

Mayors Dialogue on Growth and Solidarity

City profile: Durban (eThekweni), South Africa



Population: 595,061 (2011)
GDP per capita: \$8,460 (2019)
Major industries: services, manufacturing
Percentage of migrants: 1% (2016)
Mayor's name: Mxolisi Kaunda | **Next election date:** 2021

Socioeconomic profile

Durban is one of four major urban industrial centres in South Africa, located in the densely populated province of KwaZulu-Natal. According to the 2011 Census, the city proper has a population of 595,061 people (Statistics South Africa, n.d.). The wider eThekweni metropolitan area has a population of over 3.9 million people (eThekweni Municipality, 2020a). The city proper covers 2,291 km² with a density of 1,502 individuals/km² (South African Cities Network, 2016). Durban's population is notably young, with 63% of residents under the age of 35 (eThekweni Municipality, 2020a). Apartheid-era planning continues to influence Durban's urban structure, with multiple high-density, racially segregated, poorly integrated residential zones surrounding the city centre. Approximately 70% of Durban residents live in formal housing structures, while another 25% reside in informal settlements (eThekweni Municipality, 2017). Many of the latter are located on steep land or flood plains with higher risk of erosion and flood damage. Apart from these pockets of high-density settlement, most (68%) of the municipal area is considered rural (ibid.). This fragmented layout is due to historical state policies as well as the underlying geography of steep hills and valleys that make cohesive urban development a challenge.

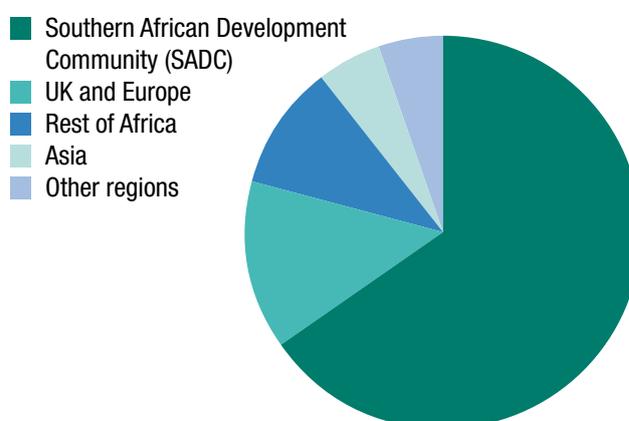
Durban contributes approximately 9.6% of total South African GDP (eThekweni Municipality, 2020a), implying a GDP per capita of around \$8,460 in 2019.¹ It is home to the largest and busiest port in South Africa, with over 30,000 people dependent on its activities (IOM, 2014). The services sector (particularly community services, finance and trade) accounts for most employment in the city, followed by manufacturing (eThekweni Municipality, 2020a). The tourism sector also plays a catalytic role, stimulating the retail trade as well as the catering and accommodation sectors. Labour force

participation is fairly low at 61.9%, and 22.1% of Durban residents are unemployed (Statistics South Africa, 2020). Racial disparities are particularly evident in the poverty levels experienced by different population groups: while 25.2% of the Black African population lives below the food poverty line (approximately \$1.30 per day), only 0.04% of the White population does so (Statistics South Africa, 2019). Of the total population, 17.1% reported zero income (eThekweni Municipality, 2020a).

Migration profile

There is a long history of temporary labour migration from Lesotho, Eswatini and Mozambique to secondary industry in Durban. During the 1990s, there was significant rural-to-urban migration, as well as an influx of immigrants from other African countries, with Durban often representing the second or third stop in their migration journeys (Maharaj and Moodley, 2000). Between 2001 and 2011 the South African Census reports that KwaZulu-Natal was one of the

International immigrants in Durban, 2016



Source: Statistics South Africa (2016)

¹ Based on author's calculations. GDP for South Africa in 2019 (\$351.432 bn) is taken from World Bank (n.d.) open data; per capita GDP for Durban is calculated using the 9.6% benchmark for the metropolitan area and the population figure cited for the metropolitan area by the city council for 2019. See eThekweni Municipality (2020a).

provinces that had an outflow of people (Statistics South Africa, 2011). Those who migrate to Durban come mainly from KwaZulu-Natal province or the Eastern Cape (eThekweni Municipality, 2017). In 2016, the Community Survey recorded 1% of the population of the municipality as foreign-born, with the majority from the southern Africa region, followed by the UK and Europe (Statistics South Africa, 2016). A significant proportion of both internal and international migrants reside in informal settlements (35% and 15%, respectively) (eThekweni Municipality, 2017).

Many migrants in Durban are employed at the port or as street traders. Both formal and informal trading businesses have expanded concurrently with the rise in immigration since the 1990s (IOM, 2014). The spatial separation between residential and economic areas in the city is especially severe for migrant workers, with many living in the north but spending significant time and money commuting to the centre for work. Durban has no formal policy to address migration, which has recently come to the fore with multiple violent incidents against people perceived to be 'foreign' (Cities Alliance, 2017).

Governance structure

The eThekweni municipal council is comprised of 219 councillors; of which 110 represent the wards and the remaining 109 are for proportional

representation (drawn from party lists) (eThekweni Municipality, 2020b). These councillors elect the mayor and other key officers (Speaker, Chief Financial Officer etc.), all of whom serve a five-year term. The African National Congress currently holds a 58% majority, with the other parties sharing 42% (eThekweni Municipality, 2020b). The municipality has the mandate to pass and implement all policies within its geographic jurisdiction, unless they are deemed contrary to national interest. In practice, municipal planning mainly deals with land uses (e.g. zoning), transportation, infrastructure and the local economy/tourism (Sutcliffe and Bannister, 2015). The eThekweni Municipality recently established the first City Planning Commission in the country. Its current priorities are furthering spatial integration, encouraging good governance and supporting economic development. The majority of spatial planning efforts centre on inner city redevelopment. A key focus of the 2018–2019 Integrated Development Plan (IDP) was to align the city's budget more closely with these goals (eThekweni Municipality, 2020b). Approximately 95% of provincial budget allocations stem from national fiscal transfers (National Treasury, 2019). Durban has also recently implemented community-based planning, a bottom-up approach to inform the IDP. Nearly every ward has now compiled their own development plan, each identifying five priorities for future policy (eThekweni Municipality, 2020b).

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