



Prepared by **United Nations  
Country Team South Africa**  
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**UNITED NATIONS**  
SOUTH AFRICA



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# Executive Summary

The last United Nations Common Country Analysis for South Africa was published in mid-2020. Since then, new Covid-19 variants have emerged in the country, followed by national lockdowns and other restrictions. In addition, South Africa has been affected by civil unrests, natural disasters such as unprecedented floods and droughts, locust infestations, renewed anti-migrant protest, a cost-of-living crisis and rising political instability in the run-up to the 2024 national election.

To complicate the situation further, both the duration and intensity of loadshedding increased significantly towards the end of 2022 and into 2023. The intensification of the energy crisis in South Africa is causing major disruption to day-to-day business, food supply chains, the education sector, other infrastructure systems such as water and transport – and the lives of ordinary people. It is likely to be a deterrent to long-term investment due to the uncertainty it creates about stable energy supply, which is essential for business plans and operations.

In July 2022, the United Nations Country Team (UNCT) South Africa decided to update the common country analysis (CCA) to capture these contextual changes, explore their interconnectedness, identify what challenges – but also opportunities – these changes have created and suggest possible programmatic changes for the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) 2020-2025.

The Covid-19 pandemic had devastating impacts across all socio-economic sectors of South Africa, causing more than 102 000 official deaths between 20 January 2020 and 24 October 2022. The country suffered a very large output contraction – 6.3% in 2020. Consequences have included a sharp rise in poverty, with a higher proportion of female-headed than male-headed households falling into poverty, households experiencing less secure employment and greater likelihood of poverty, workers with only primary education hardest hit and rising inequality. Health sector services were stretched, the education system suffered and gender-based violence (GBV) surged, as did violence against irregular migrants, refugees and asylum seekers. Unemployment increased from already extremely high levels, reaching the record high of 35.3% in the fourth quarter of 2021, against 32.5% at the end of 2020 (this receded to 32.9% in the third quarter of 2022). It disproportionately affected the youth, women, migrant populations and the poor.

The socio-economic situation caused by the pandemic was aggravated by the civil unrest of July 2021 following former president Jacob Zuma's imprisonment. The unrest spread through KwaZulu-Natal and later to Gauteng. It quickly escalated to looting and destruction of properties, culminating in a loss of 330 lives and more than 2 500 arrests. It affected food systems and value chains, with many South Africans experiencing hunger and poverty in the affected provinces.

**UNCT SOUTH AFRICA DECIDED TO UPDATE THE COMMON COUNTRY ANALYSIS (CCA) TO CAPTURE THESE CONTEXTUAL CHANGES, EXPLORE THEIR INTERCONNECTEDNESS, IDENTIFY WHAT CHALLENGES – BUT ALSO OPPORTUNITIES – THESE CHANGES HAVE CREATED**



**THE CIVIL UNREST QUICKLY ESCALATED TO LOOTING AND DESTRUCTION OF PROPERTIES, CULMINATING IN A LOSS OF 330 LIVES AND MORE THAN 2 500 ARRESTS**

The costs inflicted by the unrest on property, businesses and livelihoods were estimated at R50 billion (\$3.6 billion) – 1.2% of South Africa’s gross domestic product (GDP), with damages to both big and small businesses, warehouses and factories.

The floods that hit KwaZulu-Natal and parts of Eastern Cape in April 2022 caused significant property and infrastructure damage and colossal loss of lives and livelihoods. During the floods, 443 people died, 35 were injured and 72 went missing. A total of 13 790 houses was totally or partially destroyed and 6 210 people were left homeless. Roads, bridges, telecommunication, power lines and water structures were damaged, causing transport and logistics disruptions, including to Durban port, which services the whole of southern Africa.

Higher world inflation caused by the war in Ukraine increased domestic prices. South Africans bearing the brunt of the crisis are the poor, with consumer price inflation (CPI) rising sharply. Indeed, annual CPI reached a 13-year high of 7.8% in July 2022 (it receded to 7.2% in December 2022).



**HIGHER WORLD INFLATION CAUSED BY THE WAR IN UKRAINE INCREASED DOMESTIC PRICES**

The main drivers of rising inflation have been transport, food and energy prices. In response to rising inflation, the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) of the South African Reserve Bank (SARB) has raised interest rates successively, taking the purchase rate up to 7.0% in November 2022, with expectations that it will continue to move further up. The interest rate increase is putting further pressure on household demand due to higher borrowing costs, with an adverse impact on growth. These developments threaten food security and new waves of civil unrest could occur, especially given that wage increases, grants and other social insurance benefits are not keeping pace with higher inflation. In April 2020, at the height of Covid-19, the national government

implemented a support package that included the Social Relief of Distress (SRD) grant, a very important social protection mechanism for the most vulnerable. However, it is unlikely to stem new waves of unrest likely to arise from precarious socio-economic conditions.

**THE MAIN DRIVERS OF RISING INFLATION HAVE BEEN THE COST OF**



**TRANSPORT**



**FOOD**



**ENERGY**

Other emerging issues include:

### **Rising intolerance towards migrants**

Tensions and threats of xenophobic attacks on migrants in South Africa have increased in the recent past. A newly formed group, Operation Dudula, has been an important driver of this and is of major concern. Operation Dudula started in the townships around Johannesburg to rid South Africa of undocumented migrants or migrants in irregular situations (although migrants are targeted irrespective of migratory status) who, it claims, are involved in criminal activities such as selling drugs, robbery, rape and tavern shootings, and are taking jobs and insufficient health and education services that are considered as being exclusively for South Africans.

### **Trafficking in persons and smuggling of migrants for artisanal mining**

There has been a surge in smuggling of natural resources by miners known as zama zamas involved in illegal mining. It has been reported that some zama zamas are migrants, sometimes in irregular situations, including smuggled migrants and victims of people trafficking. These illegal and dangerous activities are often organised by criminal syndicates, which are also referred to as zama zamas. The South African government is still to respond to the challenges of artisanal miners, especially those operating in the surrounding communities.



**THE SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT IS STILL TO RESPOND TO THE CHALLENGES OF ARTISANAL MINERS**

## Compliance with anti-money-laundering rules

The Financial Action Taskforce (FATF) recently subjected South Africa to an anti-money-laundering (AML)/combating the financing of terrorism (CFT) evaluation to ascertain whether its laws comply with international standards and how effectively they are implemented. The October 2021 report revealed several deficiencies in the country's AML/CFT regime. Major concerns included inadequate laws to address terrorism financing, ineffectiveness in implementing measures to prevent investigating and prosecution of terrorism financing, and insufficient laws on regulation and supervision of financial institutions. As a result, FATF put South Africa on notice. Greylisting by the FATF in February 2023 is expected to lead to rising lending rates and make finance become more difficult to secure, which may affect socio-economic conditions.



GREYLISTING IS EXPECTED TO LEAD TO **RISE** LENDING RATES, AND MAKE **FINANCE** BECOME MORE DIFFICULT TO SECURE

## Weakening of social cohesion

Perceptions of the declining legitimacy of the ruling ANC grew in 2022, following several large-scale corruption scandals. This has undermined state institutions and gravely affected the ability of the state to deliver basic services. These political challenges, coupled with the deteriorating socio-economic conditions mentioned earlier, have exacerbated rifts in society.



LARGE-SCALE CORRUPTION HAS **UNDERMINED** STATE INSTITUTIONS AND GRAVELY **AFFECTED** THE ABILITY OF THE STATE TO **DELIVER** BASIC SERVICES

Scapegoats, particularly non-citizens, have been singled out as causes of joblessness and have become targets in political narratives looking to apportion blame for service-delivery failures. Social cohesion has weakened.

## Growing political instability

South Africa faces the growing risk of political instability. After nearly 30 years in power, the ANC faces rising public

dissatisfaction and internal dissension and, for the first time, could lose its absolute majority in Parliament during the 2024 election. ANC rule was considered until recently a guarantee of post-apartheid stability. However, the factions considered to be aligning with President Ramaphosa and former President Zuma, which seems to be increasingly difficult to control, may endanger the stability of the country, as shown during the 2021 July unrest.



PUBLIC DISSATISFACTION AND INTERNAL RIVALRY MAY **ENDANGER** THE STABILITY OF THE COUNTRY

## The climate change challenge

Events such as the devastating flooding in KwaZulu-Natal and droughts in other provinces indicate that South Africa must urgently build resilience to withstand future shocks – whether socio-economic, political or environmental. Marginalised groups have been severely affected, including women and girls, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and intersex (LGBTQI) or gender-non-conforming individuals; persons with disabilities, those living in poverty and migrants. In the current socio-political context, these groups have little resilience to climate change, which will become an increasingly pressing issue as South Africa continues to experience successive extreme weather events and a looming food security crisis.

Covid-19 and the subsequent shocks have had a negative effect on the achievement of almost all Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and related human rights. Progress has been reversed or hindered with increased poverty, hunger, inequality and key health indicators due to public health resources being shifted away from diseases such as HIV (in a country in which HIV/Aids can be characterised as a permanent pandemic), tuberculosis (TB) and malaria. Consequently, a direct impact was observed on the enjoyment of various economic and social rights (and related SDGs), including the rights to work, to sufficient food, water and adequate housing, to education, to social security and to health, including mental health. These impacts also affected the right to equality, with a concomitant impact on SDG 10, and on the ethos of 'leave no one behind', in that vulnerable groups are now at risk of being left further behind. Trends in SDG progress have indeed stalled or reversed, especially SDGs 1 to 5 and SDGs 8 and 10.

COVID-19 HAD A DIRECT IMPACT ON VARIOUS ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL RIGHTS INCLUDING THE RIGHTS TO



WORK



FOOD



WATER



HOUSING



EDUCATION



SECURITY



HEALTH

The Covid-19 pandemic, which caused deep GDP contraction, has hampered the achievement of SDG target 8.5 of full and productive employment.

The events and their impacts have clear links, which have manifested in numerous ways. Some have generated simultaneous impacts across different socio-economic sectors, while others have had cascading effects, with impacts starting in one sector and then affecting others. Events have also had second-round effects on a single sector, and feedback effects.



COVID-19 AND THE SUBSEQUENT SHOCKS HAVE HAD A **NEGATIVE EFFECT ON THE ACHIEVEMENT OF ALMOST ALL SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS AND RELATED HUMAN RIGHTS**

Macro events often have the greatest ramifications, triggering other events and impacts on different economic and societal sectors. Covid-19 and the lockdowns caused the failure of companies in different sectors. In manufacturing, companies collapsed, causing ruptures with their deep and extensive links with the agricultural and services sectors. Unemployment rates reached exceptional levels. Some UN programmes slowed down and others stopped as resources were redirected to urgent Covid-19-related needs. In rural areas, higher service and input costs had an impact on available budgetary allocation. As a result, delivery of services and interventions for the most vulnerable were delayed. Given the global nature of Covid-19, foreign direct investment (FDI) was affected as were

remittances, an important income source for poor households in South Africa and the region.

It should be also noted that any crisis, conflict or shock will have a gender impact, in that it will affect women and men/girls and boys/gender-non-conforming people differently. The impacts will tend to be bigger in countries such as South Africa where gender inequalities/disparities are already marked and deeply entrenched across socio-economic sectors and settings.

Climate change and variability, and other major macro events in South Africa, affect various human rights and, thus, various SDGs, since SDGs and human rights are closely related. Climate change exacerbates poverty (SDG 1), hindering the right to an adequate standard of living, which, in turn, has negative health outcomes. Climate change also affects men and women differently, which affects the realisation of SDG 5. Effects cascade to all areas, including UN work, development, health, women, children and people with disabilities, and social cohesion.

Fractures in social cohesion (and rise of anti-migrant sentiment), in turn, can affect political stability, and peace and security. They influence the socio-economic context of the country and that of neighbouring countries, which hamper the stability of South Africa.



HIGH LEVELS OF VIOLENCE AFFECT THE OVERALL POPULATION, HAVING AN IMPACT ON JUSTICE AND THE RULE OF LAW

**THE MULTIPLE CRISES THAT HAVE BATTERED SOUTH AFRICA IN THE PAST TWO TO THREE YEARS PRESENT BOTH THREATS AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE COUNTRY AND THE WORK OF THE UN**

The July 2021 unrest demonstrates the interconnectedness of violence, social cohesion and political instability. High levels of violence affect the overall population, having an impact on justice and the rule of law, which do not have the capacity to address this rising criminality. Subsequently, this may dent trust and confidence in state institutions and the government, which are unable to protect and fulfil their mandate to maintain law and order. Violence targeting foreigners, in particular, creates a vicious circle of reprisals and a risk for social cohesion, contributing to political instability.

The multiple crises that have battered South Africa in the past two to three years present both threats and opportunities for the country and the work of the UN. There is an opportunity to assess the feasibility of the current National Development Plan (NDP) and discuss the government's priorities for the next five years. The impending national election in 2024 could add further impetus to this work. There is a real fluidity in policy, with different sectors pushing hard for their priorities. In this context, the UN can and should use its convening power to help the government build consensus on priorities, given the present socio-economic crisis. The introduction of a basic income grant alone would be an opportunity to build back better and promote a more resilient country.



**THE INTRODUCTION OF A BASIC INCOME GRANT WOULD BE AN OPPORTUNITY TO BUILD BACK BETTER AND PROMOTE A MORE RESILIENT COUNTRY**

In terms of the UNSDCF, the UN should recognise that poverty, inequality, climate and environmental degradation are closely linked. Therefore, development policy needs to consider inclusiveness, resilience and sustainability in a much more integrated manner, putting people at the centre, as per the human-rights-based approach. UN interventions should foster green, resilient and inclusive development, promotion of youth employment, building resilience to climate change, biodiversity conservation, water management, access to sustainable, clean and affordable renewable energy; respect, protection and promotion of human rights for all; and citizens' participation in democratic processes and social cohesion. Leaving no-one behind, human rights, gender mainstreaming and gender-sensitive approaches, big data and innovation should be at the

centre of all UN interventions. There is a need to forge a new (and continuous) social contract, drawing on the government and all stakeholders.

Since 2021, the UN has operated at district level in a coordinated way under the District Development Model, in partnership with the South African government. However, recent experience has shown that the organisation should review its capacity to coordinate its work (within the UN system and with other actors) and how it operates at provincial/district levels in emergencies. Responses to the July 2021 civil unrest and the April 2022 floods revealed challenges in interactions with the South African National Disaster Management Centre (NDMC) and the provincial/district level disaster management structures. The UNSDCF should, therefore, include an emergency preparedness component and establish (or integrate) a more formal working arrangement with the NDMC and corresponding sub-national entities. Investment in capacity building should be a priority in preparation for future emergencies, humanitarian disasters and/or new outbreaks.



**POVERTY, INEQUALITY AND UNEMPLOYMENT INDICATE THAT THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD ACCELERATE IMPLEMENTATION OF ITS PROGRESSIVE POLICIES**

The shocks that have exacerbated development challenges – chiefly poverty, inequality and unemployment – indicate that the government should accelerate implementation of its progressive policies. It should invest more in its national and sub-national disaster management systems and in preparedness for and response to disasters. This includes improving early warning systems so that communities and authorities are better able to respond in time and in building back resilient infrastructure and human settlements.



**IMPROVING EARLY WARNING SYSTEMS SO THAT COMMUNITIES AND AUTHORITIES ARE BETTER ABLE TO RESPOND**

Opportunities exist for societal strategic policy actions, including transforming education post Covid-19 and strengthening health systems to better manage future health emergencies. More needs to be done to enhance





THE THREE PROPOSED POLICY ACTIONS WILL **BENEFIT THE POOREST AND MOST VULNERABLE** BY HELPING **PROTECT THEIR LIVES AND LIVELIHOODS, REDUCE THEIR SUFFERING AND VULNERABILITY, ENHANCE THEIR AGENCY AND GIVE THEM THE SPACE AND TOOLS FOR A BETTER FUTURE**

food distribution systems. Moreover, the digital divide has shown the significant injustice that results when people do not enjoy universal access to the internet or when people cannot afford the devices or data necessary for connectivity.



THE **DIGITAL DIVIDE** HAS SHOWN THE SIGNIFICANT INJUSTICE THAT RESULTS WHEN **PEOPLE DO NOT ENJOY UNIVERSAL ACCESS TO THE INTERNET**

In October 2020, when the Covid-19 crisis was at its height, the South African government adopted the Economic Reconstruction and Recovery Plan. To support this plan, coordination must be strengthened between actors and stakeholders. Crucial to plan implementation is decent employment creation, which the government can support through initiatives such as a national employment policy, employment-intensive investment, macro and sectoral pro-employment policy, and labour migration policy and labour law reform.



CRUCIAL TO PLAN IMPLEMENTATION IS **DECENT EMPLOYMENT CREATION**

This assessment recommends building resilience to shocks for better and more sustainable outcomes in future. Specifically, it suggests three interconnected policy actions. These are strengthening the country's social security system through the basic income grant, enhancing the national disaster management system and fighting climate change through climate action and accelerating investment in a just transition. These three have interfaces that can generate important synergies and become powerful tools for building resilience to shocks, reducing vulnerabilities and creating a clear pathway to a sustainable future.

All these three proposed policy actions are being discussed. First, the UN, through the International Labour Organisation (ILO), working with the government and other stakeholders, has developed a proposal on how best and most affordably to protect those still uncovered by the social protection system. Secondly, the floods of April 2022 reinforced the need to enhance the country's capacity to respond in a more coordinated and effective manner to different shocks. And thirdly, climate action will not only be about building resilience to disasters but will open new fronts of sustainable investment towards a truly inclusive and sustainable growth path. These actions will benefit the poorest and most vulnerable by helping protect their lives and livelihoods, reduce their suffering and vulnerability, enhance their agency and give them the space and tools for a better future.

**THIS REPORT RECOMMENDS BUILDING RESILIENCE TO SHOCKS FOR BETTER AND MORE SUSTAINABLE OUTCOMES IN FUTURE**

# Introduction

Since mid-2020, when the last UN CCA for South Africa was published, new Covid-19 variants have emerged in the country, followed by national lockdowns and other restrictions.

The COVID-19 pandemic and its impacts have affected key socio-economic indicators, such as GBV, unemployment, health and education, and has heightened levels of vulnerability among the poorest and most disadvantaged segments of society. In addition, South Africa has suffered civil unrests, natural disasters such as unprecedented floods and droughts, locust infestations, renewed anti-migrant protests and, more recently, a food and energy price crisis. As if these events were not enough, the intensification of loadshedding is causing major disruption to business operations, food supply chains, the education sector and infrastructure systems such as water and transport, affecting the livelihoods of millions. At the end of 2022 and into 2023, the country faced stages 5 to 6 loadshedding. In addition to the disruption to the economy, this deteriorating situation is causing major societal and political tensions, with sporadic protests and vehement criticism from political actors. This, in turn, has the potential to fuel the political instability the country is witnessing in the run-up to the 2024 national election. In addition, in 2021, FATF put South Africa on notice for below-par anti-money-laundering rules. A greylisting in February 2023 would lead to higher lending rates and difficulty in securing development and other financing, which would negatively affect the socio-economic situation.

South Africa's high levels of inequalities, poverty, and employment are well known. As the CCA of 2019-20 notes, South Africa is one of the most unequal countries in the world, with a Gini coefficient of 0.68. And, according to the Living Conditions Survey 2014-15, 25.2% of the



ACCORDING TO THE LIVING  
CONDITIONS SURVEY 2014-15,  
**25.2% OF THE POPULATION  
WERE FOOD POOR**

population were food poor, 40% below the lower-bound poverty line and 55.5% below the upper-bound poverty line. Statistics South Africa (Stats SA) is expected to publish a report in mid-2023 on the country's SDG progress, but as this CCA update highlights in the next pages, independent research analysis points to poverty increase in the wake of Covid-19, which looks likely to have increased further with the subsequent shocks. Finally, as just mentioned, unemployment rates deteriorated further during Covid-19 from levels that were already extremely high, at nearly 30% (UNCT South Africa CCA, 2020).



**UNEMPLOYMENT RATES  
DETERIORATED FURTHER  
DURING COVID-19 AT  
NEARLY 30%**

Given these factors, UNCT South Africa decided in July 2022 to update the CCA. The aim is to capture the contextual changes, explore their interconnectedness, identify what challenges – but also opportunities – these changes have created and suggest programmatic changes for the UNSDCF 2020-2025. The ultimate purpose is to ensure that UN work remains relevant and in line with its mandate, the 2030 development agenda and South Africa's national development priorities.



