

Joint Statement

Gauteng Region Elected Vice-President for Africa of Regions4

21 July 2026 - The Gauteng Provincial Government, represented by Ewan Botha, Member of the Executive Council for Environment, has been elected Vice-President for Africa of Regions4, the global network of regions driving action in climate change, biodiversity, and sustainable development. The appointment was confirmed following a formal vote of member regions during the Regions4 General Assembly, the network's annual governance gathering.

The nomination of Gauteng reflects its growing engagement within the international climate governance arena and its participation in Regions4 as a contributing member. As Vice-President for Africa, Gauteng will support the strengthening of African regional engagement within the network and contribute to ongoing discussions on climate action, sustainable development, and climate finance.

This election comes at a time when Regions4 continues to emphasise the role of subnational governments in delivering climate and biodiversity outcomes, particularly through improved access to finance, strengthened implementation capacity, and enhanced participation in global processes.

Welcoming the new Vice-Presidency, Natalia Uribe, Secretary General of Regions4, stated:

"We are delighted to welcome Gauteng as Vice-President for Africa of Regions4. Gauteng brings a highly relevant perspective to our network: that of a dynamic, urbanised and economically significant region working to align provincial climate action with national and global frameworks, while advancing concrete adaptation and resilience measures on the ground. At a time when African regions are calling for stronger recognition, greater access to climate finance, and a more meaningful role in global decision-making, Gauteng's leadership will be essential. As Vice-President for Africa, Gauteng will help amplify the voice of African subnational governments and strengthen our collective efforts to turn climate, biodiversity and sustainable development commitments into real implementation for people and territories." - **Natalia Uribe Pando** - **Secretary General, Regions4**

Role of the Vice-Presidency for Africa

The Vice-Presidency for Africa is a governance role within Regions4 aimed at supporting coordination among African member regions, facilitating knowledge exchange, and ensuring that regional perspectives from across the continent are reflected in the network's global engagement.

It also contributes to Regions4's broader objective of strengthening the role of subnational governments as implementation partners in international climate and biodiversity frameworks, including through improved access to climate finance mechanisms and multilateral funding instruments.

Welcoming the appointment, Gauteng Region's representative, Ewan Botha, stated:

"The nomination was humbling, but the vote of confidence carries a different weight. It is a mandate to act. Africa contributes minimally to global emissions yet bears the brunt of the climate crisis. This platform must shift who shapes decisions and how they are made." - **Ewan Botha - Member of the Executive Council for Environment, Gauteng Provincial Government**

Gauteng's Vice-Presidency will contribute advancing innovative financing approaches, including blended finance and carbon markets, while ensuring that subnational governments are recognised as credible implementing partners with direct access to global funds such as the Green Climate Fund, Adaptation Fund, and Global Environment Facility. A key focus will also include supporting the development of investment-ready projects and improving collaboration between subnational governments and partners.

The Provincial Government wants to elevate the voice of African regions in global climate negotiations, including in the UN Climate Change Conference (COP) processes and international financing discussions, ensuring that subnational governments are recognised as active architects of solutions rather than passive implementers. This appointment reinforces Gauteng's ambition to build a globally competitive environmental and sustainability portfolio, positioning the province as a credible partner in climate finance, green investment, and international cooperation.

Gauteng's Climate Action Context

Gauteng Province, South Africa's economic powerhouse and home to the most populous and densely populated province in the country, is setting a bold example for climate action by embracing multilevel governance and collaborative strategies. Faced with growing climate risks such as heatwaves, intense rainfall, and drought, Gauteng has adopted a structured, multi-level approach to climate governance aligned with national frameworks including South Africa's Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) and the National Adaptation Strategy. Resilience efforts span key sectors in the region - from water, energy, transport, agriculture, disaster risk reduction, industry, and health - and are increasingly embedded in municipal planning across the province, reinforcing Gauteng's commitment to climate finance, green investment, and international cooperation as practical tools for accelerating delivery on the ground.

For Regions4, Gauteng's election as Vice President for Africa strengthens the network's presence on the continent at a critical moment. It brings an African perspective to regional climate governance debates, deepens the network's connections to ongoing climate finance and adaptation work across Southern Africa, and opens pathways for peer exchange between African subnational governments and Regions4 members worldwide. As a province navigating the tension between rapid urbanisation, energy transition, and climate vulnerability, Gauteng brings practical, on-the-ground experience that enriches the network's collective knowledge and advocacy.



ABOUT REGIONS4



Regions4 is a global network of subnational governments driving action in climate change, biodiversity, and sustainable development. It was born in 2002 to represent states, regions and provinces at UN negotiations, European Union initiatives and global discussions on biodiversity, climate change and sustainable development. Today, Regions4 brings together 59 members across 25 countries, collectively representing 171 subnational governments reaching over 430 million people. For more visit: www.regions4.org

ABOUT GAUTENG



Gauteng Provincial Government is the executive authority responsible for governing Gauteng province in South Africa. The Gauteng Department of Environment is the provincial government authority responsible for environmental sustainability, conservation, and resource protection in South Africa. It oversees provincial nature reserves, manages thousands of wetland sites, and handles environmental compliance enforcement. For more visit: www.gauteng.gov.za

CONTACTS

- **Elijah Mhlanga**
Chief Director: Public Relations and Media Liaison
Office of the Premier
Cell: +27 83 580 8275 | Tel: +27 11 355 6422
Email: Elijah.Mhlanga@gauteng.gov.za
- **Bridgette Mbonambi**
Media Liaison Officer – MEC for Environment
Gauteng Department of Environment
Cell: +27 81 042 2126
Email: Bridgette.Mbonambi@gauteng.gov.za
- **Soraia Ribeiro**
Communications Manager
Regions4 Sustainable Development
Email: sribeiro@regions4.org