape in which they are tasked to deliver basic municipal services.

He added that SALGA recently embarked on a new five-year strategic journey that would continue to have a positive impact on South Africa’s local government sector, provide value and position SALGA to continue the trajectory of being a high-performing and well-managed municipal association.

SALGA Inclusive Governance and Councillor Welfare Specialist, **Michael Chauke**, briefed the ECA delegation on South Africa’s system of multilevel government with a specific focus on local government.

He said the system was geared to improve people’s day-to-day lives and quality of life in a meaningful way.

“Whether you open a tap and there’s water or you drive on the road to get to work, we affect people’s lives in an intimate way and we need to transform municipalities in a way that will give rise to their developmental duties and give effect to developmental local government,” **Mr Chauke** said.

SALGA Portfolio Head for Health, Community Services and Inclusivity, **Nozibele Makanda** informed the ECA delegation about integrated gender mainstreaming frameworks as a mechanism for the inclusion of women in local governance as well as vulnerable groups into municipal plans and programmes.

She also briefed the delegation about the 2010 establishment of the SALGA Women’s Commission (SWC).

“The establishment of the Women’s Commission for SALGA derives from a United Cities and Local Governments of Africa (UCLGA) initiative, aimed at the strengthening of gender equality within African local governments,” **Ms Makanda** said.

SALGA Specialist for economic development, **Mxolisi Mchunu**, spoke about how local government, through the delivery of municipal services, was a key enabler of economic development.

He added that if local governments deliver services, investments in cities and towns will follow.



*The ECA delegation participating in a session on strategic planning during the second leg of their study tour.*

“Investors will be interested once they’ve assessed the stability of your city for their investments and also easy access to resources and willingness to assist,” **Mchunu** said.

SALGA, ECA and VNG International representatives participating in a group discussion.

Chief Digital Officer, **Kutlwano Chaba**, spoke about how local governments can harness digital technologies to improve service delivery and create better outcomes for citizens and communities.

“How can I as a municipality use technology to meet my strategic objectives to deliver services from a services point of view and also from a developmental point of view and what products and tools can we bring to the municipality to help it do the right work but also bring citizens closer,” he said.

SALGA Chief financial Officer (CFO), **Thembeke Mthethwa**, explained SALGA’s membership structure, where members pay recurring fees to access the value that

the organisation creates as well as the organisation’s sources of revenue, which include, among others, membership levies.

**Khomotso Letsatsi**, SALGA Chief Officer for Municipal Finance, Fiscal Policy and Economic Growth and **Rio Nolutshungu**, SALGA Chief Officer for Municipal Capabilities and Governance, were also present and briefed the ECA delegation about their respective portfolios and the value they brought to the local government sector.

## Day two

Day two of the study tour, which tapped into the power of collaborative and peer-to-peer learning between SALGA and the ECA, focused on strategic planning, the long-term vision of where municipal associations want to be, and how they can get there.

Southern Africa Commonwealth Local Government Forum regional manager, **Nyasha Simbanegavi**, briefed the ECA delegation about the organisation's vision, operations, and programmes.

**Ms Simbanegavi** explained the role and purpose of CLGF Southern Africa. She told the ECA delegation that CLGF's regional offices allow a closer and more responsive dialogue and interaction with members and partners in the region such as UNDP and SADC.

She said the CLGF Southern Africa office is hosted by SALGA in Pretoria. As for the CLGF, **Ms Simbanegavi** explained that CLGF has been active in Southern Africa, working with the ministries responsible for local government, national local government associations and local governments in member countries to implement decentralisation, improve inter-governmental relationships, and build the capacity of local governments to improve governance and service delivery.

**Dr. Johnny Coetzee** from the University of Pretoria (UP) unpacked the characteristics of developmental local government with a focus on increasing and accelerating economic growth and employment.

He said, among others, that a culture of strong leadership and support, flexible institutional structures, and learning, sharing, and networking was a necessary condition for municipalities to execute their developmental local government imperatives.

on strategic planning during the second leg of their study tour.

## Day three

Day three of the ECA study tour was hosted by the Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (COGTA), where the ECA delegation was briefed about COGTA, its vision, mission, and programmes.