**THIS DOCUMENT HAS EIGHT ADDITIONAL SECTIONS:**

2

**SECTION 2:** Provides an overview of the emerging issues – including external shocks and new developments generated domestically, their impacts and some immediate responses.

3

**SECTION 3:** Gives a brief account of the current political and macroeconomic contexts.

4

**SECTION 4:** Discusses the impacts of the various crises on the realisation of SDGs and human rights.

5

**SECTION 5:** Details the interconnectedness of events, their second-round effects and any spillover (or feedback) effects.

6

**SECTION 6:** Considers whether the new events and context have created opportunities and space to do things differently.

7

**SECTION 7:** Explores implications for the UNSDCF – specifically whether ongoing programmes are sufficiently flexible to respond to the new issues and whether they require corrective actions, changes in approach or programming.

8

**SECTION 8:** Ponders possible implications for government policy.

9

**SECTION 9:** Concludes with a deeper look at actions to build resilience to future shocks.

The CCA update is an independent UN analysis, undertaken by an inter-agency team established under the leadership of the Resident Coordinator's Office (RCO). It has benefitted from a validation workshop comprising in-house and external experts.

## Emerging issues: Overview, impacts and some immediate responses

Several events relevant to the people of South Africa and the work of the UN have occurred since mid-2020, when the last CCA was concluded.

These include successive waves of the Covid-19 pandemic, the political unrest of July 2021 in KwaZulu-Natal and Gauteng, the KwaZulu-Natal and Eastern Cape floods of April 2022, large locust infestations in Eastern Cape, Free State and Northern Cape, the rising cost of living as a result of the war in Ukraine, the rise of anti-migrant sentiment, labour trafficking associated with illegal mining, poor compliance with FATF anti-money-laundering rules and increased political instability. Finally, a crucial issue that cuts across virtually all SDGs and that is gaining urgency in South Africa is the need for climate action.<sup>1</sup>

### Covid-19 pandemic

The Covid-19 pandemic has had devastating impacts across all socio-economic sectors of South Africa, causing more than 102 000 deaths, officially, between 20 January 2020 and 24 October 2022.<sup>2</sup> Shops and factories closed or operated well below capacity with sharp output decrease. Production was further hampered by lack of intermediate supplies. The collapse of companies in the manufacturing sector, with its deep and extensive links with the agricultural and service sectors, caused further output contraction and reduced trade. The

economy was already in the midst of a prolonged period of depressed investment, subdued growth, and high and rising public debt, in addition to deep-rooted structural challenges such as exceedingly high levels of inequality and unemployment, and reversals in poverty reduction.

The country suffered one of its largest output contractions – 6.3% – in 2020.<sup>3</sup> Model simulations indicate that social conditions worsened.<sup>4</sup> The consequences have included a sharp rise – in poverty and other accompanying social ills, with more female-headed than male-headed households falling into poverty, households with less secure employment more likely falling into poverty, workers with only primary education hardest hit and inequality rising.<sup>5</sup> Unemployment increased from already extremely high levels, disproportionately affecting the youth, women, migrant populations and the poor. Health sector services were stretched, the education system suffered, and GBV surged, as did violence against irregular migrants, refugees and asylum seekers.<sup>6</sup> Inequalities increased, affecting the most vulnerable groups. GBV was declared by President Ramaphosa to be the shadow pandemic that affected vulnerable individuals including migrants, refugees and asylum-seekers.

1 The final section of this update states that South Africa is among the most carbon-intensive energy producers and among the largest emitters of carbon dioxide in the world, with references therein; and discusses government climate action initiatives, including in response to the Paris Climate Agreement and in the context of COP 26 and 27.

2 <https://covid19.who.int/region/afro/country/za>.

3 IMF (2021). South Africa: Staff concluding statement of the 2021 Article IV Mission, 8 December, available at: <https://www.imf.org/en/News/Articles/2021/12/07/south-africa-staff-concluding-statement-of-the-2021-article-iv-mission>.

4 See UNDP South Africa (2020), Covid-19 in South Africa: Socio-economic impact assessment, United Nations Development Programme, South Africa.

5 Ibid.

6 UN News (2022). South Africa 'on the precipice of explosive xenophobic violence', UN experts warn, available at: <https://news.un.org/en/story/2022/07/1122612>.



The government responded by assisting companies and workers facing distress through the Unemployment Insurance Fund and special Industrial Development Corporation programmes. Low-income workers received a small tax subsidy for four months, and a temporary SRD grant of R350 a month for unemployed persons who were not entitled to any other social grants or unemployment benefits. The grant was created and extended three times, first to April 2021, then until the end of March 2023, and in October 2022 to the end of March 2024.<sup>7</sup> Litigation in June 2020 ensured that the grant was also extended to some migrant populations holding special dispensation visas, and asylum-seekers.<sup>8</sup> What follows describes sector-specific impacts.

**HEALTH:** Health systems bore the brunt of the pandemic. Health workers came under immense work and psychological strain. There has also been a protracted disruption of various essential health services, including for HIV, TB, reproductive, maternal, newborn, child and adolescent health and nutrition, and non-communicable diseases.<sup>9</sup> Consequences have included reduced access to health services and exacerbated inequities. TB and HIV testing and treatment have declined, the latter in the

context of the permanent HIV/Aids pandemic. Childhood immunisations and maternal reproductive and child health services have suffered, including more than 100 000 not receiving three doses of the combined diphtheria, tetanus toxoid and pertussis vaccines. And routine health services for non-communicable diseases such as hypertension, diabetes and cancer have been disrupted, as have elective surgeries. This will increase the burden of preventable health conditions, deaths and disability.



**ROUTINE HEALTH SERVICES FOR NON-COMMUNICABLE DISEASES BEEN DISRUPTED, AS HAVE ELECTIVE SURGERIES**

The pandemic has hampered the realisation of the right to health,<sup>10</sup> including sexual and reproductive health rights, affecting vulnerable groups, including persons with disabilities. Progress on many UN joint workplan areas under health, wellbeing and nutrition has slowed, including national health insurance legislation, implementation of the Presidential health compact and rollout of the National Public Health Institute of South Africa.

7 The latest extension took place under the October 2022 medium-term policy statement, with egregious consequences for other grants such as the child support grant. See K Hall and P Proudlock (2022), Treasury is pushing SA's poorest and youngest over the edge in a cruel trade-off, Daily Maverick, 31 October, available at [www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2022-10-31-treasury-is-pushing-sas-poorest-and-youngest-over-the-edge-in-a-cruel-trade-off/](http://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2022-10-31-treasury-is-pushing-sas-poorest-and-youngest-over-the-edge-in-a-cruel-trade-off/); M Heywood (2022), Inhumane and unconstitutional economic policy 'takes food from the mouths of children', Daily Maverick, 1 November, available at [www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2022-11-01-inhumane-economic-policy-takes-food-from-mouths-of-children/](http://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2022-11-01-inhumane-economic-policy-takes-food-from-mouths-of-children/); Medium-term budget is taking from the mouths of babies, children's organisations claim, (27 October 2022).

8 Scalabrini (2020), Centre of Cape Town and another v Minister of Social Development and others (22808/2020) [2020] ZAGPPHC 308, 2021 (1) SA 553 (GP) (18 June).

9 Primary healthcare (headcount) declined by over 20% from April 2020 to March 2021 compared with April 2019 to March 2020, antenatal first visit declined 2.7% over the same period, immunisation under one year coverage by nearly 5%, HIV tests conducted by 22%, and screens for TB symptoms among individuals five years and older by 20% (Department of Health, South Africa).

10 Article 12 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR). section 27 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 (Constitution).



The pandemic has laid bare gaps in the health system, particularly fragmented information systems, inadequate intersectoral coordination and absence of dedicated emergency preparedness and response structures and mechanisms. With the scaling up of Covid-19 vaccinations and high population immunity owing to natural infections, there currently is lower incidence of severe disease and deaths. The government is resetting the health systems on the path to recovery, and mainstreaming Covid-19 into day-to-day lives and health systems. However, the pandemic is not yet over and the risk of evolving variants remains. These could be more virulent, more transmissible and may be immune to earlier protection. Therefore, surveillance, vigilance, health system readiness, and public health and social measures must be maintained, while allowing for economic activity. It is also vital that the right to basic healthcare, afforded to all persons in South Africa, is reiterated, particularly for migrant populations. It is also crucial to ensure the participation of all individuals, including women, girls, children, older persons and persons with disabilities, in decision-making processes, the outcome of which will have an impact on their lives.

**CHILDREN AND THE YOUTH:** The Covid-19 pandemic in South Africa, arguably Africa’s worst-affected country, led to more than 101 000<sup>11</sup> deaths. Nearly 95 000<sup>12</sup> children have lost parents and guardians, the highest number of Covid-19 orphans on the continent.



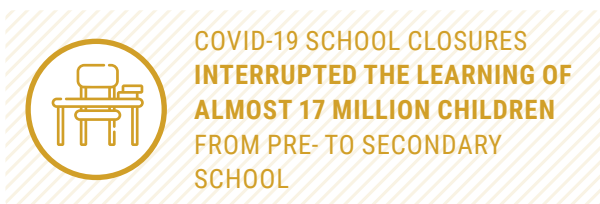
**NEARLY 95 000 CHILDREN HAVE LOST PARENTS AND GUARDIANS, THE HIGHEST NUMBER OF COVID-19 ORPHANS ON THE CONTINENT**

The increase in the number of orphans was exacerbated by the loss of lives in the April 2022 floods in KwaZulu-Natal and parts of Eastern Cape, raising great concern among national authorities about the probable reversal of years of progress in protecting and promoting the rights of children and in tackling and eliminating child labour. Essential basic social services in sectors such as education, health (see above), nutrition and child protection were all disrupted. The third wave of the virus that hit in mid-2021 was the worst and coincided with widespread looting and violence across KwaZulu-Natal and Gauteng in July that year (see further below).

11 Department of Health Covid-19 statistics <https://sacoronavirus.co.za/>.

12 Lancet Report [https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736\(21\)01253-8/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(21)01253-8/fulltext).

According to Stats SA, Covid-19 school closures interrupted the learning of almost 17 million children from pre- to secondary school. Close to 2.3 million



students enrolled in post-school education and training institutions were affected by strict lockdown rules. Only 11.7% of schools offered remote learning options nationally, highlighting the urban-rural divide in which twice as many urban-area individuals than their rural counterparts were offered remote learning (14.7% and 7.6% respectively). The disruptions reduced attendance, with about one million children aged five to 18 out of school. The largest number of out-of-school children were aged five to 13, with the highest percentage of non-attendance of schools among five- and six-year olds (about 38% and 12% respectively). The percentage of out-of-school children aged five to 13 was highest in Western Cape (13.0%), followed by KwaZulu-Natal (9.1%).<sup>13</sup> In 2021, close to 3% of 15-year-olds and nearly 9% of 17-year-olds dropped out of school.<sup>14</sup> Since many children have access to basic nutrition through school feeding programmes,<sup>15</sup> this had a direct impact not only on the children's nutrition, but on the distribution of household food consumption, economy and expenditure. Temporary suspension of face-to-face learning and teaching also threatened national efforts to combat child labour and teenage pregnancy.

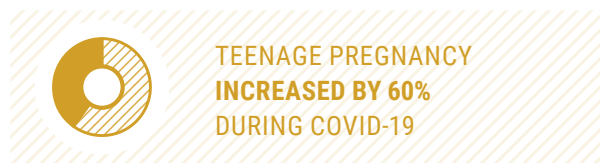
**CHILD LABOUR:** South Africa is a source, transit and destination country for child trafficking, with regular reports of children being rescued from human traffickers and sexual exploitation. Young children, mostly girls between the ages of 10 and 14 from poor rural areas, are exploited as prostitutes and for other commercial purposes.<sup>16</sup> In 2021, South Africa made moderate gains to eliminate the worst forms of child labour. It added an additional 484 labour inspectors, bringing its labour inspectorate staffing into alignment with ILO technical advice. However, children in South Africa are subjected

to the worst forms of child labour, including commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking, forced begging and use in illicit activities.



South Africa is a destination for child trafficking from both southern Africa and Africa. Young children are subjected to commercial sexual exploitation in major cities, including Cape Town and Johannesburg. Traffickers often recruit domestic and foreign victims with promises of jobs and economic opportunity in urban areas. Research suggests that, during the Covid-19 pandemic, traffickers turned to online methods, including social media, to recruit children. Government officials have indicated that child trafficking, primarily for commercial sexual exploitation, rose significantly during the pandemic.<sup>17</sup>

**GBV:** This and teenage pregnancy have increased, the latter by 60% during Covid-19. These trends were



exacerbated by the unrest and natural disasters in KwaZulu-Natal. Women experiencing GBV often also experience poverty and are involved in sex work, drug use and conflict with the law. GBV is abetted by a culture of silence and impunity.<sup>18</sup> Negligence and police mishandling of cases are accompanied by the failure of the South African Police Service (SAPS) to investigate systematically and by other state organs to prosecute and adequately punish those found guilty. Women and girls facing intersecting forms of discrimination are at particularly high risk of GBV, including lesbian, bisexual and transgender, intersex, migrant, asylum-seeking and refugee women, those with disabilities and those with albinism. Moreover, low prosecution and conviction rates for sexual offences prevail. Persistent discriminatory gender stereotypes in the justice system perpetuate the

13 [www.statssa.gov.za/?p=15197](http://www.statssa.gov.za/?p=15197).

14 [www.statssa.gov.za/?p=15520](http://www.statssa.gov.za/?p=15520).

15 Following litigation against the Minister of Basic Education and others (22588/2020) [2020] ZAGPPHC 306 to ensure that qualifying students have access to the National School Nutrition Programme even during school closures during the Covid-19 pandemic, North Gauteng High Court ordered that learners are entitled to receive daily meals and that the NSNP must provide them.

16 [www.dol.gov/sites/dolgov/files/LLAB/child\\_labor\\_reports/](http://www.dol.gov/sites/dolgov/files/LLAB/child_labor_reports/).

17 *Ibid.*

18 As noted by the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) in its concluding observations to the fifth periodic report of South Africa.

stigmatisation of women complainants – particularly those living in informal settlements, migrant workers, sex workers, rural women, those who identify as LGBTQI, and those with disabilities and albinism – exposing them to continued risk of violence. Additionally, ukuthwala<sup>19</sup> is yet to be prohibited and criminalised, leaving women and girls at risk of, among others, abduction and forced marriage, since it is difficult to establish whether there had been free, prior and informed consent.<sup>20</sup>

Failures in the implementation of GBV and femicide legislation and policies (including the lack of adequate allocation of financial resources), a culture of impunity and silence, absence of accountability within national institutions (including the police service), intersecting forms of discrimination against women, girls, LGBTQI persons, patriarchal attitudes and discriminatory stereotypes are persisting and contributing factors – directly and indirectly – to rampant GBV and femicide in South Africa. As a result, victims and survivors risk discrimination, rape and murder, trauma and not receiving an appropriate remedy.



Progress by South Africa towards **SDG 5** on gender equality and gender-related indicators is not enough. Trends indicate progress is uneven, at times slow and fragile.

Limited human, technical and financial resources at different levels negatively affect the capacity of the government, national institutions and civil society organisations to effectively carry out their mandates. This includes the national machinery for the advancement of women, the Commission for Gender Equality, SAPS and the national action plans on GBV and femicide.<sup>21</sup> That said, the government continues its efforts, which range from allocating funds to national action plans to the adoption of legislation and policies. Recent initiatives include three GBV-related bills<sup>22</sup> that President Ramaphosa assented into law on 25 January 2022.

**FOOD SYSTEMS:** The Covid-19 pandemic highlighted fragilities in agri-food systems around the world. In South Africa, food value chains manifested in, among others, rising retail prices and smallholder farmers restricted in movement to access their land.<sup>23</sup> In addition, it aggravated conditions in the labour market, in which unemployment levels were already extremely high following a decade of weak job creation. Further job losses, slow growth and sluggish recovery, combined with a fragile food system, increased food insecurity: 23.6% of the population was affected, with nearly 15% experiencing severe food insecurity in 2020.<sup>24</sup> Job losses were disproportionately concentrated among low-income earners and women, further exacerbating high inequality. It is reported that almost three million jobs were lost during the pandemic.



**15% OF THE POPULATION EXPERIENCED SEVERE FOOD INSECURITY IN 2020.**

Intensified conflicts, climate extremes and economic shocks, with growing inequalities, greatly drive food insecurity and malnutrition. The Russian/Ukrainian conflict has further slowed down prospects for economic recovery by disrupting energy supply, shipping, production and security. Prices have risen of wheat, energy and production inputs, especially fertiliser, as Russia alone is responsible for 14% of global fertiliser exports. Prices of primary agricultural inputs in South Africa are already up by more than 100% compared to January 2021. Fertilisers (35% of production costs), fuel (12%) and agrochemicals (8%) are all more expensive than in 2021. This has significant implications for the realisation of the right to food, which is guaranteed in South Africa's Constitution as well as the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR).

Variable weather conditions and climate change cause a fluctuation in yields, which affects local and global supply dynamics, creating volatility in volumes and crop prices.

19 Ukuthwala is 'a practice whereby, preliminary to a customary marriage, a young man, by force, takes a girl to his home' as a way to persuade the girl or her family to endorse marriage. See MC Jokani, (2017), The customary law practice of ukuthwala – an antithesis in the South African constitutional order, Doctoral thesis.

20 See CEDAW/C/ZAF/CO/5.

21 See CEDAW/C/ZAF/CO/5 and CEDAW/C/ZAF/IR/1.

22 Criminal Law (Sexual Offences and Related Matters) Amendment Bill, the Criminal and Related Matters Amendment Bill and the Domestic Violence Amendment Bill.

23 See, for instance, Biowatch South Africa (2020), available at <https://biowatch.org.za/download/impact-of-covid-19-on-food-systems-sa/?wpdmdl=1772&refresh=638c59eb7c32d1670142443>.

24 See Statistics South Africa, Measuring food security in South Africa: Applying the food insecurity experience scale, with link available at [www.statssa.gov.za/?p=15273](http://www.statssa.gov.za/?p=15273).





The prevalence of transboundary pests and diseases has also increased, posing further threats to development and food security. The July 2021 civil unrest in KwaZulu-Natal and Gauteng and April floods in KwaZulu-Natal and parts of Eastern Cape, with certain underlying factors, signalled an urgent need to build inclusive, resilient and sustainable food systems.

**REFUGEES AND ASYLUM-SEEKERS:** Documentation issues for asylum-seekers and refugees in South Africa persisted amid protection concerns during the Covid-19 pandemic and in the aftermath. These included long-expired asylum permits and new arrivals being unable to register, preventing full socio-economic inclusion of many asylum-seekers and refugees. With the national state of disaster in 2020, all refugee reception offices were closed to mitigate the spread of Covid-19, meaning that immigration services available to asylum-seekers and refugees were initially unavailable and later available only online and limited. Although a blanket permit extension was granted, it expired during the lockdown and no provision was made for new applicants to claim asylum and obtain documentation. The Department of Home Affairs introduced an online system through which permits could be extended to April 2021. Many former or aspiring refugee small-business owners are still recovering from Covid-19 losses and are not able to take out loans, but they continue to need support grants to jumpstart their businesses.

More generally, violence against foreigners is spreading across parts of the country (see below), continuing to threaten the lives and livelihoods of refugees and asylum-seekers while generating fear and insecurity.



This adversely affects the quality of asylum and directly works against local integration as a form of protection and durable solution, while constituting the serious violation of several human rights guaranteed nationally, regionally and internationally. Further politicisation of the issue of foreigners could hinder full and meaningful social cohesion between refugee and host communities as the rhetoric becomes mainstreamed, particularly in the social media.



