

Press Release



**South African
Institute of
Race Relations**

South Africa's Leading Research and Policy Organisation

For immediate release

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More people living in urban areas than ever before

More people in South Africa live in urban areas than ever before. Some 52% of South Africans lived in urban areas in 1990, but this proportion went up to 62% in 2010.

In 1990, some 48% of people lived in rural areas, a proportion which dropped to only 38% in 2010. This is according to the annual South Africa Survey 2009/10, published by the South African Institute of Race Relations in Johannesburg this week.

Only three provinces in South Africa had a net in-flow of migrants — Gauteng, the Western Cape, and KwaZulu-Natal — the three provinces with the largest urban areas in South Africa.

According to Statistics South Africa data, Gauteng will have a net in-flow of 364 400 people between 2006 and 2011. The Western Cape and KwaZulu-Natal will have a net in-flow of 94 600 and 1 800 people respectively.

Two provinces with large numbers of people living in rural areas – the Eastern Cape and Limpopo – are expected to have the largest net out-flow of migrants.

The Eastern Cape is estimated to have a net out-flow of 211 600 people between 2006 and 2011. Most of these people will be moving to the Western Cape and Gauteng.

The net out-flow of 141 000 people leaving Limpopo are most likely to move to Gauteng.

Kerwin Lebone, a researcher at the Institute, said that, 'People in South Africa are moving to urban areas in increasing numbers to seek employment.'

'The three provinces with the largest provincial economies, Gauteng, the Western Cape, and KwaZulu-Natal, have more jobs than other provinces, and are thus attractive to migrants. This is compared to the Eastern Cape and Limpopo, which have economies that are failing to employ large numbers of the provincial population.

'However, this trend affects the provision of services in provinces such as Gauteng and the Western Cape, as these provincial governments are continuously chasing moving targets, as more people migrate to these areas.

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‘Service delivery in more rural provinces such as the Eastern Cape and Limpopo is also affected, as they lose skilled workers who often seek better employment prospects in provinces with larger provincial economies,’ Lebone concluded.

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