COGTA Director-General (DG), **Avril Williamson**, welcomed the ECA delegation. She said she was confident that the study tour would be a success and that the collaboration between the ECA, SALGA and South Africa's local government institutions, would yield positive results and open future strategic partnerships.

To lead the cooperative governance system in support of integrated planning and implementation across all 3 spheres of government and to create an efficient and effective cooperative governance system that enables resilient, safe, sustainable, prosperous and climate smart cities and towns, was part of COGTA's vision and mission, as explained by COGTA Chief Director, **Seabelo Molefi**.

Director for Intermediary Cities and Spatial Planning, **Nomkita Fani**, explained COGTA's programmes that respond to the development challenges that cities face and

The ECA delegation participating in a se



*Representatives from COGTA, the ECA and SALGA in a group photo following the days proceedings.*

the spatial dislocations they inherited from apartheid

She also explained briefed the delegation about the Integrated Urban Development Framework (IUDF). **Ms Fani** added that the IUDF seeks to foster a shared understanding across government and society about how best to manage urbanisation and achieve the goals of economic development, job creation and improved living conditions for people.

As urbanization increases, small town regeneration (STR) is increasingly becoming an important topic, says Professional Town and Regional Planner, **Prabin Governder**.

He outlined the STR programme, which was initiated by SALGA in 2012. **Mr Governder** explained that its aim was regeneration, restoration, and fulfilling the economic potential of underperforming small towns, as well as embracing the significance of small towns and their crucial roles in larger hierarchy settlements.

Over time, and as evidenced by legislative and policy context indicated, he said the STR evolved to the Small-Town Regeneration Strategy, which adopted a regionalist approach to small town development and regeneration that moves away from jurisdictional/administrative regions to

functional social, spatial, and economic regions.

National Treasury's **Samantha Naidu**, unpacked Treasury's Cities Support Programme, which aims to improve the capacity of cities and create an enabling intergovernmental fiscal system and policy environment to support city-led transformation and her colleague, **Mbali McBrown**, delivered a presentation about Treasury's Neighbourhood Development Partnership Programme, which funds neighbourhood development projects to improve the quality of life of people living in marginalised communities.

## Day four

The council offices of the City of Johannesburg municipality became a hive of activity on the fourth and final day of the exposure visit, which promoted knowledge sharing on local governance and capacity development.

The day's proceedings even grabbed the attention of United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) secretary-general Emilia Saiz, who tweeted, "City diplomacy, decentralized cooperation and longstanding