**VIOLENCE AGAINST FOREIGNERS IS SPREADING ACROSS PARTS OF THE COUNTRY, CONTINUING TO THREATEN THE LIVES AND LIVELIHOODS OF REFUGEES**

Recognition of the status of stateless persons is a step in providing them with protection. The country is participating in different fora that discuss statelessness, particularly on measures to prevent and reduce statelessness. Lawyers for Human Rights in the country, also a partner of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), has developed a statelessness index tool for countries to assess whether they meet international standards such as provision of registration, issuing of birth certificates and giving nationality to a foreigner's child. However, birth registration for refugees and asylum-seekers remains limited, with many reporting barriers to access. In fact, the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR) recommended in 2018 that South Africa 'facilitate birth registration by streamlining the registration procedure and helping parents meet the requirements'.<sup>25</sup>

25 Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, Concluding observations on the initial report of South Africa (2018), E/C.12/ZAF/CO/1, paras 50-51.



**HUMAN RIGHTS:** The Covid-19 pandemic had a direct impact on the enjoyment of various economic and social rights (and related SDGs), including the right to work (ICESCR article 6), the right to an adequate standard of living (ICESCR article 11), the right to sufficient food (ICESCR article 11, Constitution section 27), the right to sufficient water (Constitution section 27), the right to adequate housing (ICESCR article 11, Constitution section 26), the right to education (ICESCR article 13, Constitution section 29), the right to social security (ICESCR article 9, Constitution section 27 and the right to health, including mental health (ICESCR article 12, Constitution; section 27). The impact has been most egregious on vulnerable groups at risk of being left behind, including black women, older persons, women-headed households, child-headed households, children, non-nationals, those working in low-paid jobs and the informal economy.

Limitations and violations of such rights manifested in job losses and increased unemployment, hunger, an inability to access adequate housing, sufficient water or decent sanitation; educational losses through school closures coupled with the digital divide, evictions, and protest action and civil unrest. The last mentioned led to the reinstatement of the Covid-19 SRD grant and renewed calls for a basic income grant.

### July 2021 civil unrest

The socio-economic situation caused by the pandemic was aggravated by the civil unrest of July 2021 following Zuma's imprisonment. The unrest spread through his home province of KwaZulu-Natal and later to Gauteng. What was initially a political demonstration quickly

escalated into looting and destruction of properties, resulting in the loss of 330 lives and more than 2 500 arrests. It affected food systems and value chains, with many in the affected provinces experiencing hunger and poverty. The unrest also disrupted the country's economic rebound that had started with the easing of lockdown restrictions, with GDP contracting by 1.5% in the third quarter of 2021.

Costs to property, businesses and livelihoods were estimated at R50 billion (\$3.6 billion), with damages to both big and small businesses, warehouses and factories. The \$3.6 billion estimate was equivalent to 1.2 % of South Africa's GDP. The unrest affected both



**COSTS TO PROPERTY, BUSINESSES AND LIVELIHOODS WERE ESTIMATED AT R50 BILLION (\$3.6 BILLION = 1.2% OF SOUTH AFRICA'S GDP)**

retail and production, the latter including disruption to several supply chains. According to the South African Property Owners Association, 150 000 informal traders were targeted, 40 000 businesses affected, about 100 malls burnt or severely damaged, and 11 warehouses and eight factories extensively damaged.<sup>26</sup> Presidency figures were even more staggering: 200 malls targeted, 3 000 businesses looted and 200 banks and post offices vandalised.<sup>27</sup>

The costs in KwaZulu-Natal alone were estimated at above R20 billion. There was a disproportionate impact on poor communities, since most of the stores and malls were in or near townships.<sup>28</sup>

26 Bloomberg (2021).  
27 Bloomberg (2021).  
28 CNBC (2021).

The unrest resulted in more than 140 schools<sup>29</sup> looted, with billions of rands in damages. This had immediate and long-term psychological effects on children who were exposed to the violence. Xenophobic violence and politically motivated attacks spiked at times, particularly targeted harassment and violence against undocumented migrants and refugees, which exposed children to direct violence or threats of violence.

In the agricultural sector and rural areas, in response to disruption of food systems, the UN, through its Food and Agriculture Organisation, has provided technical assistance on inclusive and sustainable food systems as part of ongoing efforts to rebuild the economies of KwaZulu-Natal and Gauteng. The ultimate objective is to reduce food and nutrition insecurity in South Africa, especially KwaZulu-Natal and Gauteng, through inclusive and sustainable food systems.

The unrest may be considered the culmination of South Africa’s unaddressed social inequalities and a historically disadvantaged population and divided society, which created fertile ground for instability, violent crime and substance abuse, among other social challenges. President Ramaphosa’s announcement of the reinstatement of the SRD grant shortly after the unrest was an acknowledgment of the links between socio-economic rights fulfilment and prevention through building stable and resilient societies.

**April 2022 floods**

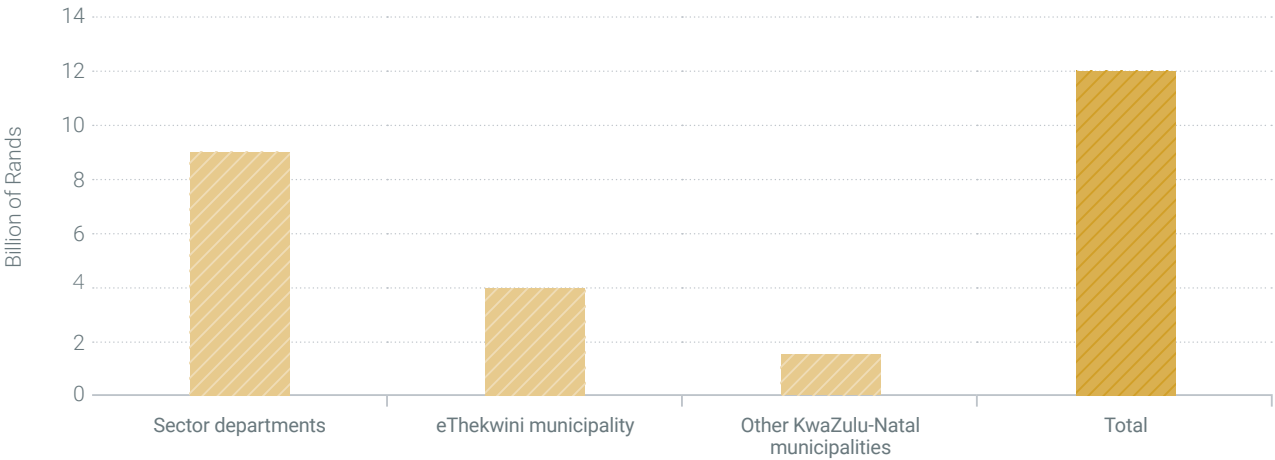
The floods of April 2022 caused significant property and infrastructure damage and colossal loss of lives and livelihoods. This happened as KwaZulu-Natal was just recovering from the worst of Covid-19 and the civil unrest, and against a backdrop of deteriorating global economic conditions caused by the war in Ukraine. During the floods, 443 people died, 35 were injured and 72 went missing. Some 13 790 houses were either totally or partially destroyed and 6 210 people were left homeless. All district municipalities and nearly 117 000 people were affected in one way or another (KwaZulu-Natal provincial government, 2022).



**SOCIAL INFRASTRUCTURE SUFFERED, WITH 551 SCHOOLS AND 62 HEALTH FACILITIES DAMAGED**

Roads, bridges, telecommunication, power lines and water structures were damaged, causing transport and logistics disruptions, including at Durban port, whose services reach the whole of southern Africa. Businesses in the plain areas were flooded and their operations disrupted. Social infrastructure suffered, with 551 schools and 62 health facilities damaged. Total costs for repairs at both provincial departments and municipalities were estimated at up to R12.8 billion.

**Figure 1: Estimated costs of infrastructure damage**

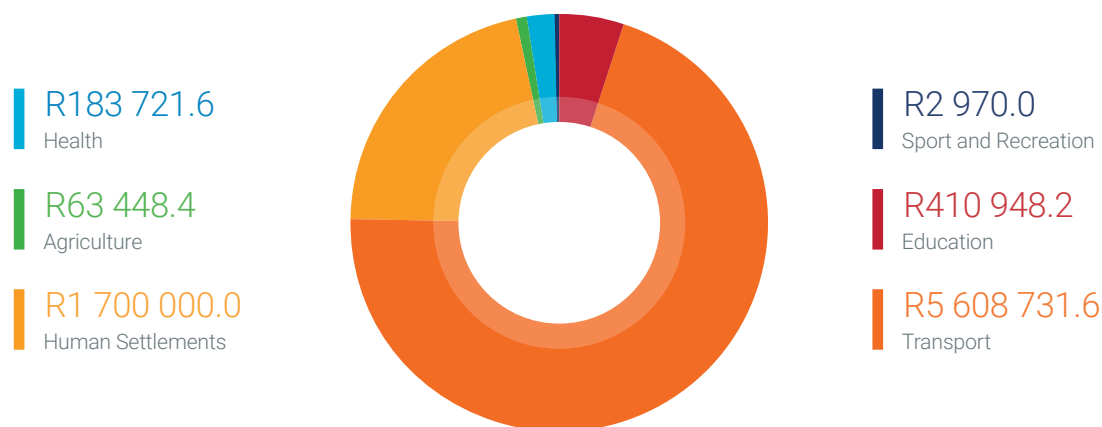


Source: KwaZulu-Natal provincial government (2022). Other municipalities for which cost estimates were provided are Ugu, Ray Nkonyeni, Umdoni and Umzumbe.

29 DBE statistics.

Among provincial government sector departments, the highest costs were in the transport sector – repairs to road infrastructure alone were calculated at R5.6 billion – and human settlements, to fix and rebuild houses (see Figure 2).

**Figure 2: Distribution of costs for repair among provincial departments (in thousand rands)**



Source: KwaZulu-Natal provincial government (2022).

In the district municipality of eThekweni, where impacts and costs were concentrated, businesses were severely affected – 38% in manufacturing, 32% in wholesale and retail and 11% in the government sector. Paper and packaging companies such as Sappi and Mondi, the retail chain Pepkor and carmaker Toyota had to shut down, causing operational losses of more than R700 million

**SAPPI, MONDI, PEPKOR AND TOYOTA HAD TO SHUT DOWN, CAUSING OPERATIONAL LOSSES OF MORE THAN R700 MILLION**

(EIU, 2022, Freight News, 2022). Logistics businesses, such as cargo and shipping companies Grindrod and Maersk, had to halt parts of their operations in and near the Durban port (Business Maverick, 2022). According to the municipal mayor, eThekweni’s annual GDP was expected to be reduced by 1.8%. eThekweni Municipality is a major manufacturing and logistics hub for South Africa. Consequently, loss of property and operational and logistical disruptions have been felt throughout the country and beyond. Indeed, partly as a result of the floods, South African GDP in the second quarter of 2022 contracted by 0.7% (after two consecutive quarters of expansion), led by a steep decline of 5.9% in manufacturing (20% of which is concentrated in KwaZulu-Natal).

As the floods hit KwaZulu-Natal, President Ramaphosa declared a national state of disaster for a coordinated response across all spheres of government. All organs of state activated contingency arrangements in line with their mandates. The government also developed a multisectoral National Integrated Flood Response and Recovery Plan<sup>30</sup> and adopted a three-pronged approach, which comprised:

- **Phase 1:** Immediate humanitarian relief to secure the safety and basic needs of all affected persons.
- **Phase 2:** Stabilisation and recovery, including rehousing people who had lost homes and restoring services.
- **Phase 3:** Reconstruction and rehabilitation, with a focus on ‘building back better’.

A joint response tactical team was formed comprising search-and-rescue specialists from all first responders across public, private and volunteer organisations to spearhead search-and-rescue operations and provide humanitarian relief to communities.

The government acknowledged the flooding as proof of climate change and that preparing for its effects is critical, requiring among other initiatives effective early warning systems to enable communities and authorities to better respond in time. Also crucial is a fit-for-purpose disaster

<sup>30</sup> In addition, to inform the response, a rapid assessment study was conducted to identify the situation and needs of vulnerable groups in disaster-affected areas to deal with hunger, violence, abuse and neglect.

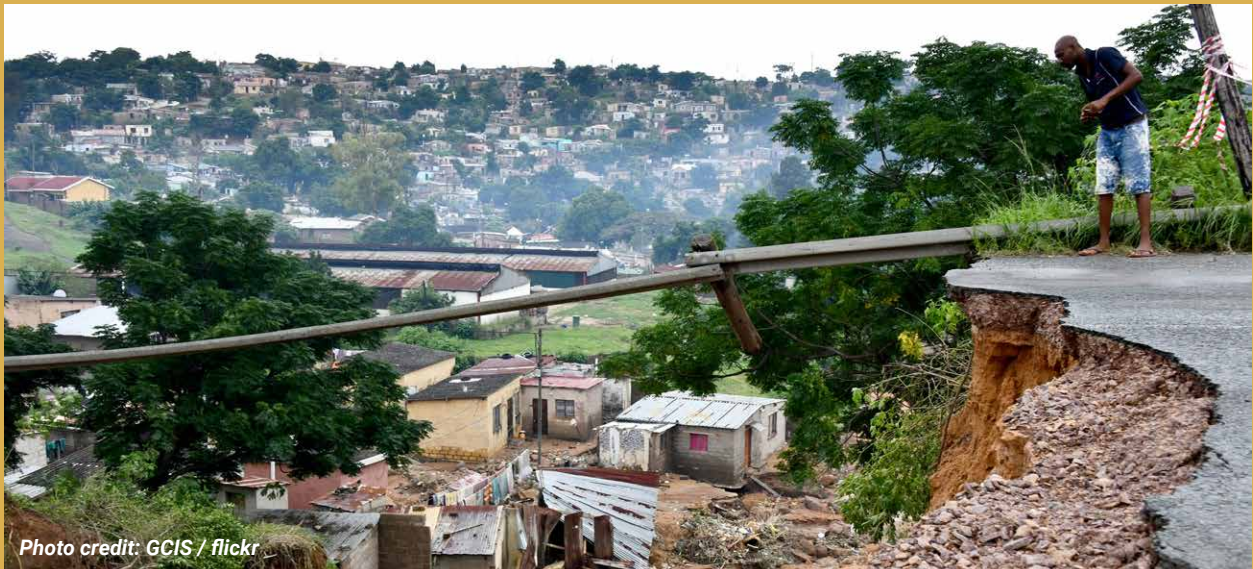


Photo credit: GCIS / flickr

management capability and building back infrastructure and human settlements to ensure greater resilience to future disasters.

The unprecedented disruptions caused by the floods led to increased hardships for children and families, including lack of basic needs and disruption of daily routines. Evidence has shown that, during such crises, women, girls and young people are the most affected.<sup>31</sup> It is against this background that the UN in South Africa, through the RCO, launched a coordinated humanitarian response through its agencies, funds and programmes focusing on saving the lives of women and girls and young people, and upholding dignity and human rights with emphasis on sexual and reproductive health and rights, HIV and GBV.

Within the framework of the UN response, the UN, led by the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) and in collaboration with the South African Department of Social Development (DSD) and its partners in KwaZulu-Natal, assisted with the distribution of food and non-food items to affected communities in vulnerable situations. Through a joint programme, the UN's implementing partner provided psychosocial support to the most vulnerable migrant families through its local migrant-led partners.<sup>32</sup> It did so by conducting trauma-informed community dialogue with directly affected Mzinyathi community individuals. It also assessed the need for further support including to areas beyond the joint programme's project cycle.

The UN, through the Food and Agriculture Organisation, also conducted a rapid geospatial analysis of the flood impacts on crops in KwaZulu-Natal and Eastern Cape from 10 to 20 April 2022. The assessment provided information from districts, local municipalities and wards in the areas of interest. The results were provided as maps by administrative units and in tables with descriptive statistics. With recent advances in geospatial and information technologies and updated land cover maps, crop-specific information adapted to national conditions with tailored field campaigns has the potential to better support response programmes and agricultural development.

In addition, the UN responded to the DSD request to support the province with the sexual and reproductive health essentials required by women and young girls displaced by the floods. The request was for sanitary dignity kits for emergency delivery in key affected districts, namely eThekweni and Ugu. It was also asked to support a rapid assessment undertaking in the KwaZulu-Natal disaster districts of eThekweni, uThukela and Ugu, using the real-time monitoring tool – see the box on the next page. UN support has ensured that the assessment covers the needs of the families and children, and the measurement of the impact of the floods on the sexual and reproductive health, GBV and HIV needs of adolescents, young people and women in the two most-affected districts.

31 This point was highlighted in the UNFPA 2022 humanitarian action overview report.

32 The UN joint programme supported and complemented existing efforts by the government and other stakeholders to implement the National Action Plan to Combat Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance and NDP 2030, particularly chapter 15, whose focus is on transforming society and uniting the country. The joint programme was implemented by five UN agencies: IOM, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), UNHCR, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and UN Women.

## UN RAPID ASSESSMENT OF FLOOD IMPACTS

### THE ASSESSMENT FOCUSED ON THE FOLLOWING OBJECTIVES:

- Establish to what extent universal access to sexual and reproductive health, GBV and HIV services continued during this catastrophic period, particularly for those left furthest behind, namely adolescents, young people and pregnant women/adolescents.
- Generate evidence in the emergency settings with emphasis on the above and focus on young people, adolescents and women – with data disaggregated by sex, age, location and other variables.
- Ascertain the extent to which adolescents, women and young people were affected by all forms of violence, exploitation, abuse and harmful practices.
- Based on the rapid assessment findings, enable the provincial KwaZulu-Natal government to prioritise integrated services and respond appropriately to the needs of adolescents, young people and women in emergencies.

The rapid assessment involved 586 households, 48% in eThekweni, 44% in uThukela and 8% in Ugu. Of the respondents, 69% were in communities and 31% in shelters. However, the distribution of these varied substantially, with most respondents in shelters being from eThekweni. The primary caregivers and respondents were mostly female (82% of the households), with 77% between 18 and 60 years old, 21% over 60 and 2% below 18.

The survey uncovered that, before the disaster, 49% of households lived in informal settlements, 26% in apartment blocks, 24% in single-storey homes and 1% in shelters. According to respondents' feedback, 49% of all households reported that their homes had been completely destroyed by the floods, while 37% reported partial damages and 11% reported only light damage.

### Other key findings included:

**HEALTH:** The main issues identified under were that 14% of children reported that their poor health was affecting their daily activities and about half (49%) of families reported having no access to healthcare services, including primary healthcare. As a result, many people on chronic medication had limited access to care. Another important concern was that households with limited access to services were not able to access any support, including sexual and reproductive health services, rendering them even more vulnerable to a wide range of related issues. In some areas, the healthcare coverage was quite limited and caregivers reported that the clinic was too far away for them. These results may indicate that the decline in access may have affected some of the most common services sought by the youth, including family planning, HIV services, treatment for sexually transmitted infection and mental health services.

**HIV/AIDS:** Findings from the assessment and qualitative data indicate poor disclosure of HIV-positive status, due probably to stigma and fear of discrimination. While data indicate reasonably high proportions of people who have ever tested for HIV, very few (2%) reported being HIV-positive, far below the expected rate given the HIV statistics in the province. Access to services, especially chronic medication for HIV and TB treatment, was a challenge. Non-disclosure limits the possibility of people obtaining the support they need to acquire their chronic medications.

The findings were shared widely and an improvement plan workshop was then organised with national and provincial stakeholders to identify short-term interventions requiring urgent implementation.

*\* The assessment was undertaken by the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA).*



### Cost-of-living crisis

Higher world inflation caused by the war in Ukraine has increased domestic prices, affecting the purchasing power of many South Africans. Those bearing the brunt are the poor, as CPI has risen sharply, having reached a 13-year high of 7.8% in July 2022 (it receded to 7.2% in December 2022). The main drivers of rising inflation have been transport, food and energy prices (Stats SA, 2022). More concerning is that, until June 2022 at least, consumers in the lowest two expenditure deciles (20% of the total population) who spend the least and are the most marginalised groups of all, were facing the highest inflation.<sup>33</sup>

In response to rising inflation, SARB's MPC has raised interest rates successively, taking the benchmark rate up to 7.0% in November 2022. During the Covid-19 lockdown, the repurchase rate had been lowered to a minimum of 3.5%. Therefore, the total rise since then has been 3.5 percentage points, with expectations that it will continue to move up. The MPC policy decision follows tighter monetary conditions globally against continued higher commodity prices (food, energy, minerals), and supply chains and trade disruptions. The interest rate increase is putting further pressure on household demand, due to higher borrowing costs and is likely to

have an adverse impact on growth. These developments threaten food security and new waves of civil unrest could occur, especially since wage increases, grants and other social insurance benefits are not keeping pace with higher inflation.

