

# Minister Gigaba: Migrants entitled to protection

Home Affairs Minister Malusi Gigaba says individuals visiting, transiting and residing in the territory of a country are entitled to the protection of the host country.



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“By virtue of their presence in a territory, they may also make various claims on the host State, and thus destination countries are entitled to know who a prospective visitor is, and what their needs, circumstances and intentions are before they enter a country’s territory,” he said.

## Potential future citizen

Speaking on Friday at the International Migration Conference at the Sandton Convention Centre, Minister Gigaba said when governments manage migration, they do so in the awareness that they are not merely considering entry of a temporary resident, but also a potential future citizen.

“People also become citizens of other countries through naturalization. International migration is not just about the affluent strata of the economy, it is a development issue.

“The desire to control immigration was a strong motivator in the decision of British voters to leave the European Union, 56 years after first applying to join its predecessor, the European Economic Commission, in 1961.

“Anti-immigrant sentiment has, and is, continuing to play a significant and troubling role in the politics of countries, which

have hitherto been seen as exemplars of openness and regional integration,” he said.

## **New policy framework needed**

Minister Gigaba told delegates at the conference that there is an urgent need to develop a new and enduring policy framework and programme for the management of international migration in order to harness its positive benefits, while minimising the risks.

“The new framework must meet both the current and our future challenges,” he said.

The Minister has identified the development of a new international migration policy as one of his top priorities during his term of office. This policy review seeks to lay a solid policy foundation for South Africa to manage international migration securely and effectively, in line with the National Development Plan.

In the 2014/15 financial year, the Department of Home Affairs submitted the Discussion Paper on International Migration to the Minister for approval. The Discussion Paper served as a basis for drafting the Green Paper, which was submitted in the 2015/16 financial year and approved by the Minister on 29 March 2016. The Green Paper has been used as a basis for drafting the White Paper on International Migration, to be submitted to Cabinet for approval by 31 March 2017.

## **Right to entry reserved**

Home Affairs Deputy Director General: Immigration Services, Jackie McKay, said as sovereign State, South Africa has defined borders that are recognised by approximately 200 states.

“SA reserves the right to determine who is allowed entry into the country and under what conditions.

“The new Whiter Paper on International Migration affirms SA’s sovereign right to determine the admission and residence conditions for foreign nationals, in line with its national interest,” he said.

According to McKay, SA urgently needs a robust, progressive vision of the benefits of well-managed international migration.

“This vision must be based on the crucial contribution inward and outward migration and will make to growing our economy and to the transformation of Africa,” he said.

Namibian delegate at the conference, Justino Okkae, told *SAnews* that the conference is important to address the many problems faced by Africans when migrating to other countries.

“We need to sit down and agree on the way forward to protect our people from the frustrations they are experiencing daily,” he said.

According to the World Bank, there are 250 million international migrants in the world, 3% of the world’s population.

The National International Migration Conference is, among others, attended by Ministers of Home Affairs from Zimbabwe, Namibia, Lesotho and Swaziland, ambassadors as well as international experts and practitioners invited to share international experience on the management of international migration.