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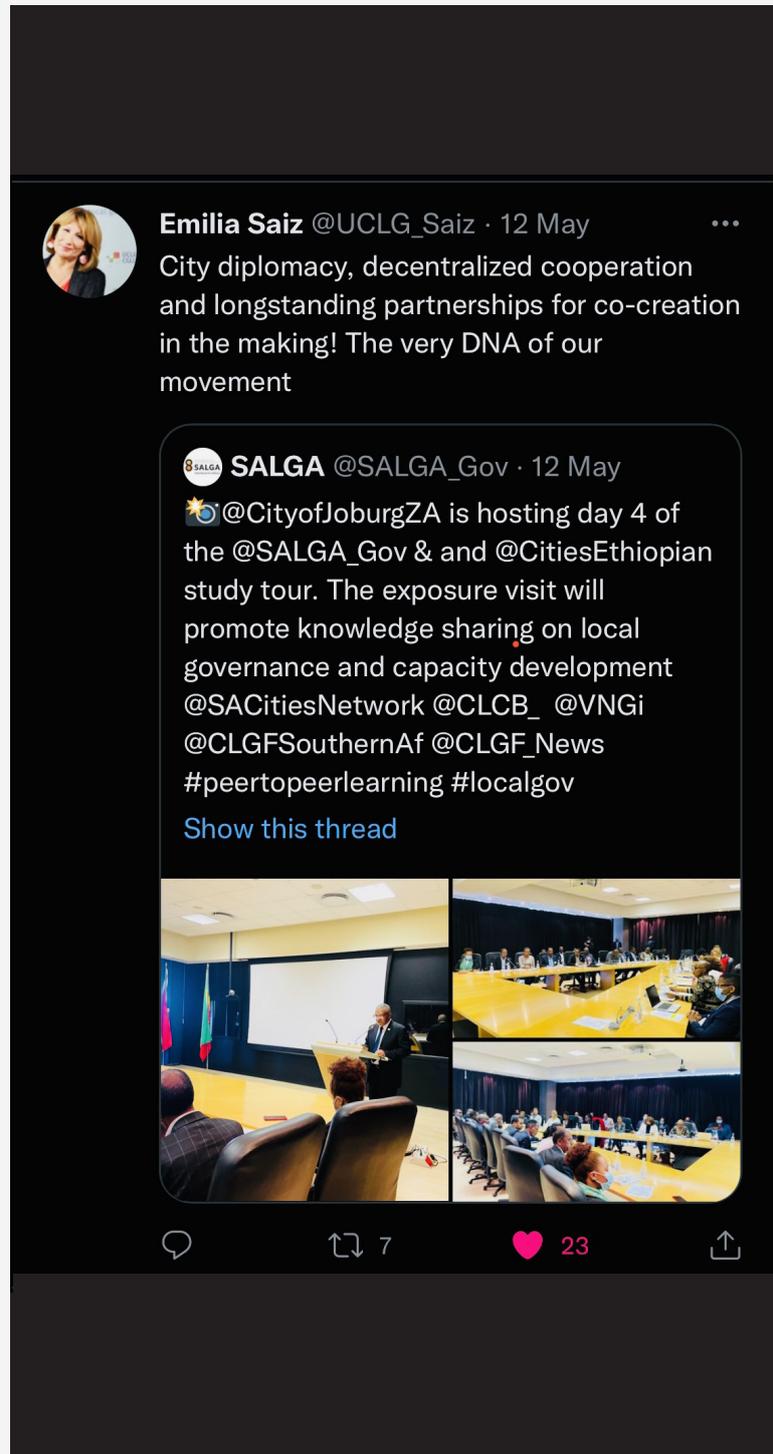
partnerships for co-creation in the making! The very DNA of our movement.”

City of Johannesburg Council Speaker, **Vasco da Gama**, delivered the welcoming remarks and said the visit from the delegation of representatives from the ECA would have a positive impact that could strengthen relations between South Africa and Ethiopia on many fronts, including the economy.

“We would like to encourage the international community and business to invest in our project of building a city of opportunities. Johannesburg is ready to engage with them on investing in our city. It therefore perfect timing that we are receiving your high level delegation. In light of the above history that I have highlighted which illuminated a way for us to build at a country-to-country level as well as a city-to-city level with Addis Ababa.”

The ECA delegation then received an overview about the City of Johannesburg, the most advanced commercial city in Africa and the engine room of the South African and regional economy.

The were told about the city’s infrastructure in the fields of telecommunications, transportation, water and power. The ECA delegation was also told that the demographics of Johannesburg indicated a large and ethnically diverse metropolitan area, which is home to almost 5 million people and that the city was often the first





*The ECA delegation receives a warm welcome at SALGA's national office in Tshwane*

choice of destination by job seekers across the country.

Challenges such as the patterns of poverty, unemployment and urbanization were also highlighted for the delegation to hear.

SA Cities Network Programme Manager, **Rebecca Gatangí**, delivered a presentation that explained the role of the network of South African cities in promoting the exchange of information, experience and best practice on urban development and city management.

She explained the overall mandate of the SACN as follows:

- Promote Good Governance and Management in South African cities
- Analyse strategic challenges facing South African cities, particularly in the context of global economic integration and national development challenges
- Collect, collate, analyse, assess,

disseminate, and apply the experience of large city government in a South African context

- Promote shared-learning partnerships between different spheres of Government to support the management of South African cities

ECA Board Chairman, **Tsegaye Tuke Kia**, expressed his overall concluding remarks about the organisation's exposure visit and said he looked forward to a fruitful relationship and future collaborations with SALGA and its member municipalities.

He added that the study tour would encourage the ECA to use the knowledge and skills gained for the benefit and development of their member municipalities and the communities they served.

"We look forward to fruitful relations with your cities," said **Tuke Kia**.

**END.**