It is in this context that the UN is operating in South Africa – trying its best with limited resources to respond to the plight of vulnerable groups such as children and families. They are at severe risk of food insecurity, which affects child nutrition, exacerbating existing high malnutrition. The financial implications of the government's response to the Covid-19 pandemic have reduced the availability of fiscal buffers, leading to projections of a decline in government expenditure in the social sector of between 3% to 6% in real terms, thus compounding the plight of poor women and children.

### Rising intolerance of migrants

Tensions and threats of xenophobic attacks on migrants in South Africa have increased recently. A newly formed group, known as Operation Dudula, which means to push back or push out, has been an important driver of this increase and is, therefore, of major concern. Operation Dudula started in the townships around Johannesburg. Its objectives include ridding South Africa of undocumented migrants or migrants in irregular situations (although sometimes migrants are targeted irrespective of migratory status) who, it claims, are involved in criminal activities such as selling drugs, robbery, rape and tavern shootings, and are taking jobs and accessing stretched services that they feel should be exclusively for South Africans. This movement is spreading rapidly and gaining




**RISING INFLATION THREATENS  
FOOD SECURITY AND NEW  
WAVES OF CIVIL UNREST COULD  
OCCUR**

33 <https://businesstech.co.za/news/trending/616909/perfect-storm-has-hit-middle-class-south-africans/>.



support among other sectors of society such as truck drivers and farm workers. The anti-migrant sentiment driven by Operation Dudula has become highly politicised and can be seen as a mechanism to mobilise individuals politically.



**OPERATION DUDULA HAS BECOME HIGHLY POLITICISED AND CAN BE SEEN AS A MECHANISM TO MOBILISE INDIVIDUALS POLITICALLY**

The April 2022 floods further exacerbated the situation, especially in the townships around eThekweni, where public awareness events and UN joint programme dialogues on social cohesion have been postponed.

The trend is expected to continue in the run-up to the 2024 national election, which is likely to add further fuel to the fire. The anti-migrant sentiment in the country has, in the past, seen specific peaks that have resulted in violence meted out to non-citizens and those perceived to be non-citizens. Recent peaks include violent outbreaks in 2008 and 2015, to a lesser extent 2018 and in late-2021, that last linked to Operation Dudula.<sup>34</sup> This is among the specific forms of contemporary racism evident in South Africa, one that has been politicised and that is exacerbated by inequality and socio-economic challenges. This was noted by the UN special rapporteur on racism and on migrants in a communique to South Africa.<sup>35</sup>

The country's legal framework is also changing rapidly. Restrictive immigration policies, cancellation of special dispensation visa programmes and amendments to existing laws have restricted space for non-nationals in South Africa. This has made it difficult to implement certain UN joint programme activities, presenting significant challenges to the social-cohesion-related aims of such programmes and the UN's partnerships with the government.

Despite these challenges, the government has reiterated its support for the implementation of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration, demonstrated in its statement at the International Migration Review Forum and subsequent support to the progress declaration. This goodwill, with support from the Department of Justice and Constitutional Development and other key departments, presents a significant opportunity for implementation of ongoing activities to build social cohesion. Furthermore, South Africa was part of the universal periodic review under the United Nations Human Rights Council in November 2022, an opportunity to accelerate momentum to address recommendations on social cohesion and key populations of concern.

To mitigate these challenges, the UN has started engaging with the Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs<sup>36</sup> to explore dialogues and other initiatives in affected communities to promote social cohesion. The UN has also been invited to participate in meetings targeting traditional leaders, chiefs and other

<sup>34</sup> See [www.aljazeera.com/features/2022/4/8/what-is-operation-dudula-s-africas-anti-immigration-vigilante](http://www.aljazeera.com/features/2022/4/8/what-is-operation-dudula-s-africas-anti-immigration-vigilante).

<sup>35</sup> Press release: South Africa: UN experts condemn xenophobic violence and racial discrimination against foreign nationals, available at [www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2022/07/south-africa-un-experts-condemn-xenophobic-violence-and-racial-discrimination-against-foreign-nationals](http://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2022/07/south-africa-un-experts-condemn-xenophobic-violence-and-racial-discrimination-against-foreign-nationals), available at [www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2022/07/south-africa-un-experts-condemn-xenophobic-violence-and-racial-discrimination-against-foreign-nationals](http://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2022/07/south-africa-un-experts-condemn-xenophobic-violence-and-racial-discrimination-against-foreign-nationals).

<sup>36</sup> CoGTA is a ministry consisting of the Department of Cooperative Governance and the Department of Traditional Affairs.



community leaders in Gauteng and Mpumalanga. Sub-regionally, the UN, through ILO, is leading the Southern African Migration Management project.

**Artisanal mining**

Smuggling of natural resources has surged among miners, called zama zamas, involved in illegal mining activities. It has been reported that some zama zamas are migrants, sometimes in irregular situations, including smuggled migrants and victims of people trafficking. These illegal and dangerous activities are often organised by criminal syndicates, which are also referred to as zama zamas.

Zama zamas are emblematic of a changing South African mining landscape. They are a direct byproduct of the unanswered socio-economic inequalities of one of Africa’s leading economies and mining powers. While South Africa remains one of the continent’s principal gold producers, its reserves are finite and declining. As the industrial gold sector becomes less economically viable, artisanal mining increases. The government seems ill-prepared to respond to the challenges posed by artisanal miners, especially those operating in surrounding communities. It considers the miners criminals who must be brought to justice through the force of the law. However, non-governmental organisations working with zama zamas and artisanal mining say that such an approach is misguided and counterproductive.

Artisanal mining is carried out principally underground in industrial shafts, not in open pits, as is normally the case. In essence, it occurs within large-scale mines, not separate from them.


 **ARTISANAL MINING COMMUNITIES EVERYWHERE ARE SUBJECTED TO UNSAFE, EXPLOITATIVE AND PRECARIOUS WORK CONDITIONS**

Artisanal mining communities everywhere are subjected to unsafe, exploitative and precarious work conditions. Zama zamas face greater dangers, including extortion, murder, forced migration, money-laundering, corruption, racketeering, drugs, trafficking in persons and sex trafficking. Artisanal miners are also potential victims of human trafficking and some are smuggled migrants. Migrant zama zamas are very vulnerable due to their irregular migration status, thus are constantly harassed by law enforcement agencies, under threat of deportation.

Furthermore, organised crime groups recruit males from neighbouring countries such as Lesotho, Mozambique, Zimbabwe and Eswatini to work as artisanal miners. These groups take advantage of the socio-economic vulnerabilities of these males, who are unemployed and looking for opportunities in South Africa. Females are recruited in South Africa or from neighbouring countries and forced into prostitution at these illegal mining sites.

The surge in artisanal mining has a direct impact on UN work led by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC). Although Stats SA collects data on the number of this category of victims, often the victims are not identified as victims of trafficking but as migrants in irregular situations. Consequently, they are not given the protection and support required by South African human trafficking legislation.

A border management authority (BMA) will be established on 1 April 2023 involving the departments of home affairs; forestry, fisheries and environment; agriculture, land reform and rural development, and health. It will, among other objectives, address transnational organised crime, especially trafficking in persons and the smuggling of migrants. It will have access to SAPS control functions at ports of entry. When fully established, it will play a pivotal role in tackling border security challenges for South Africa and its neighbours, such as uncoordinated traveller

 **WHEN FULLY ESTABLISHED, THE BMA WILL PLAY A PIVOTAL ROLE IN TACKLING BORDER SECURITY CHALLENGES FOR SOUTH AFRICA AND ITS NEIGHBOURS**

processing, cross-border criminality, illegal crossings and undue delays in the facilitation of movement of goods and services. The government will require technical support to build the capacity of BMA officials on combatting transnational organised crime through a human-rights and gender-based approach. Support will be necessary to strengthen coordination mechanisms between the BMA and other spheres of government.

**Compliance with FATF**

Also related to artisanal mining and trafficking are AML/CFT. The October 2021 FATF mutual evaluation to establish South Africa’s compliance with international standards revealed several deficiencies. These included inadequate terrorism financing laws, lack of effectiveness in investigation and prosecution of terrorism financing,

and inadequate laws on regulation and supervision of financial institutions, including using new technologies in the financial sector, beneficial ownership and legal persons, regulation of non-profit organisations, regulation of cash couriers and reporting suspicious transactions.

These deficiencies must be addressed by February 2023, otherwise South Africa will be listed as a country with insufficient measures to address money-laundering and terrorism financing (greylisting). Should this happen, the cost of doing business, particularly conducting financial transactions, will be high. For example, it will become expensive for banks to maintain correspondent banking relationships as foreign banks will want to cover themselves on any transaction from South Africa. This additional expense will ultimately be transferred to the bank customer. In addition, some correspondent banks that have relationships with South African banks may even decide to end these relationships, limiting customers' foreign transaction options.

### Weakening of social cohesion

The perceived decline of the legitimacy of the ruling ANC accelerated in 2022, following several large-scale corruption scandals. This has undermined state institutions, with a grave impact on the ability of the state to deliver basic services. These political challenges, coupled with the deteriorating socio-economic conditions mentioned earlier, have exacerbated rifts in society. Scapegoats, particularly non-citizens, have been singled out as causes of joblessness and targets in political narratives looking to apportion blame for service-delivery failures. The result has been the weakening of social cohesion in the country.



Racism is a further challenge.<sup>37</sup> The country continues to see regular incidents of racism, hate speech and use of racist language.<sup>38</sup> In addition, hate crimes continue to plague society, targeting in particular minority groups such as LGBTQI individuals and non-nationals. Civil society continues to advocate implementation of the

Prevention and Combatting of Hate Crimes and Hate Speech Bill. At least one LGBTQI-targeted hate crime was reported each month in 2021 in the mainstream media, with the actual figures likely to be higher.<sup>39</sup> Concerns of ethnic tensions further undermine social cohesion.



Examples of social cohesion weakening associated with hate speech, xenophobic behaviour and racism include increased risk of human rights violations, such as the right to life. Rising vigilantism has also been observed, with more than 600 refugees seeking refuge in a Cape Town church after being forcibly removed from a sit-in protest at UNHCR offices, where they sought removal from South Africa due to violent xenophobic attacks. Difficulties accessing government services – notably documentation – have resulted in several protests against UNHCR.

Many South African citizens have demonstrated resilience to racist narratives, countering them with the tools and pathways available. However, the resilience of migrant groups (cross-border migrants, regular and irregular) is far lower. This has already been demonstrated with the attacks on migrants, including the killing of a Zimbabwe national in April 2022 by an angry mob and the attacks on foreign truck drivers allegedly by the All Truck Drivers Forum. In addition, four Zimbabwean migrants were burnt to death in Musina in September 2022. On 17 September, three people were burnt to death in Western Cape, prompting 200 migrants to flee their homes into the bush or other villages, with some reportedly forced out of their homes by unidentified armed groups. This vulnerability is expected to increase as divisive narratives increase.

The government has three initiatives to build social cohesion. The most high-level initiatives are the National Development Plan 2030: Our future – make it work and the Medium-term Strategic Framework 2019-2024. Action and strategic plans to address the root causes of inequality and lack of social cohesion include the National Action Plan to Combat Racism,

37 See [www.washingtonpost.com/world/interactive/2021/south-africa-phoenix-massacre](https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/interactive/2021/south-africa-phoenix-massacre).  
38 See [www.africanews.com/2022/02/14/south-african-students-and-parents-denounce-alleged-racism-at-school](https://www.africanews.com/2022/02/14/south-african-students-and-parents-denounce-alleged-racism-at-school) and [www.africanews.com/2022/02/14/south-african-students-and-parents-denounce-alleged-racism-at-school](https://www.africanews.com/2022/02/14/south-african-students-and-parents-denounce-alleged-racism-at-school).  
39 Hate Crimes Working Group, Advocacy Brief, The state of hate in South Africa in 2021, available at <https://za.boell.org/sites/default/files/2022-05/HCWG%20Advocacy%20Brief%202022%2003%2022.pdf>.



Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance and the National Strategic Plan on Gender-based Violence and Femicide. The Department of Sports, Arts and Culture is also currently updating the country's social cohesion strategy. The Prevention and Combatting of Hate Crimes and Hate Speech Bill is also currently before Parliament. The bill addresses the approach of South Africa's criminal justice system to combatting



**THE PREVENTION AND COMBATTING OF HATE CRIMES AND HATE SPEECH BILL IS ALSO CURRENTLY BEFORE PARLIAMENT**

grave intolerances. The Promotion of Equality and Prevention of Unfair Discrimination Amendment Bill was published in 2021 for public comments. In 2021, the South African Human Rights Commission (SAHRC) convened a participatory workshop to develop a social media charter amid prevalent hate speech and harassment. However, progress appears to have stalled. In 2021, the SAHRC also convened a conference on racism, and another on corruption and human rights followed by a whistleblower summit in 2022. In early-2020, the SAHRC had convened a national hearing on xenophobia focusing specifically on violence targeting long-distance truck drivers. This followed another national hearing on social cohesion in 2018. The reports from these hearings are not yet publicly available.

Despite the abovementioned legal and policy responses to counter discrimination and strengthen social cohesion, it is clear that government departments and civil society need further capacitation.

**Growing political instability**

Political instability is a growing risk. After 30 years in power, the ANC faces growing public discontent and internal dissensions and, for the first time, could lose its absolute majority in Parliament during the 2024 election. ANC rule was considered until recently a guarantee of stability post-apartheid. However, factions considered to be aligned with President Ramaphosa and former President Zuma, which seems to be increasingly difficult to control, may endanger the country's stability, as shown by the 2021 July unrest. Moreover, the rise of coalition governments at municipal level continues to weaken the ANC's historical hold over key municipalities, as shown in the local elections in 2021, and raises question of whether squabbles over coalitions will impede effective service delivery.

The ANC's declining legitimacy, which started with the Thales arms deal in the early-2000s, accelerated in 2022, following several large-scale corruption scandals (with the state capture report implicating numerous prominent ANC members), spreading to the government and its institutions. Doubts persist about the capacity of the criminal justice system to effectively investigate and prosecute individuals implicated in corruption, fraud and abuse of authority, particularly those identified in the report. The ANC faced increasing internal factional turmoil ahead of its elective conference in December 2022.



**THE ANC FACED INCREASING INTERNAL FACTIONAL TURMOIL AHEAD OF ITS ELECTIVE CONFERENCE IN DECEMBER 2022**

In addition, the division between the ANC faction supporting President Ramaphosa as the ANC candidate for the 2024 election and that supporting former President Zuma, known as the Radical Economic Transformation faction, has become more difficult to manage internally and disputes are spilling into the rest of society. According to some analysts, the increase in unrest and violence in the country since 2009 has been more often linked to internal ANC revolts than spontaneous social protests. Protests stabilised and declined between 2013 and 2017, thanks largely to what is considered to be former President Zuma's policy of patronage and repression, which was to some extent discontinued by President Ramaphosa. However, ANC unity is thought to have been sustained at the expense of the constitutional framework, the economy and the capacity of state entities.<sup>40</sup> Former President Zuma has retained significant influence in KwaZulu-Natal and in the security and intelligence sector, and as such, is capable of inflicting severe damage on a country already weakened by the pandemic, floods, economic sabotage, and spiralling fuel and food prices. Widespread poverty and unemployment, lack of access to public services, which are fuelling population grievances, are always fertile grounds for politicians wishing to spark protest and unrest.



**WIDESPREAD POVERTY AND UNEMPLOYMENT AND LACK OF ACCESS TO PUBLIC SERVICES, ARE FUELLING POPULATION GRIEVANCES**

Protests triggered by insufficient access to the rights to healthcare, education, water and sanitation, electricity, housing and adequate policing have increased. These are, in part, also rooted in the persistent high poverty rates and high levels of unemployment among historically disadvantaged groups and the youth, and pervasive inequality along racial lines. Some protests have turned violent, such as that in Tembisa (Gauteng) in August 2022, where four persons died when protesting against high electricity tariffs. In addition, increased nationalism and xenophobia (see above),<sup>41</sup> are also finding resonance in political parties. Foreigners' presence in the country (estimated at 5% of the population), which is perceived as too high by some South Africans, is likely to become

a contentious and controversial issue in the electoral context, which will in turn place migrants at increased risk of xenophobic attacks.

Political instability and related violent protest increase the risk of human rights violations and abuses, including excessive use of force by law enforcement. Political instability usually leads to worsening of socio-economic situations – and, hence, deterioration of the enjoyment of social and economic rights by most of the population, but more disproportionately by vulnerable groups and individuals such as persons with disabilities, women head of households and migrants. Consequently, most SDGs are likely to be affected.



**POLITICAL INSTABILITY AND RELATED VIOLENT PROTEST INCREASE THE RISK OF HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS AND ABUSES**

While the South African population demonstrated its resilience during and after the Covid-19 crisis, the added political instability dimension could lead to a tipping point, the first signs of which include the rising xenophobic narratives and increasing popularity of Operation Dudula, rising service-delivery protests, higher unemployment, greater poverty and increasing inequality.

The current government took a stand against violence, including that targeting migrants. However, there are allegations that Operation Dudula benefits from assistance or tolerance from some law enforcement officers during its actions, which often turn violent. The government decided in December 2021 not to extend Zimbabwean exemption permits expiring on 31 December 2021 (later extended until the end of 2022 and then again until mid-2023, when Zimbabwe is expected to hold a general election), which could entail the forced return of 178 000 Zimbabweans – or having them live in South Africa without legal status/regularised documentation.

The government reinstated the Covid-19 SRD grant following the July 2021 unrest<sup>42</sup> until March 2024, but the lack of access to public services and rising costs of

40 Ivor Chipkin and Jelena Vidojevic, with Laurence Rau and Daniel Saksenberg, *Dangerous elites: Protest, conflict and the future of South Africa*. Institute for Security Studies, Southern Africa Report 49, 16 March, 2022.

41 Department of International Relations and Cooperation (2022), *Framework document on South Africa's national interest*, 30.

42 [www.news24.com/news24/southafrica/news/political-parties-give-thumbs-up-to-reinstatement-of-social-relief-grant-20210726](http://www.news24.com/news24/southafrica/news/political-parties-give-thumbs-up-to-reinstatement-of-social-relief-grant-20210726).



living remain. With increasing calls from civil society for basic income support, the government will have to decide if and how the SRD grant will be extended or replaced with a form of basic income support beyond March 2024.<sup>43</sup>

### Climate change challenge

Events such as the devastating flooding in Kwa-Zulu Natal<sup>44</sup> and droughts in other provinces<sup>45</sup> indicate that South Africa must urgently build resilience to withstand future shocks, whether socio-economic, political or environmental.

Through such events, marginalised groups have been severely affected, including women, girls, LGBTQI or gender non-conforming individuals, persons with disabilities, people living in poverty and migrants. In the current socio-political context, these groups have little resilience to climate change, which will become increasingly pressing as South Africa continues to experience extreme weather events and a looming food security crisis.<sup>46</sup> An adequate and comprehensive social protection system will help build resilience to climate change and variability, while

also preventing further social conflict, such as that starkly witnessed in the July 2021 unrest.

To cast more light on the effect of the current global climate emergency on the enjoyment of human rights, the UN, through its OHCHR regional office, has engaged with stakeholders to promote the right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment.<sup>47</sup> For example, it influenced law reform by making a submission on the Climate Change Bill to ensure that it was in line with international human rights standards and the foundational principles of the sustainable development agenda. The submission underscored the added value of adopting a human-rights-based and gender-sensitive approach to climate change. The need for meaningful and inclusive public participation, in particular of marginalised, vulnerable groups, was also highlighted, as was ensuring inclusive and accessible public consultations, including in rural areas. The submission also underscored the importance of promoting meaningful representation of groups at risk of disproportionate harm from the effects of climate change on important institutions such as the Presidential Climate Commission.

43 See previous reference to decision undertaken by the government in the October 2022 Medium-term Budget Policy statement, to further extend the SDR grant until the end of March 2024.

44 Today, KwaZulu-Natal floods sound the alarm on climate adaptation, Institute for Security Studies. 20 April 2022, available at <https://issafrica.org/iss-today/kwazulu-natal-floods-sound-the-alarm-on-climate-adaptation>.

45 'Day Zero' water crisis looms on South Africa's eastern cape, Washington Post, 19 June 2022, available at [www.washingtonpost.com/world/2022/06/19/south-africa-water-day-zero/](http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2022/06/19/south-africa-water-day-zero/).

46 Food insecurity threatens societies, exacerbates conflicts and 'no country is immune', UN South Africa, 20 May 2022, available at <https://southafrica.un.org/en/182755-food-insecurity-threatens-societies-exacerbates-conflicts-and-no-country-immune/>. Averting an African food crisis in the wake of the Ukraine war, World Economic Forum 16 May 2022, available at [www.weforum.org/agenda/2022/05/averting-an-african-food-crisis-in-the-wake-of-the-ukraine-war/](http://www.weforum.org/agenda/2022/05/averting-an-african-food-crisis-in-the-wake-of-the-ukraine-war/).

47 This right was formally recognised by both the General Assembly and the Human Rights Council, as per resolutions A/RES/76/300 adopted on 28 July 2022 and A/HRC/RES/48/13 adopted on 8 October 2021 respectively.

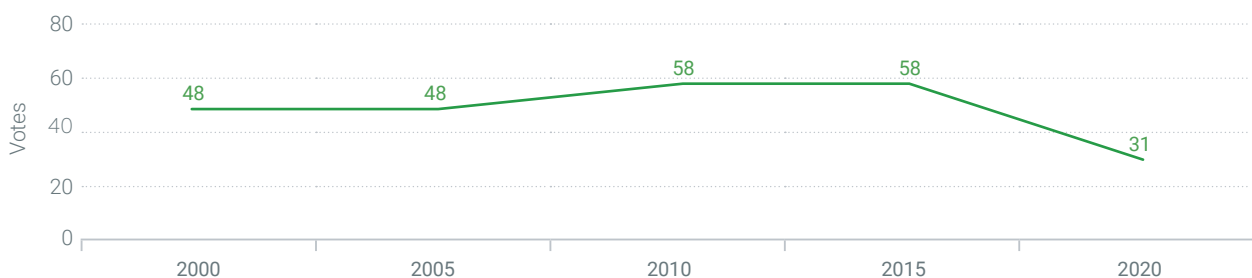
## Country context

Since the worst of the Covid-19 crisis in the year 2020, recovery has been slow, with GDP returning to pre-pandemic levels only in the third quarter of 2022.

The lockdowns were particularly hard on informal sector workers and revealed the fragility of livelihoods of millions of persons (citizens and non-citizens alike) who are on the margins of the labour market. Many informal businesses, particularly women-owned or migrant-owned, failed to benefit from government's relief schemes owing to onerous requirements for eligibility. Despite the relaxation of the lockdowns, unemployment continued to rise, receding only more recently (see below). Job losses disproportionately affected low-income earners, women, migrants and the youth. Poverty – facets of which are hunger and malnutrition – remains stubbornly high, especially among children. The civil unrest of July 2021, as the economy was just starting to recover from the pandemic, aggravated the socio-economic situation. GBV and femicide – and the 'shadow pandemic' of domestic violence – grew worse during the pandemic.

The local government elections in November 2021 saw the lowest voter turnout since 1994. Of the 39 million eligible voters, 26.1 million registered. However, only 46% of registered voters went to the polls – just 31% of the total eligible voters (*Figure 3*). Although the ANC, the ruling party, won 161 of the 213 contested municipalities, the number of councils in which the ANC does not have a clear majority rose substantially, leading to a record number of local coalitions – 70 in 2021 against 29 in 2000 (*Figure 4*). This was particularly evident in the larger metropolitan areas. The election outcome was seemingly due to declining public trust in the political system and the state of service delivery. Loss of trust is of great concern, with only a third of citizens surveyed having full trust and confidence in public institutions and leaders.

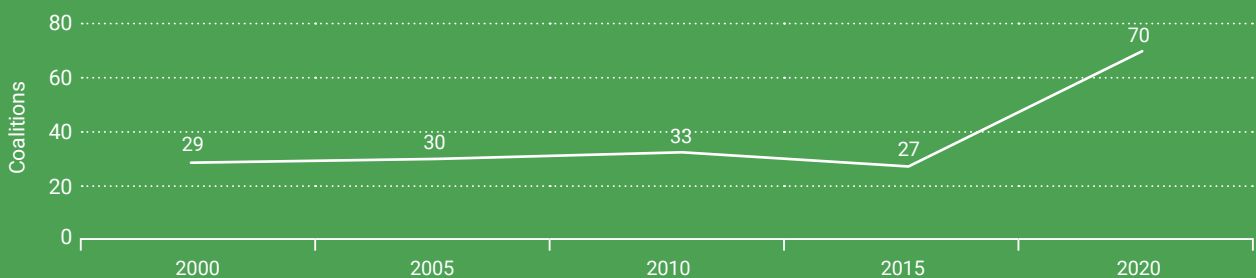
**Figure 3: Voter turnout between 2000 and 2021**



Source: Electoral Commission of South Africa, 2022.



Figure 4: Number of coalitions in South Africa 2000 to 2021.



Source: Independent Electoral Commission 2017, Ndletyana 2021

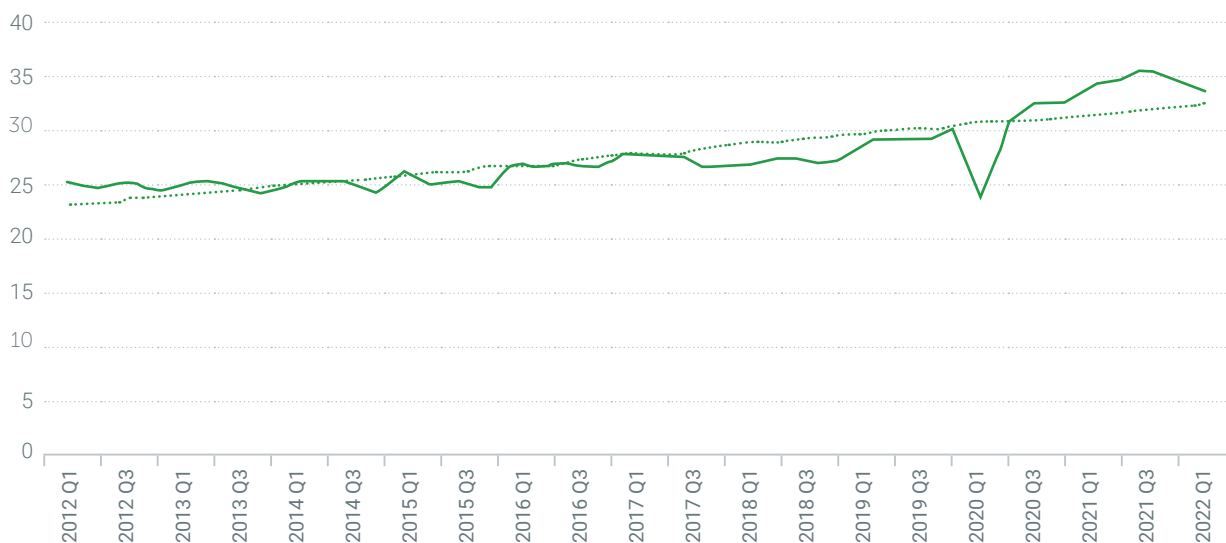
With the 2024 national election approaching, political tensions are rising, as discussed above. The international context of rising inflation and jittery financial markets associated with the war in Ukraine adds uncertainty to any future scenario. The public debt, which increased significantly as the government responded to the Covid-19 crisis, has diminished the government's capacity to respond to pressing societal demands for better basic infrastructure and public services, or to enhance social protection. In addition, Eskom, the state-owned utility that is fossil fuel-based and debt-ridden, is viewed as a major systemic bottleneck for rapid recovery. As the country witnesses the intensification of loadshedding, there is renewed urgency for more investments in renewables to accelerate the path to a just energy transition.

### Key macroeconomic trends

In the short- to medium term, the main risk to recovery in South Africa is external. The war in Ukraine with no signs of abating, is causing high uncertainty in global trade and supply chains. Major disruptions in the supply of energy sources such as gas and oil, in addition to cereals such as wheat and maize, have already translated into higher food prices and rising inflation in South Africa and the region. SARB has responded with successive interest rate rises to curb inflation, which will probably hinder recovery, while higher inflation will hurt mostly the poor and most vulnerable.

Despite the government emphasising job creation and employment programmes, unemployment increased throughout 2021, reaching the record high of 35.3%

**Figure 5: Unemployment rates – South Africa: 2012 Q1 to 2022 Q2**



Source: Quarterly Labour Force Survey, Stats SA

in the fourth quarter of the year (against 32.5% at the end of 2020). Women unemployment reached 38.2%, compared with men unemployment of 32.8% in the same quarter. In the first quarter of 2022, total unemployment receded to 34.5% and again to 33.9% in the second quarter (Figure 5) on the back of incipient output expansion (Stats SA, 2022).

Unemployment in its expanded definition also declined slightly and was 44.1% in 2022 Q2, with youth unemployment at 46.5%. It is possible that these positive trends reflect, in part, a methodological effect. In 2022, there was a resumption of face-to-face interviews for the Quarterly Labour Force Survey, garnering better responses than the telephone interviews conducted in 2020 and 2021, which may have underestimated employment during the pandemic (Economist Intelligence Unit, 2022).

Rising inflation and high unemployment rates, especially among the youth, are rich ground for new waves of civil unrest. In April 2020, at the height of Covid-19,

the government implemented a support package that included the SRD grant, a very important social protection mechanism for the most vulnerable. However, it is unlikely to be sufficient to stem new waves of unrest arising from precarious socio-economic conditions. Such conditions include a lack of economic opportunities, different forms of violence (especially against women and girls) and xenophobia/anti-migrant sentiment, which, as reported above, gained momentum during the pandemic, the July 2021 unrest, the April 2022 floods and rising political instability. The economy contracted during the July civil unrest and new social uprisings could be important deterrents to sustained growth.

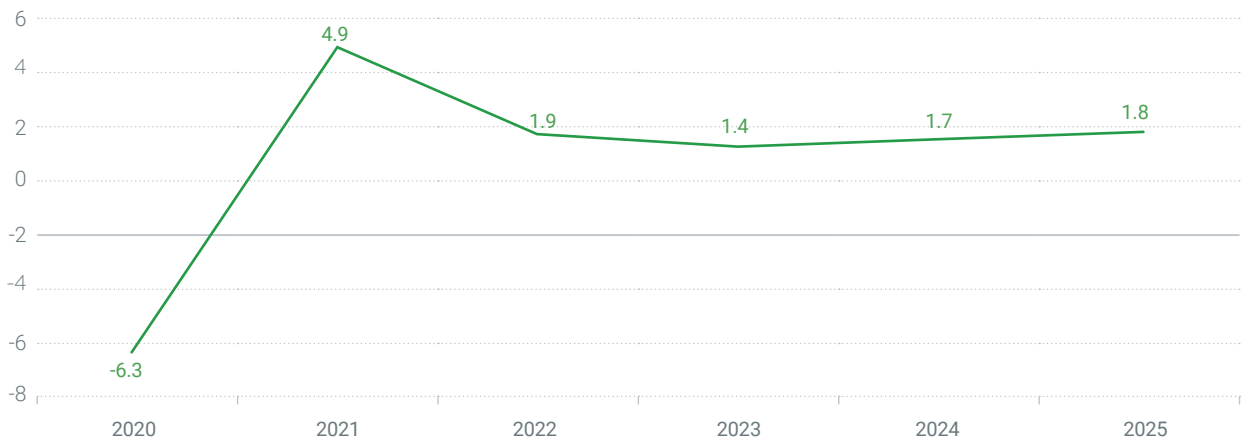
In 2021, GDP growth rebounded by 4.9% after the steep contraction of 6.3% in 2020 (Figure 6). The best-performing industries in 2021 were mining, agriculture, manufacturing and trade, all growing at or above 6%. The worst performers were construction (suffering a contraction of 1.9%) and government (zero growth – Figure 7).

**THE BEST-PERFORMING INDUSTRIES IN 2021 WERE MINING, AGRICULTURE, MANUFACTURING AND TRADE, ALL GROWING AT OR ABOVE 6%.**

1 Year 2022: Estimate.  
2 Years 2023 to 2025: Forecast.

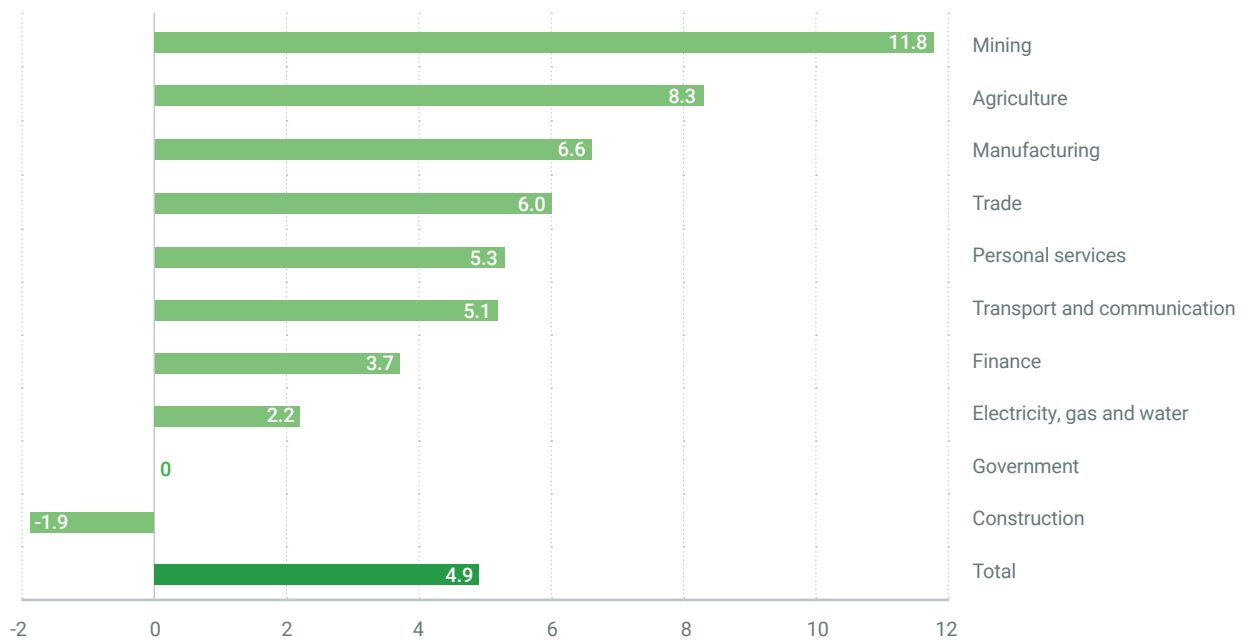


**Figure 6: Annual GDP growth – South Africa 2020 to 2025 (percentage)**



Source: SA National Treasury.

**Figure 7: GDP growth by industry – South Africa 2021 (percentage)**



Source: Stats SA



In the first quarter of 2022, the economy continued to expand, reaching pre-pandemic levels. However, the second quarter saw GDP contract by 0.7%, bringing the economy back to below pre-pandemic levels. GDP then expanded in the third quarter of the year by 1.6%, surpassing its pre-pandemic levels. Growth in the quarter was led by agriculture, transport, finance and manufacturing.

The volatility of GDP levels in 2022 occurred amid rising interest rates. The 24 November 2022 SARB benchmark interest rate change – by 75 basis points to 7% – was the seventh consecutive increase. It happened in a very fragile socio-economic environment of still very high unemployment rates, stretched health sector services, continued high GBV, increasing violence against migrants and rising anti-migrant sentiment/mobilisation. The SRD grant is temporary and provides only partial protection to the most vulnerable. Those older than 18 are left out of the social protection system. The civil unrest and floods further increased the plight of the most vulnerable in the affected areas and beyond.

According to National Treasury in its Medium-term Budget Policy Statement presented to Parliament on 26 October 2022, expectation for GDP growth in 2022 is 1.9%. Growth forecast for 2023, 2024 and 2025 is 1.4%, 1.7% and 1.8% respectively (*Figure 6*). This forecast

indicates an expected end of the rebound, the softening of the commodity boom and lack of investment to drive growth faster, in addition to the impacts of war in Ukraine and rises in interest rates.

Macro-economically, much of the recovery to date has been exports- and consumer-demand driven, with investment picking up only more recently. To this already fragile situation, the war in Ukraine has increased energy and food prices, affecting all who live in South Africa – and the poor more intensely, including women, persons with disabilities, older persons, migrants, asylum-seekers and refugees. The rise in food prices, in particular, is ongoing and is increasing the risk of acute food insecurity in the country.



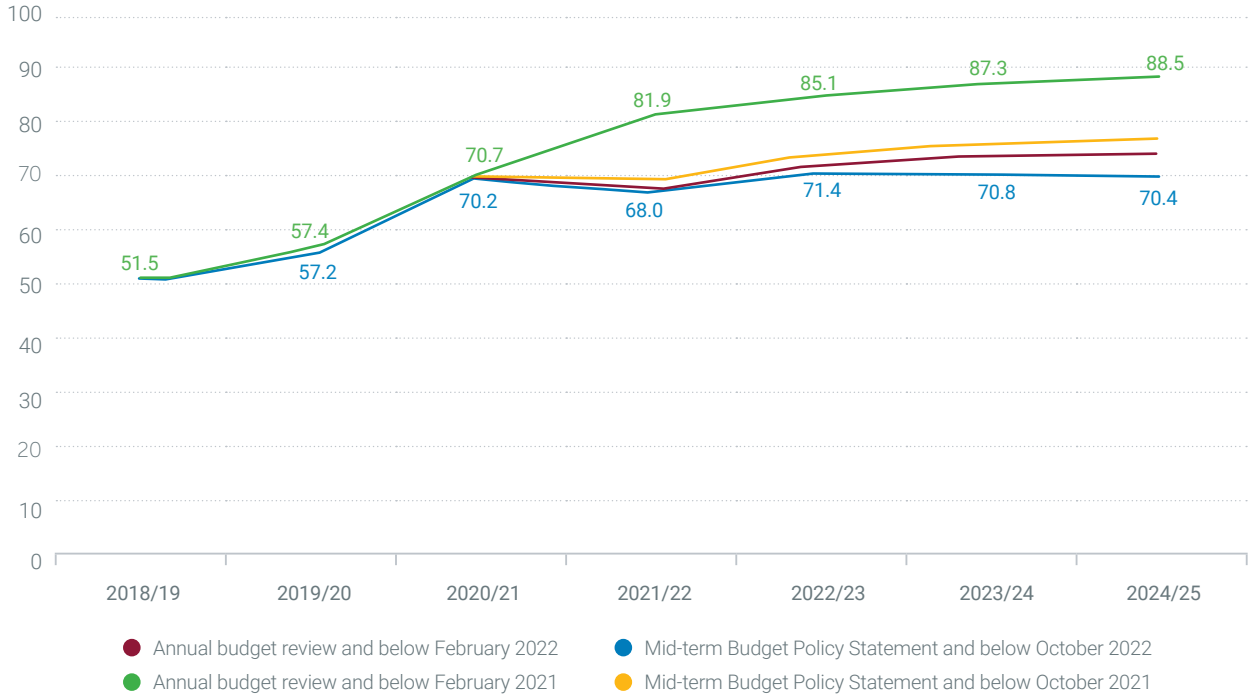
**THE RISE IN FOOD PRICES IS ONGOING AND IS INCREASING THE RISK OF ACUTE FOOD INSECURITY IN THE COUNTRY**

Both the government and analysts have consistently warned that the country's fiscal position is fragile. The fiscal deficit reached 10% in 2020 and the debt trajectory was ascending, moving from 51.5% of GDP in 2018 to 57.2% in 2019 and then 70.2% in 2020. For these reasons, National Treasury, the department charged

with fiscal policy design and implementation, has reiterated its commitment to fiscal adjustment to be achieved mainly through expenditure containment. Given this fiscal policy stance, the government strategy, outlined in October 2020 through its Economic Recovery and Reconstruction Plan, is to focus on structural reforms so that the private sector can drive economic growth in the future.<sup>48</sup>

The public debt, projected to reach 72.8% of GDP in 2022/23 (February 2022) and 85.1% in the annual budget of February 2021, has been revised down to 71.4 % of GDP already in 2022/23, with a slight decline thereafter (*Figure 8*).

**Figure 8: Gross public debt in South Africa<sup>1</sup> (percentage as a proportion of GDP)**



Source: National Treasury, various budgets. Years 2022-2025: Projections.

Another crucial macro-indicator doing poorly is public investment. Low levels of public investment, with the dominance of capital-intensive industries, market concentration (mining, finance, construction, retail) and a lack of pro-poor tax and land reforms, may hinder growth or at least inclusive growth.

<sup>48</sup> The question is how that might be possible, without economic and sectoral policy, particularly through incentives and stimulus – that is, without a clear enabling/incentivising strategy to make investment in the country profitable.

## Impacts on Sustainable Development Goals

Covid-19 has dented the achievement of almost all SDGs and related human rights. Progress has been reversed or hindered with increases in poverty, hunger, inequality and key health indicators due to public health resources being shifted away from diseases such as HIV, TB and malaria.

The Covid-19 pandemic had a direct impact on the enjoyment of various economic and social rights (and related SDGs) as reported earlier, including the right to work, the right to sufficient food and water and adequate housing, the right to education, the right to social security and the right to health, including mental health. These direct impacts on economic and social rights also had a proximate impact on the right to equality (Constitution section 9) with a concomitant impact on SDG 10 and on the ethos of 'leave no one behind', in that vulnerable groups are now at risk of being left further behind. SDG progress has indeed stalled or reversed, especially that of SDGs 1 to 5 and SDGs 8 and 10.

Covid-19 rolled back some of the government's gains in children and youth issues made during the last decade. One example is rising levels of hunger (estimated to be close to 15% for children during the height of the crisis<sup>49</sup>), increased risk of child labour and a possible reversal in gains made to combat child labour and exploitation with implications for the achievement of SDG 8.7 by 2030. It is

logical to assume that hunger levels may increase further with the cost-of-living crisis that South Africa currently faces. Also, because of the response to Covid-19, gains in early childhood development and primary healthcare were effectively reduced. Moreover, Covid-19 led to a mental health crisis. HIV-affected adolescents with symptoms of mental disorders have a high prevalence of virological non-suppression, especially if they do not know their status or have not disclosed it.<sup>50</sup>



**LEARNERS WERE 75% TO A FULL SCHOOL YEAR BEHIND WHERE THEY SHOULD HAVE BEEN**

The Department of Basic Education (DBE) played a leading role in keeping schools open safely but in-person schooling was combined with remote education. In July 2021, ahead of the second school term, the National Income Dynamics Study coronavirus rapid



49 National Income Dynamics Survey coronavirus rapid mobile module – Home – CRAM | Covid-19 | South Africa (cramsurvey.org).

50 V Simms et al, Risk factors for HIV virological non-suppression among adolescents with common mental disorder symptoms in Zimbabwe: a cross-sectional study', J Int Aids Soc, Aug 2021, 24(8): e25773, doi: 10.1002/jia2.25773. PMID: 34402199; PMCID: PMC8368838.



Photo credit: Dean Calma / IAEA / flickr

mobile survey and DBE statistics showed that learners were 75% to a full school year behind where they should have been, due to rotational attendance, sporadic school closures and days off.<sup>51</sup> In addition, close to 3% of 15-year-olds and nearly 9% of 17-year-olds dropped out of school.<sup>52</sup>

Most SDGs are also likely to have been affected by growing political instability. While the South African population demonstrated its resilience, including during and after the Covid-19 crisis, added political instability could lead to a tipping point, the first signs of which include rising xenophobic narratives and increasing popularity of anti-migrant groups such as Operation Dudula, rising service delivery protests, higher unemployment, higher poverty rates and expanded inequality.

Work on social cohesion is among several UN initiatives to respond to these issues and to SDG 16 Peace, justice and strong institutions, which promotes peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provides access to justice for all and builds effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels by reducing violence and related death. Also, respect, protection and promotion of human rights are the cornerstones of SDG 16. SDG 10 on Reducing inequalities, with specific emphasis on promoting social and economic inclusion

of all, irrespective of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion or economic or other status, through advocacy and public education, is enshrined in South Africa's Constitution – specifically, the right to equality. These two goals are very closely linked to objectives 16 and 17 of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration, which seeks to empower migrants and societies to realise full social inclusion and eliminate all discrimination through evidence-based public discourse to shape perceptions of migration. However, as a result of Covid-19 and subsequent crises, the increase in poverty, loss of livelihoods and violence against foreigners continue to threaten the lives and livelihoods of migrants, asylum-seekers and refugees. The recent crises have stunted their resilience and increased their vulnerability. SDGs 1, 3 and 4 have faced particular challenges.

South Africa's economic recession at the start of 2020, the Covid-19 pandemic and other factors have affected the achievement of SDG 8 targets 8.5 and 8.6. In 2021, South Africa witnessed growing unemployment and deepening inequality and poverty. As reported elsewhere in this document, an estimated three million jobs were lost and, in the fourth quarter of 2021, the unemployment rate reached an all-time high of 35.3% (46.6% according to the expanded definition). Women, youth and other vulnerable groups were disproportionately affected.

51 UNICEF press release, based on National Income Dynamics Survey coronavirus rapid mobile / DBE data.  
52 www.statssa.gov.za/?p=15520.

Among youth aged 15 to 24 and 25 to 34 years, the unemployment rate rose to 66.5% and 43.8% respectively. While the economy started to recover in 2021, with GDP reaching 4.9%, the recovery has been jobless, with nearly 1.9 million fewer people employed at the end of 2021 than in Q1 2020 – that is, before the pandemic struck. Structural challenges and weak growth continue to undermine progress in reducing poverty and curbing unemployment, problems heightened by Covid. The number of people not in employment, education or training is rising, having increased substantially during the pandemic and from Q1 2021 to Q1 2022. There were about 10.2 million youngsters aged 15 to 24 years in Q1 2022, 37.0% of whom were not employed, in education or training – 4.6 percentage points higher than in Q1 2021. The rate for males and females increased by 5.9 percentage points and 3.3 percentage points respectively, with the rate for females higher than that for males in both years.

South Africa's progress against SDG 5 on gender equality and gender-related indicators is inadequate to achieve targets. Trends indicate progress is uneven, at times slow and fragile, with the pandemic having exacerbated existing gender equality fault lines.<sup>53</sup> Slow progress on SDG 5 is likely to affect the achievement of most other SDGs.

Setbacks on SDG 13's climate-response requirements will affect progress on all other SDGs, most importantly SDGs 1 to 3 and 5 to 8.

Finally, given reports of corruption uncovered by commissions of inquiry, it is evident that South Africa has not made significant progress against SDG 16 targets against corruption and illicit finance flows. However, the

government has taken significant steps such as creating a fusion centre, comprising a multidisciplinary team of experts to investigate and prosecute corruption. Results will, however, take time.

The Sustainable Development Report 2022 (Sachs et al, 2022)<sup>54</sup> captures reasonably well the above trends and details South Africa's progress in realising the 17 SDGs.

The all-but-absent progress on the national triple challenges of poverty, unemployment and inequality is of the biggest concerns, as it has multiple knock-on effects on every aspect, fibre and institution of the country, and as such, dire implications for the realisation of nearly all SDGs. Equally concerning are that:

- The data used most likely do not cover the full consequences from Covid-19, the civil unrest of July 2021 or any of the subsequent events that have affected South Africa most recently, nor the impacts of rising anti-migrant sentiment and attacks on migrant-owned businesses or those that employ migrants.
- Hidden in the data is high youth unemployment, which poses questions about the sustainability of progress where it has been observed and the risks of undoing gains made to date.
- The data do not capture the huge differences in the quality, reliability and sustainability of government services across provinces, districts and municipalities, especially in education, healthcare and basic municipal services (water, electricity, sewage).

Given the interrelatedness of SDGs, targeting one without focusing on the others reduces overall progress.

## GIVEN THE INTERRELATEDNESS OF SDGS, TARGETING ONE WITHOUT FOCUSING ON THE OTHERS REDUCES OVERALL PROGRESS



<sup>53</sup> See, for example, [https://cramsury.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/3.-Casale-D.-\\_-Shepherd-D.-2021-The-gendered-effects-of-the-Covid-19-crisis-and-ongoing-lockdown-in-South-Africa-Evidence-from-NIDS-CRAM-Waves-1-%E2%80%93-5.pdf](https://cramsury.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/3.-Casale-D.-_-Shepherd-D.-2021-The-gendered-effects-of-the-Covid-19-crisis-and-ongoing-lockdown-in-South-Africa-Evidence-from-NIDS-CRAM-Waves-1-%E2%80%93-5.pdf).

<sup>54</sup> <https://s3.amazonaws.com/sustainabledevelopment.report/2022/2022-sustainable-development-report.pdf>.

South Africa: Progress towards the realisation of SDGs

SDG		PROGRESS								
#	DESCRIPTION	LEVEL				TREND				
		SDG achievement	Challenges remain	Significant challenges remain	Major challenges remain	On track	Increasing moderately	Stagnating	Decreasing	Data not available
1	No poverty				X				X	
2	Zero hunger				X			X		
3	Good health and wellbeing				X		X			
4	Quality education			X				X		
5	Gender equality		X			X				
6	Clean water and sanitation			X			X			
7	Affordable and clean energy				X			X		
8	Decent work and economic growth				X			X		
9	Industry, innovation and infrastructure			X			X			
10	Reduced inequalities				X					X
11	Sustainable cities and communities			X			X			
12	Responsible consumption and production		X			X				
13	Climate action			X			X			
14	Life below water				X			X		
15	Life on land				X			X		
16	Peace, justice and strong institutions				X			X		
17	Partnerships for the goals		X				X			
<b>Total</b>		<b>0/17</b>	<b>3/17</b>	<b>5/17</b>	<b>9/17</b>	<b>2/17</b>	<b>6/17</b>	<b>1/17</b>	<b>1/17</b>	<b>1/17</b>
%		-	18%	29%	53%	12%	35%	41%	6%	6%

## Interconnectedness of events and across socio-economic sectors

Covid-19, the July 2021 unrest, the April 2022 floods, rising anti-migrant sentiment, erosion of social cohesion, growing political instability and their impacts have clear links that have manifested in various ways.

In some cases, simultaneous impacts have occurred across different socio-economic sectors, while in others effects have cascaded, with impacts starting in one sector and then affecting others. Events have also had second-round effects on a single sector, and feedback effects. This section explores these.

Macro-events often have the greatest ramifications, triggering other events and with impacts on different sectors of the economy and society. Covid-19 and the lockdowns caused companies to fail. In the manufacturing sector, companies collapsed, causing ruptures with their deep and extensive links with the agricultural and services sectors. Unemployment rates reached exceptional levels, and some UN programmes slowed down or stopped due to diverted resources. In rural areas, higher service and input costs had an impact on budgets, delaying delivery of services and interventions to the most vulnerable. Foreign direct investment was affected as were remittances, an important source of income among poor households in South Africa and the region. Any crisis, conflict or shock will have a gender impact, in that it will affect women and men/girls and boys/gender-non-conforming people differently. The impacts tend to be greater in countries such as South Africa, where gender inequalities/disparities are already great and deeply entrenched across socio-economic sectors and settings.

Rising inflation is leading to policy responses such as rising interest rates, with overall impacts on jobs, real incomes and recovery. Rising inflation and its knock-on effects have the power to unleash protest and unrest, exacerbate anti-migrant sentiments and advance political instability. With rising inflation, government budgets can buy far less than in the year before. When this is coupled with severe expenditure cuts as part of an austerity drive, both the quantity and quality of services in key areas are drastically reduced, affecting women, children, labour and social protection. Social protection cuts across UN work such as violence against foreigners, GBV and child protection. GBV itself has an intersecting



**GBV HAS AN INTERSECTING IMPACT ON VARIOUS AREAS RELATED TO GENDER EQUALITY AND THE EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN, POVERTY, CHILDREN AND NEW CYCLES OF VIOLENCE**

impact on various areas related to gender equality and the empowerment of women, poverty, children and new cycles of violence. In addition, reduced budgets limit room for preservation and extension of socio-economic rights. Possible consequences include limitation, violation and retrogression on the achievement of economic



and social rights with a direct impact on sustainable development outcomes. Clearly, the present socio-economic environment may imply trade-offs that may not be favourable to positive social outcomes, especially women and children in vulnerable situations.

Climate change and variability, another major macro-event affecting South Africa, has impacts for various human rights and thus for SDGs, since the two are closely related.<sup>55</sup> Climate change exacerbates poverty (SDG 1) and has an impact on the right to an adequate standard of living, which, in turn, has negative health outcomes. Climate change also affects men and women differently, which relates to the realisation of SDG 5. It, therefore, has cascading effects in all areas, including UN work involving development, health, women, children, people with disabilities and social cohesion.

The growing political instability discussed earlier creates political uncertainty and contributes to economic instability and low growth – and undermines foreign and domestic investments. Low growth affects provision of social services and realisation of fundamental human rights. This causes further effects, as lack of access to social services (healthcare, education, water and sanitation, electricity, housing or adequate policing) triggers violent protests against poor service delivery, with increased politicisation of anti-migrant sentiment. Thus, political instability is conducive to manipulation of xenophobia, which can greatly damage social cohesion.

Fractures in social cohesion (and rise of anti-migrant narratives) can have important feedback effects through an impact on political stability, peace and security in the country. They also directly influence the socio-economic context of the country and that of neighbouring countries, which then further shapes South African stability. Attacks on long-distance truck drivers and the blocking of main routes starkly demonstrate the interrelation between an absence of social cohesion and barriers to various sustainable development outcomes. Political instability also disturbs South Africa's regional influence and prominent position in southern Africa and the continent.<sup>56</sup> Crises in neighbouring countries such as Eswatini, Zimbabwe and Mozambique would greatly benefit from a strong South Africa, which could influence

and mediate between parties. Conversely, a South Africa that is politically unstable and lacks a clear strategy or stance and engagement in the region could encourage non-state armed groups from neighbouring countries<sup>57</sup> to take refuge in its territory and/or lead to a spillover of those conflicts with targeted attacks and/or non-discriminating violence committed on home soil.

The July 2021 unrest demonstrates the interconnectedness of violence, social cohesion and political instability. High levels of violence affect the overall population, weakening justice and the rule of law, which do not have the capacity to address this rising criminality. Subsequently, this may diminish the trust and confidence of the people in state institutions and the government, which are unable to protect them and fulfil their mandate to maintain law and order. Violence targeting foreigners, in particular, creates a vicious circle of reprisals and risk to social cohesion. This, in turn, contributes to political instability.

Other sectoral issues also have important macro-economic spillover effects. The zama zama phenomenon has had feedback effects in that the Minerals Council of South Africa estimates lost sales, taxes and royalties of R21 billion a year through illegal mining. As a result, government social programmes funded by the fiscus are at great risk of being underfunded. Further fiscal and broader economic impacts may also come from AML/CFT, due to the possible greylisting of South Africa's financial sector. Foreign investment in the sector may drop as potential investors refer to the list when making investment decisions. The government, in response, may have to spend more resources to rectify noted deficiencies, with impacts on how the country prioritises spending and possible resource deviation from areas such as health and education.

Finally, the inability of South Africa to deal effectively with corruption prevents all efforts to improve the economy and employment, thwarting initiatives to eradicate poverty. Corruption also facilitates crimes that affect the environment, leading to exploitation of natural resources and loss of biodiversity. It also undermines faith in public institutions and service delivery, which damages social cohesion.

55 SDGs and human rights are indeed closely related, as 92% of SDG targets are related to human rights and labour standards.  
56 See, for example, the Arusha Peace Agreement on Burundi.  
57 Example, Swaziland International Solidarity Forces and non-state armed groups in Mozambique, including the Islamic State.

## Opportunities for United Nations work in South Africa

The multiple crises that have battered South Africa in the past two to three years present both threats and opportunities for the country and the UN's work. Taking shape in an economy already grossly underperforming, these crises made the growth targets of the country's NDP, at 5% a year, largely unrealistic.

The current context of rising inflation reinforces the sentiment that both growth and social sector targets of the NDP are no longer attainable. Social sector policy implementation is likely to be disrupted because of trade-offs arising from rising inflation. For example, the government will have to offset its tax expenditure on the fuel levy by spending less elsewhere.

However, these crises also allow civil society, the UN and the government to build back better. As stated in the foreword of the previous CCA, this means not just doing more but doing differently, including:

*[T]ackling with greater determination concentration of income and wealth; extending the social protection system to fully cover the poor and the most vulnerable on a permanent basis; adopting a more integrated approach to levelling the playing field for women; and supporting the adoption of emerging technologies for a more rapid transition to a sustainable future, while leaving no one behind.* (CCA, 2020, 1)

There is now an opportunity to assess the feasibility of the NDP and discuss government priorities for the next five years. The impending national election in 2024 could

add further impetus to this work. There is real fluidity in policy, with different sectors pushing hard for their priorities. In this context, the UN can and should use its convening power to help the government build consensus on priorities, given the economic crisis. The introduction of a basic income grant alone would be building back better and promoting a more resilient country.

In this spirit, the UN, through lead agency the United Nations Industrial Development Organisation, established a three-pillar approach in response to the Covid-19 crisis – prepare and contain; respond and adapt; and recover and transform. The third pillar can support recovery and transformation towards inclusive, resilient and sustainable economies through inclusive and sustainable industrial development. This can draw on UN's global pool and networks through capacity building and knowledge exchange based on the lessons learnt, best practices and best available technologies.

There is also an urgent need for decent employment creation and the UN, through its wide pool of expertise, has much to offer. In addition, the government must create an enabling environment for businesses to grow and create jobs alongside expanded public employment and social protection expansion. Moreover, the African



Photo Credit: UN Photo / Kim Haughton / flickr

Continental Free Trade Area presents an opportunity to the most industrialised state on the continent to expand exports, particularly in labour-intensive sectors.

The increase in the use of information and communications technology ensured that activities continued during the lockdowns. With appropriate support, this technology may play a major role in future, leading to new programmes and projects, such as providing farmers with access to markets through real-time data on market prices, weather forecasts, information on pests, seed varieties and planting techniques. The UN, through the Food and Agricultural Organisation, has developed applications, databases and platforms to support work being carried out in countries around the world. These digital services increase access to useful data, information, maps and statistics that can be relevant to South Africa.

In building resilience to shocks and protecting the most vulnerable, opportunities already exist for real-time data collection on children's wellbeing. This is led by DSD and is active in six provinces. This programme was set up in response to the July unrest using a real-time monitoring tool developed with UN assistance, through UNICEF. It improved care and protection for children affected by the unrest. A digitised case management system for 'children on the move' was also developed for all provinces.

Other areas in which opportunities are identified include:

**HEALTH:** The Covid-19 pandemic has opened various opportunities for strengthening the health sector. The experiences have shown clearly that economic security is linked to health security and, therefore, that greater investments in building resilient health systems can avert devastation in the future. There is now an unprecedented political impetus on health on the road to economic recovery. Health systems, the government and communities too are better equipped with knowledge and information from the past two-and-a-half years and there are renewed collaborations among government departments, development partners, civil society and the UN.

The HIV/Aids pandemic is a critical health issue, which continues to cripple the country, destroy lives and increase vulnerability of already vulnerable groups such as pregnant women, children, people who use/inject drugs, people in correctional facilities and sex workers. Given the immensity of the problem, the UN intends to continue to strengthen the South African National Aids Council (SANAC) stewardship to mobilise multisectoral political leadership, resources and accountability at all levels to achieve the 2021 UN High-level Political Declaration on Aids. It is also committed to providing policy, advocacy and technical support to improve HIV treatment literacy;

leverage the power of partnerships across multiple sectors and provide policy advice, normative guidance and technical support to develop, adopt and endorse an evidence-driven and costed national strategic plan for HIV, TB and sexually transmitted illnesses (2023-2028). The plan will ensure that every rand is focused for impact, provide policy advocacy and strategic guidance to assist SANAC in the removal of punitive and discriminatory laws, and focus on policies to decriminalise sex work.

A successful fight against Aids and all other diseases is premised on a strong, integrated and universal health system. To this end, the UN will continue its key role in mobilising resources to build a resilient health system, specifically supporting the national and provincial governments to build more resilient health systems and accelerate progress towards universal health coverage.

**REFUGEES AND ASYLUM-SEEKERS:** The UN, led by the work of the UNHCR, has the opportunity to invest more in diverse partnerships and work with national systems to provide services to refugees and asylum-seekers.

**RISK DISASTER MANAGEMENT IN CRISES AND EMERGENCIES:** There is an urgent need for the UN to increase coordination in response to crises such as the April floods, to deliver as 'One UN' and to continue to support rebuilding to ensure that no-one is left behind. The flood allowed all UN agencies to tap into their expertise in the country and is an example of how the UN can work together in future crises. Besides the need for greater coordination – and prevention (see discussion below) – actions could include sustaining investments in assessments and monitoring and evaluation tools to identify vulnerable populations, generating lessons learnt from emergency responses by supporting real-time evaluations, and engaging with other development institutions and private sector partners to strengthen systems.

**INSTABILITY/MIGRATION:** The UN Migration Multi-partner Trust Fund focusing on social cohesion and involving IOM, UNHCR, OHCHR, UNDP and UN Women could help to change the growing anti-migrant/xenophobic narrative. In the lead-up to the 2024 national election, the UN and the international community could call for the strengthening of democracy by having constructive, substantive debates and commitments by all political parties – and the law enforcement sector – on the economic, political and social reforms urgently needed. The UN agencies with sub-regional offices in South Africa that are part of UNCT could – indeed should – leverage

their regional links to respond more effectively to cross-border issues such as migration and human trafficking (see below).

**SOCIAL COHESION:** Working towards a socially cohesive society entails a whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach. There are clear divisions and distrust between civil society and society in general, and government entities. There are opportunities for much work in this area, including by UN agencies involved in the Migration Multi-partner Trust Fund, although this is funding dependent. UN support for social cohesion is ongoing through work with community radio and faith-based organisations and partnership with associations of migrant communities. This work has generated positive results and has great scale-up potential.

Technical and capacity-building assistance is needed for government departments working on social cohesion; and for civil society organisations focusing on vulnerable groups, such as migrants, women and girls, LGBTQI persons, and those with disabilities and albinism to ensure no-one is left behind. Clear entry points include the Prevention and Combatting of Hate Crimes and Hate Speech Bill currently being considered by Parliament and the National Action Plan to Combat Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance (adopted by Cabinet in 2019).

**VIOLENCE:** Access to justice can be improved, including through large-scale awareness-raising campaigns on GBV and xenophobic violence, and violence targeting human rights defenders and activists, which affects also men, traditional leaders and politicians. Law-enforcement agents should be trained to not resort to the excessive force witnessed during the lockdowns. The Presidential Summit on GBV in November 2022 was a further opportunity to review progress on the commitments made at the previous summit in 2018 and strengthen engagement with the government on building a comprehensive, coordinated and multisectoral response to the crisis.

**CLIMATE CHANGE AND THE JUST TRANSITION:** To cast more light on the effect of the current global climate emergency on the enjoyment of human rights, the UN, through its OHCHR regional office, liaised with stakeholders to promote the right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment. The office, for example, was able to influence law reform by making a submission on the Climate Change Bill to ensure that it was in line with international human rights standards and sustainable

development agenda principles. The submission underscored the added value of adopting a human-rights-based and gender-sensitive approach to South Africa's response to climate change. Recommendations on the need to ensure meaningful and inclusive public participation, in particular of marginalised, vulnerable groups, were also highlighted, as was ensuring inclusive and accessible public consultations, including in rural areas. There is, thus, an opportunity for the UN to provide technical assistance to government and civil society to promote meaningful participation, especially for the urgently required just transition, and to assist the government nationally and sub-nationally to create an enabling policy environment for green jobs and capacity to promote green enterprises.

The submission also reinforced the importance of promoting meaningful representation on important institutions such as the Presidential Climate Commission of groups at risk of disproportionate harm from climate change – including women, girls, LGBTQI or gender non-conforming individuals, persons with disabilities and migrants. The UN could use its convening powers to capacity build the commission and other institutions on the importance of participation of marginalised groups.

**THE CARE ECONOMY:** Covid-19 exposed the urgent need for transformative care policies grounded in gender equality<sup>58</sup> to achieve good quality unpaid and paid care work. Government responses to Covid present South Africa with an opportunity to rethink care more transformatively and seize the moment to re-engineer it in a development context and as a catalyst for change through transformative care policies. Investing in the care economy is good for gender equality and is very important for South Africa's economic growth and job creation. Promoting increased investments in the care economy and the balanced sharing of family responsibilities can accelerate substantive equality in work. Unpaid care work remains mostly invisible, unrecognised and unaccounted for in decision-making. However, time-use surveys show that it inflicts time poverty that prevents women from engaging in productive employment. The UN, through the ILO, UN Women and other agencies, could advocate the care economy as a tool to address gender inequality.

**AML/CFT:** South Africa should be assisted to institute actions to avoid its financial sector being greylisted or,

if listed, to exit the list as soon as feasible. There is an opportunity, too, to educate the public about how to prevent failure by investigating or prosecuting financial crime.

**ARTISANAL MINING:** Work has been done to strengthen private/public partnerships between the UN and companies involved in the mining of natural resources. The BMA has created collaborations with Zimbabwe, Lesotho, Mozambique, Eswatini and Namibia to address transnational organised crime. Civil society is spearheading initiatives for government regulation of small-scale mining in South Africa. The issue is being seen through a business and human-rights lens.

**ANTI-CORRUPTION:** South Africans are now more conscious of the deleterious effects of corruption. Civil society and media have become more vocal. Citizens are demanding more accountability, transparency and good governance. People are no longer complacent about what is happening. This should prompt the country to strengthen its democracy and governance systems.

**CHILD LABOUR:** Further to the recent global conference on child labour and commitment made by the South Africa's government and civil society to combat child labour, the UN's role should be focused on strengthening the policy environment and the capacity of national and sub-national structures to implement and enforce compliance with policy and legislation. Its support could also go to law-enforcement agencies, given the complexities of identifying child labour, including trafficking in children.

**HUMAN RIGHTS:** South Africa's recent election to the Human Rights Council and its universal periodic review in November 2022 are important opportunities for the UN<sup>59</sup> to strengthen engagement and advocacy with government on the importance of, respect for, and protection and promotion of human rights for all, in accordance with the Secretary-General's call to action on human rights and 'Our common agenda'. Work will continue to support the government to implement recommendations of UN human rights mechanisms, strengthen the national mechanism for reporting and follow-up, and offer technical support to the SAHRC in matters including the strengthening of the national preventive mechanism, the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and the establishment of an independent monitoring mechanism.

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58 Gender equality is the enjoyment of equal rights, opportunities and treatment by men and women, boys and girls in all spheres of life, ILO (2000), ABC of women workers' rights and gender equality.  
59 Through technical support and capacity building, led by OHCHR regional office.

## Implications for the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework

In a South Africa dealing with multiple crises – from Covid-19 to politicised anti-migrant sentiment to the impact of the war in Ukraine, energy loadshedding and climate change, the UN should recognise that poverty, inequality, climate and environmental degradation are closely linked.

Therefore, development policy needs to consider inclusiveness, resilience and sustainability in a much more integrated way, putting people at the centre, as is the human-rights-based approach. UN interventions should foster green, resilient and inclusive development, promotion of youth employment, building resilience to climate change, biodiversity conservation, water management, access to sustainable, clean and affordable renewable energy; respect, protection and promotion of human rights for all, and citizens' participation in democratic processes and social cohesion. Leaving no-one behind, human rights, gender mainstreaming and gender-sensitive approaches, big data and innovation should be at the centre of all UN interventions. For UN interventions to succeed, a new and lasting social contract must be forged, drawing on the government and all stakeholders.



**THERE IS ALSO A NEED FOR  
GREATER COHESION IN THE UN  
POSITION ON KEY ISSUES**

There is also a need for greater cohesion in the UN position on key issues, whether social protection or areas that need dedicated support over the next three to four years. For example, if one UN entity supports

refugees and asylum-seekers in one community and another supports national community members, these efforts should be combined to reduce the possibility of conflict (community harmony/social cohesion) and improve impact.

Since 2021, the UN has operated under the District Development Model in partnership with the government. However, experience in responding to recent crises shows that the organisation should review its capacity to coordinate its work (within the UN system and with other actors) and how it operates in province and district emergencies. Response to the July 2021 unrest and the April 2022 floods revealed that interactions with the NDMC and the provincial/district disaster management structures were fraught with challenges. UN agencies worked with their normal counterparts from government departments, but failed to engage satisfactorily with the disaster coordination structures. The UNSDCF should, therefore, include an emergency preparedness component and establish (or integrate) a more formal working arrangement with the NDMC and corresponding sub-national entities. Investment in national and sub-national capacity building to prepare for future emergencies, humanitarian disasters and/or new outbreaks should be a high priority. The UN should not miss the opportunity to use the recovery period to build back more inclusive and resilient systems.



In the health arena, there is a need for:

**AGILITY AND FLEXIBILITY:** The UN, through the World Health Organisation and fellow UN agencies, rapidly reprioritised staff and resources to support the government response to Covid-19. However, this had implications for other programme areas and some joint workplan results/activities have not progressed. They now need to be expedited.

**SUPPORT FOR THE RESETTling AND RECOVERY OF HEALTH SYSTEMS:** The government's strategic framework is crucial for recovery, but national and provincial governments need technical assistance, collaboration and financial support.

**GREATER ADVOCACY FOR INVESTMENTS IN HEALTH SECURITY AND UNIVERSAL HEALTH COVERAGE:** More funds are needed to support national and provincial governments to build more resilient health systems and accelerate progress towards universal health coverage. The UN needs to be a catalyst in mobilising resources.

**PARTNERSHIPS AND COLLABORATIONS:** The pandemic has shown the need for 'whole-of-government' and 'whole-of-society' approaches. The UN needs to improve coordination and collaboration across agencies and sectors for better preparedness and response to future public health emergencies.

The following actions or recalibrations are indicated for the UNSDCF framework:

**SOCIAL COHESION:** The launch of Operation Dudula and the growing anti-migrant/xenophobic tensions between South Africans and foreigners continue to pose a major threat to achieving the goals of the UN joint programme on social cohesion initiatives. Greater coordination and collaboration are called for to ensure delivery as one and that no-one is left behind. Greater coordination within the UN system and with other stakeholders needs to be institutionalised as long-term programming for all agencies, since xenophobia is a long-term challenge that requires a sustainable institutional UN response.

**VIOLENCE:** UNSDCF capacity building must be strengthened for politicians, government, law enforcement, men and boys, women and girls, and migrant communities on all forms of violence, particularly GBV. The organisation can also support and ensure coordinated, effective and multisectoral implementation of the National Strategic Plan on Gender-Based Violence and Femicide.

**HUMAN RIGHTS:** Although UN programmes are comprehensive and cover human-rights issues, more emphasis should be placed on equality in access to economic and social rights, including healthcare, mental

healthcare, adequate housing with access to electricity, water and sanitation and security of tenure, education to address increased dropout rates and lost learning, lobbying for a basic income grant and consensus-building with National Treasury, and promotion of decent work. Localised action such as that under the District Development Model should be expanded as much as possible.

**REFUGEES:** UNSDCF South Africa is key in supporting an inclusive approach in which all stakeholders, government, the UN through its agencies, civil society, refugee-led networks and communities come together to work on national action plans, such as the National Action Plan to Combat Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance. The UN, through the UNHCR, is also working with social protection actors within it and the government to provide stronger social-protection responses to refugees and asylum-seekers.

**POLITICAL INSTABILITY:** For effective, efficient and transformative governance, the UNCT will have to consider the risks of political instability, particularly in run-up to the 2024 election. Political instability may affect all activities under this strategic priority by exacerbating existing deep-rooted governance challenges (corruption, abuse of power, impunity, limited rule of law, illicit financial and arms flows, and persistent discrimination based on race, sex, ability or location).

**ILLEGAL MINING ACTIVITIES:** A joint UN programme is needed to address artisanal mining activities in South Africa, as the issues cut across different UN agencies. Particularly urgent is a programme to counter transnational organised crime in mining. The BMA has extended the scope and context of the UNSDCF, but there needs to be a 'One UN' approach to border management, which should also strengthen procedures for cross-border migrants coming to South Africa.

**FOOD SYSTEMS:** The agro-food system in South Africa is highly skewed in favour of large, established companies and agri-businesses, with market monopoly on farming, processing, distribution, manufacturing and retail.



SDGs call for major transformations in agriculture and food systems to end hunger and poverty, achieve food security and improve nutrition by 2030. Protecting the planet and fighting inequality are also at the centre of SDGs, as is leaving no-one behind. The UNSDCF needs to elevate issues raised in the National Food and Nutrition Security Implementation Plan to establish inclusive local food value-chains that support access to nutritious and affordable foods. UNSDCF emphasis should be on:

- Building inclusive, sustainable and resilient agri-food systems to end hunger and eradicate poverty.
- Improving food and nutrition security, food safety and livelihoods.

**CLIMATE:** Resilience, capacity building and just transition should be upscaled, given the urgency of the climate crisis.



The UN in South Africa is committed to 'mainstreaming freshwater resources management in the UNSDCF'. To this end, the organisation, led by its United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and supported by the UNEP-Danish Hydraulic Institute Centre on Water and Environment, is undertaking a pilot assessment on how to strengthen UNCT understanding of the role of freshwater ecosystems and integrated approaches to water resources management. The basis is that water, as a natural resource, cuts across multiple SDGs.

This initiative is adopting a phased approach:

- **PHASE 1:** Conduct rapid needs assessment and recommend how needs may be met and in what format. The purpose is to understand UNCT needs in the SDG context, and its water, environment and climate roles and responsibilities.
- **PHASE 2:** Develop a support package for UNCT, including the identification of key water data sources, resources and tools that can fill gaps, and a document detailing why integrated approaches to water and environment support multiple development objectives.
- **PHASE 3:** Recommendations on data, decision support tools and processes necessary for replication and scaling-up.



More broadly, a key area for UN action is the role of human rights defenders. In South Africa, many such individuals and communities have taken action to protect the environment and human rights. They play an essential role in supporting the government to fulfil its obligations under the Paris Agreement and to realise the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including the pledge that no one be left behind.

It is, therefore, important that the UN in South Africa ensures the meaningful participation of defenders in decision-making, making information widely available. Access to information and participation in decision-making, when mediated by fair and transparent rules and processes, can contribute greatly to the causes of defenders and UN work. In addition, these individuals and communities can be brought closer to UN work through analysis, design, implementation and evaluation of UN-led programmes in areas such as conservation and just transition, and in frameworks and programming, including the cooperation framework and the CCA.

Defenders in South Africa, however, are among the most at risk of human rights groups. They face threats, physical attacks and property damage in retaliation for their activism. It is crucial, therefore, that the UN devises plans for their protection, which may include protection risk assessment, risk monitoring and early responses to alleviate threats. Other actions to consider are promoting a safe and enabling civic space in which defenders can exercise freedom of speech and association and to support their right to access to justice.



**PROMOTE A SAFE AND ENABLING CIVIC SPACE IN WHICH DEFENDERS CAN EXERCISE FREEDOM OF SPEECH AND ASSOCIATION AND SUPPORT THEIR RIGHT TO ACCESS TO JUSTICE**

Finally, the UN system in South Africa should adopt a sub-regional/regional perspective to respond to migration, refugees, asylum-seekers, human trafficking, climate change, industrial development and others. Several agencies in UNCT are sub-regional offices that provide a pool of knowledge and understanding of cross-border issues and their implications for South Africa and the region. This gives the UN the opportunity to work sub-regionally and regionally for greater effectiveness and better results.



## Implications for government policy

**As discussed, the shocks of the last couple of years exacerbated existing development challenges, chiefly poverty, inequality and unemployment.**

The South African government should advance implementation of its progressive policies. To build resilience against shocks, it should invest more seriously in its national and sub-national disaster management systems, and in particular, in the coordination of preparedness and response to disasters, including improving early warning and simulation systems so that communities and authorities are better able to respond in time. It should also build back infrastructure and human settlements and related services, ensuring its resilience to future disasters.

There are opportunities for strategic social policy actions, including transforming post-Covid-19 education and strengthening health systems to better manage future emergencies. More needs to be done to address food insecurity and hunger in South Africa, which increased as a result of the shocks. In addition, the digital divide has shown the significant injustice that results when people do not enjoy universal access to the internet, or cannot afford devices or data necessary for connectivity. Zero-rated websites should be promoted with the provision of

digital literacy training for children and adults alike. Should these gaps not be addressed now, the future generation of children will face similar inequities in seeking the fundamental right to education during crises.

In October 2020, when the Covid-19 crisis was at its height, the South African government adopted the Economic Recovery and Reconstruction Plan, whose success will rely on stronger coordination with various actors and stakeholders. Crucial is decent employment creation, which the government can support through initiatives such as a national employment policy, employment-intensive investment and pro-employment policy at both macro and sectoral levels. A labour migration policy and labour law reform are also essential, as is better intra-governmental cohesion and coordination on pro-employment (economic) policymaking.

To create good-quality jobs and prepare for the future, the government must also strengthen its manufacturing and digital capabilities and promote mutual learning and knowledge sharing. It and business leaders have to foster the development of domestic production capabilities to ensure long-term resilience in a rapidly changing global industrial landscape. To build back better also requires accelerating the shift to a green industrial sector, leaving no-one behind. Environmental sustainability and social inclusiveness must become key components of post-pandemic industrial policies to achieve SDGs.



**ZERO-RATED WEBSITES SHOULD BE PROMOTED WITH THE PROVISION OF DIGITAL LITERACY TRAINING FOR CHILDREN AND ADULTS ALIKE**

A human-rights-based approach to policy development and implementation is paramount, including those for housing/evictions, migration, upgrading of informal settlements, social protection, promoting decent work, and taxation (which reflects government’s human-rights priorities) and fiscal matters. Previous investment in its social protection system enabled South Africa to adapt relatively quickly to the devastation of the pandemic by providing a lifeline in the SRD grant. Investment in universal health coverage (a target under SDG 3) will be essential to weather future pandemics and similar shocks. This must also include migrants in South Africa – a population group that suffered a lack of access to health coverage during the pandemic. Simultaneously, the vast inequalities exposed by the pandemic point to an urgent need for improved investment in the right to education, the right to social protection and the right to food.<sup>60</sup>



**THE VAST INEQUALITIES EXPOSED BY THE PANDEMIC POINT TO AN URGENT NEED FOR IMPROVED INVESTMENT**

South Africa’s legislative framework provides an enabling environment to tackle GBV and femicide. Even so, persistent systemic failures in the implementation of legislation and policies contribute to and exacerbate patterns of such violence across the country. Among other initiatives, new legislation is required that considers non-custodial measures for women. Also, the government could establish a national council on GBV and femicide and provide it with adequate human, technical and financial resources, a strong mandate and guarantee of independence.<sup>61</sup> Furthermore, it could ensure adequate human, technical and financial resources for the implementation of the National Strategic Plan on GBV and Femicide 2020 to 2030 and establish effective coordination and results-based monitoring and evaluation.

UN migrant-centred work – through IOM, UNCHR, UNODC, OHCHR, ILO and other agencies – seeks to build resilience among local communities, but cannot

alone have a significant impact if damaging narratives against foreigners continue. The need is clear for both political will and coordinated efforts to counter the toxic narratives with evidence-based arguments. Such efforts should be pursued by all key stakeholders, including local, provincial and national governments. Government and stakeholder ownership and accountability should be advocated in the implementation of the National Action Plan to Combat Racism, Discrimination, Xenophobia, Violence and Related Intolerance and key performance



**THE NEED IS CLEAR FOR BOTH POLITICAL WILL AND COORDINATED EFFORTS TO COUNTER TOXIC NARRATIVES WITH EVIDENCE-BASED ARGUMENTS**

indicators included in each department’s performance management appraisal system. Sufficient budget to develop a comprehensive integration plan for migrants and other affected populations is important to ensure compliance with South Africa’s Constitution and international obligations, including the Global Compact for Migration, Global Compact for Refugees and the World Conference against Racism. There is a need for refugee inclusion in national services/systems to support local integration and promote tolerance.

The government needs to address the deficiencies noted in the AML/CFT mutual evaluation. In particular, it should consider conducting a national AML/CFT risk assessment to identify threats and vulnerabilities and design strategies to address these.

A change in policy direction is needed, from targeting artisanal miners to addressing transnational organised crime, including smuggling of migrants and labour trafficking. Legislation is in place that created the BMA, but the BMA framework needs regulations for transnational organised crime and to ensure full deployment of the structure, while ensuring a human-rights-based approach particularly at borders and for people crossing borders.

60 United Nations (2020), Covid-19 and human rights: We are all in this together, April.  
 59 Through technical support and capacity building, led by OHCHR regional office.  
 61 The establishment of the council was part of the declaration made during the 2018 presidential summit. In September 2022, the Minister in the Presidency for Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities Maite Nkoana-Mashabane announced that the National Council on Gender-based Violence and Femicide Bill had been approved by Cabinet and sent to Parliament for processing.

## Building resilience to shocks: A deeper look

The UN and the South African government are currently implementing the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework 2020-2025 with key national partners, including civil society, the private sector, youth and women's organisations.

The cooperation framework outlines the UN system's collective commitment to support sustainable development in South Africa in line with national, regional and global development priorities. It is aligned with NDP 2030, which recognises the environment and science and technology as central drivers of change, and the Medium-term Strategic Framework 2019-2024 and is firmly anchored in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the UN Charter and the African Union Agenda 2063.

The four main strategic priority areas are:

- Inclusive, just and sustainable economic growth.
- Human capital and social transformation.
- Effective, efficient and transformative governance.
- Climate resilience and sustainably managed natural resources.

Within these areas, the UN has responded reasonably effectively to emerging issues. However, as discussed earlier, the magnitude and complexity of the new challenges call for some repositioning and refocusing within the framework. Also, throughout discussions on emerging issues, their impacts, responses and required measures for better and more sustainable outcomes, building resilience to shocks has emerged as a most

important action to respond to the many issues identified by the UN system across its intervention areas. This section examines in greater detail three interconnected policy actions that have been recurrently suggested in this CCA, which are crucial for building resilience to shocks. These are strengthening the country's social security system through adoption of a basic income grant,<sup>62</sup> enhancing the national disaster management system and fighting climate change through climate action and accelerated investment in a just transition. These three can generate important synergies and become powerful tools for building resilience, reducing vulnerabilities and creating a clear pathway towards a sustainable future.

In South Africa, all three are under discussion for adoption. First, the UN, through the ILO, working with the government and other stakeholders, has developed a proposal on how best to protect those still uncovered by the social-protection system while ensuring affordability. Secondly, the April 2022 floods revealed the need to strengthen the national disaster management system to enable the country to respond with greater coordination and effectiveness to shocks. And thirdly, climate action will not only build resilience to disasters but will open new sustainable investment that can lead to a truly inclusive and sustainable growth path. All these actions will benefit

<sup>62</sup> It would be very important to make sure that the vulnerable migrant population is covered by the basic income grant and that we do not see a repeat of what happened in the initial stages of the Covid pandemic.



the poorest and most vulnerable the most, by helping protect their lives and livelihoods, reduce their suffering and vulnerability, enhance their agency and give them the space and tools for a better future.

### An expanded social protection system<sup>63</sup>

South Africa’s social-protection system has some of the highest coverage and benefit levels in sub-Saharan Africa. Nonetheless, by many measures, the system is not all-inclusive due to policy gaps in provisions to specific groups, targeting inefficiencies and barriers of access to benefits. The system offers limited protection to those of working age (18 to 59 years). In the wake of Covid-19, it was expanded significantly with the introduction of the SRD grant, which covered unemployed people aged 18 to 59.

The grant sparked much debate and renewed interest in the possibility of a basic income grant in South Africa. In December 2021, an expert panel report was launched by the DSD with the ILO under the UN SDG Fund on ‘The appropriateness and feasibility of a system of basic income support in South Africa’. Conclusions and recommendations included:

- Clear merit in expanding the system of social transfers along the lines of a basic income grant given the social and economic context of South

Africa, seen with the constitutional obligations on the state.

- Basic income grant would have an overall positive impact on poverty.
- A phased approach to basic income grant adoption is recommended fiscally and economically.

The UN, in its debates with other stakeholders, identified the following possible obstacles, doubts and concerns:

- Discussions on reforming the system tend to be compartmentalised, covering areas such as social security reforms, the basic income grant, the Unemployment Insurance Fund and social grants. A more coordinated approach and a push for a more integrated system might help adoption of reforms that include basic income grant. However, social partners, civil society and other stakeholders may have to play a more active role.
- The economy and the fiscus feature prominently in discussions on extending the social system. Despite analyses being conducted and reported – for example through the expert panel report – doubt remains about the potential impact of a basic income grant adoption on the economy.
- An expanded system might induce ‘dependency syndrome’ or ‘dependency culture’, meaning that welfare recipients will ‘choose leisure’ and prefer to survive on ‘handouts’ from the state, remaining

63 This section is based on a concept note on the South African social-protection system prepared for the February 2022 UNCT South Africa retreat session on the topic and on the ideas and proposals participants presented during the session.

unemployed rather than looking for paid work. Although empirical evidence shows that this is not happening in South Africa, this line of reasoning remains entrenched in some policy quarters and explains why social grants typically prioritise groups seen as 'deserving', particularly older persons, persons with disability and children. The dependency argument has been at the centre of basic income grant debates over the past 20 years. How can it be addressed?

- Whether a basic income grant should be universal or targeted also remains unclear, with discussions focusing on this at the OHCHR July 2022 roundtable meeting on a human-rights-based approach to basic income support in South Africa, with the development of the composite cost of living index recommended by the CESCR in 2018.

Despite these concerns, Covid-19 did show unprecedented collaboration and engagements between the government and development partners. The UN system in South Africa can play an enhanced role in supporting government initiatives and collaborating with other stakeholders on social protection. The question for further discussion is what UN strategic measures/actions could support the establishment of a comprehensive social-protection system.

### **An enhanced national disaster management system**

South Africa has a disaster management system built over the years and based on a single framework comprising the Disaster Management Act of 2002 and the Disaster Management Framework of 2005.

The system is a network of disaster management centres across national, provincial and municipal governments, which, in turn, are connected with state organs, business, non-governmental organisations and communities. At the core of this system is the NDMC, located in the Department of Cooperative Governance.

As South Africa faces ever more frequent climate events, the question is what additions or enhancements could enable the disaster management system to respond more effectively and mitigate obstacles to sustainable development.

Disaster management models differ, but, in essence, a standard model has four pillars: Prevention, response, recovery and mitigation.

According to the Notre Dame Global Adaptation Initiative Country Index, which measures countries' vulnerability to climate change and other challenges, South Africa is ranked 92 of 182 countries. This indicates a fairly



**SOUTH AFRICA IS RANKED 92 OF 182 COUNTRIES. ACCORDING TO THE NOTRE DAME GLOBAL ADAPTATION INITIATIVE COUNTRY INDEX**

high level of vulnerability and places the country behind those of similar levels of development such as Argentina, Botswana, Brazil, Chile, Morocco, Mexico, Peru and Tunisia. It indicates that, despite the reasonably well-developed framework built over the years, South Africa has significant work to do to build resilience to disasters.

Countries that seem to be doing well and are highly ranked have invested substantially in disaster risk prevention. Examples are: Switzerland, which has invested heavily in early warning systems that predict threats of landslides, avalanches and floods; Japan, which has the best warning system for tsunamis and earthquakes, and whose children are trained to head for higher ground at the sound of warning sirens; Mexico, which has applied building standards for protection against earthquakes; Brazil, which strictly regulates construction activities in the flood plains of rivers, and Germany, whose forests are natural barriers to protect against storm winds.



**SOUTH AFRICA SHOULD FOCUS ON RISK PREVENTION INCLUDING EARLY WARNING GIVEN THAT IT IS EXPERIENCING MAJOR DISASTERS WITH INCREASING FREQUENCY AND INTENSITY**

South Africa should focus on risk prevention including early warning given that it is experiencing major disasters with increasing frequency and intensity. In addition to having solid legislation and a framework, it should invest more in climate-resilient infrastructure, better warning systems, climate adaptation and preparedness for rapid response, including personnel training.

The NDMC, which is at the apex of the country's disaster management system, deals with intergovernmental relations among national, provincial and municipal governments. This is a positive, as recent events have shown that coordination and communication among



disaster centres and other operational structures at different government levels is key to a proper disaster risk response. However, response to the KwaZulu-Natal floods, to which UN agencies lent significant support, point to a need for stronger coordination and communication. Indeed, international experience demonstrates that enhancing a disaster management system relies on increased agility and coordination across government levels, agencies and stakeholders.

It also indicates that a whole-of-society approach is required to identify communities' most important priorities and ensure that communities are heard and participate actively in jointly identifying coping measures for long-term ownership and sustainability. A global trend is integrating disaster risk reduction into national adaptation plans and developing multisectoral adaptation plans.

Another lesson is to make a quantitative risk profile the backbone of any planning, taking cascading effects into account, as, sometimes, these are more significant than the initial ones. The crises discussed in this report, with their interconnectedness, second-round effects and cascading effects, confirm this. The risk profile should be developed with a disaster risk reduction economic analysis and budget analysis, the latter as it is crucial that financing mechanisms are activated rapidly during disaster responses.

South Africa's disaster management framework has National Treasury-linked funding available for both

emergency relief and reconstruction and rehabilitation. However, these resources are limited. Moreover, as an upper-middle-income country, South Africa is not eligible to access international funds. Thus, domestic crisis management and response must be substantial. The country might consider making existing disbursement rules less restrictive or cumbersome to ensure speedy access, reducing conditions such as making funds available only if the line department/organ dealing with the disaster lacks resources.

Other countries have invested a great deal in early warning systems, as mentioned earlier. These must be as effective and accurate as possible and should be multihazard and multisectoral. Disasters often have systemic impacts through cascading effects. South Africa would do well to develop hazard maps of regions prone to disasters – or if these exist, update them using new technologies. It is also important to invest in capacity development through communication, education and training to enhance ability of people (women, girls, boys, migrant communities, people with disabilities) to manage their own risks. Conducting stress-test plans with simulations would be worthwhile, so that everyone knows his or her role and what to do if a disaster strikes.

Much of this is contained in the UN Sendai framework for disaster risk reduction, which supports the 2030 development agenda by providing 'member states with concrete actions to protect development gains from the risk of disaster'.

Sendai principles include strengthening good governance through coordination (within and across sectors) and integration, working together with stakeholders (shared responsibility), ensuring inclusion and non-discrimination, considering the needs of all people at risk in the design and planning of disaster preparedness and providing access to all (elderly, people with disability, migrant communities etc), empowering local authorities and communities to take risk-informed decisions in preparedness and response, and undertaking a multihazard risk assessment based on local and specific characteristics. A successful disaster management system values communication and interconnectedness and moves hand-in-hand with development initiatives that build resilient infrastructures for the benefit of all.

The UN system, through its agencies and programmes operating in South Africa, has provided prompt disaster support to the government. The floods were a case in point. Working closely with national and provincial departments, it rallied its global structures to provide personnel and resources to meet urgent humanitarian needs. It also intervened in health, education, agriculture, disaster risk management and coordination, and economic recovery.

### Climate action and just transition

South Africa is among the many vulnerable middle-income countries already experiencing the impacts of climate change. It is forecast to experience, among others, more frequent and greater heat extremes,



resulting in extended periods of drought; increased wind events and heightened risk of fires; extreme heat stress, particularly affecting manual labour; increased spread and outbreaks of zoonotic diseases, affecting people, crops, livestock and wildlife; more frequent and intense rainfall events, and continued rise in sea levels with severe implications for coastal zones and infrastructure. Recent expert reports<sup>64</sup> speak of the profoundly negative impact of climate change on future generations in the country. This is despite South Africa's progressive Bill of Rights, which guarantees, among others, environmental rights,<sup>65</sup> economic, social and cultural rights,<sup>66</sup> and the rights to equality<sup>67</sup> and human dignity<sup>68</sup>. In particular, section 24 of the Constitution recognises the importance of inter-generational equity.

The government is responding to climate challenges. In February 2022, the Climate Change Bill was finally published for public comment. A just transition framework, developed under the leadership of the Presidential Climate Commission, was adopted on 27 May 2022. The framework is a planning tool and basis for South Africa to start dealing with jobs, local economies, skills, social support and governance. It sets out actions (policy measures/undertakings) for the government and its social partners and outcomes to be realised in the short-, medium- and long term. The shared consensus is that 'the social and economic impacts should be minimised, while the livelihoods of those vulnerable to climate change must be improved'.<sup>69</sup>

The Department of Mineral Resources and Energy is updating the 2019 Integrated Resource Plan (IRP2019)<sup>70</sup> – an electricity capacity plan indicating the country's electricity demand, how this will be satisfied and what it will cost. It reflects South Africa's constantly changing supply and demand scenarios, and global technological advancements in the efficient and responsible generation of energy.<sup>71</sup>

64 N King, Climate change implications for SA's youth, Expert report commissioned by the Centre for Environmental Rights, 2021, accessible at <https://cer.org.za/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/Nick-King-Report-Final.pdf>.  
 65 South African Constitution section 24.  
 66 South African Constitution sections 26 to 29.  
 67 South African Constitution section 9.  
 68 South African Constitution section 10.  
 69 For a thorough analysis of the pathways for a just transition in South Africa, see, inter alia, Xaba and Fakir, eds, A just transition to a low carbon future in South Africa', Mapungubwe Institute for Strategic Reflection, Johannesburg, 2022.  
 70 It identifies the preferred generation technology to meet expected demand growth up to 2030. It incorporates government objectives such as affordable electricity, reduced greenhouse gas emissions, reduced water consumption, diversified electricity generation sources, localisation and regional development.  
 71 The most dominant technology in the IRP2019 is renewable energy from wind and solar photovoltaic technologies, with wind being identified as the stronger. The consistent annual allocation for wind technology from 2022 to 2030 is 1 600MW. The solar photovoltaic allocation of 1 000MW a year is incremental up to 2030, with no allocation in 2024 (being the year the Koeberg nuclear extension is expected to be commissioned) and 2026 and 2027 (presumably since 2 000MW of gas is expected in 2027).



South Africa is one of the world's most carbon-intensive electricity producers and one of the largest emitters of carbon dioxide worldwide.<sup>72</sup> To decarbonise South Africa's energy matrix, the decommissioning of the existing coal-fired plants is planned and the IRP2019 contains a detailed schedule. Between 2030 and 2050 alone, 24 100MW of coal power is expected to be decommissioned.



At COP26, President Ramaphosa established an important international partnership to support a just transition to a low-carbon economy and a climate-resilient society. Partner countries have promised to organise an initial \$8.5 billion over the next three to five years through instruments including grants and concessional finance to support the implementation of South Africa's revised nationally determined contributions to reduce carbon emissions through a just transition.<sup>73</sup> The funds will help install more clean energy, accelerate the country's transition away from coal power and cushion the blow for workers who may be affected by the shift. A caveat is that the financing promised is still too little, especially if one considers that it is not just grants, but loans to be repaid, and includes private investments over up to five years. In recognition of this, two days before the start of COP27 in Egypt, Ramaphosa released the Just Energy Transition Investment Plan (JET-IP) that outlines what will be required for South Africa to achieve its decarbonisation commitments while supporting a transition that is just for workers, communities and the most vulnerable. According to the plan, the financing required amounts to nearly R1.5 trillion, or \$98.7 billion, and targets the electricity, new energy vehicles and green hydrogen sectors. The value agreed at COP26, therefore, accounts for less than 10% of the total needed.<sup>74</sup> The question, then, is how can South Africa capitalise on these initial collaborative steps to leverage the additional capital.

Post-COP26, the Presidential Climate Commission convened a series of stakeholder engagements (dialogues/debates/colloquia) covering various energy transition topics, including electricity system reliability and sustainability, energy transition finance, electricity industry structure, jobs and skills for the just transition, the pace of coal closure, and South Africa's commitment to climate change and its impacts on oil and gas.

Concrete actions have been undertaken in investments in more efficient coal technologies of high-efficiency-low-emissions technology, including power plants with carbon capture, use and storage to comply with climate and environmental requirements. These coal technologies include underground gasification, integrated gasification combined cycle, carbon capture use, and supercritical and ultra-supercritical power plants.

COP27 was expected to turn the Glasgow outcome into action in key areas such as finance, transparency in reporting, and market and non-market approaches to keep the 1.5°C target in place and adapt to the impacts of climate change. Paris Agreement-specified reduction to safe limits of emissions that are the core risk factor for climate change is crucial for South Africa and the groups and communities at the frontline of vulnerability.

Given the historical and unique context of South Africa, the transition should address socio-economic justice, fairness and equity (poverty eradication, income disparities, increase in decent jobs) to ensure 'no-one is left behind'. The shared consensus is to focus on a 'broader' concept of just transition rather than a 'narrower' idea of just energy transition; implementation of nationally determined contributions as a commitment to tackling climate change, scaling- and speeding up of investments in climate adaptation solutions that protect people and ecosystems to build resilience for crises, and action to address the triple planetary crises of climate change, nature/biodiversity loss, and pollution and waste. These exacerbate South Africa's severe risks in water, energy, loss of coastal ecosystems and waste management.

72 See Climate transparency report: Comparing G20 climate action towards net zero, 2021, available at [www.climate-transparency.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/CT2021-Highlights-Report.pdf](http://www.climate-transparency.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/CT2021-Highlights-Report.pdf); Carbon dioxide emissions in 2010 and 2020, by select country, available at [www.statista.com/statistics/270499/co2-emissions-in-selected-countries/](http://www.statista.com/statistics/270499/co2-emissions-in-selected-countries/); 'The carbon brief profile: South Africa, available at [www.carbonbrief.org/the-carbon-brief-profile-south-africa/#:~:text=South%20Africa%20is%20the%20world's,a%20heavy%20reliance%20on%20coal](http://www.carbonbrief.org/the-carbon-brief-profile-south-africa/#:~:text=South%20Africa%20is%20the%20world's,a%20heavy%20reliance%20on%20coal).

73 Partners are the United Kingdom, the United States of America, France, Germany and the European Union.

74 SA Government (2022). South Africa's Just Energy Transition Investment Plan JET IP for the initial period 2023-2027, table 2, page 8.



Photo credit: David Lagerlöf

The government has developed the White Paper on Conservation and Sustainable Use of South Africa's Biodiversity vital for initiating concrete actions. In the just transition context, which goes beyond the just energy transition, the country is amplifying social equity (equitable access and benefit-sharing) in the 'sustainable use of wild resources'. Attainment of the White Paper's outcomes will contribute strongly to the achievement of a broad range of SDGs and goals encapsulated in the NDP, African Agenda 2063, and signed and ratified key multilateral environmental agreements.

Again, it is paramount that no-one is left behind and, to this end, that a human-rights-based and gender-sensitive approach is adopted, as 'the risk of harm is particularly high for sectors of the population that are already marginalised or in vulnerable situations or that, owing

to discrimination and pre-existing inequalities, have limited access to decision-making or resources, such as women, children, persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples and persons living in rural areas'.<sup>75, 76</sup> 'Human rights obligations, standards and principles have the potential to inform and strengthen international, regional and national policymaking in the area of climate change, promoting policy coherence, legitimacy and sustainable outcomes'.<sup>77</sup> States have a human-rights obligation to prevent the foreseeable adverse effects of climate change and ensure that those who could be affected, particularly those in vulnerable situations, have effective remedies and means of adaptation to enjoy lives of human dignity. If the transition to an environmentally sustainable economy is not just, the economic changes that it entails may instead result in increased social inequality and lead to instances such as civil unrest.<sup>78</sup>

75 Statement on human rights and climate change by the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the Committee on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families, the Committee on the Rights of the Child and the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, HRI/2019/1, 14 May 2020 para 7.

76 The UN supports, through 'Voices of youth in climate action', youth engagement in policy dialogue and co-creating solutions to climate crisis.

77 Human Rights Council resolution 41/21, 14th preambular paragraph.

78 ILO, Frequently asked questions on just transition, available at [www.ilo.org/global/topics/green-jobs/WCMS\\_824102/lang-en/index.htm](http://www.ilo.org/global/topics/green-jobs/WCMS_824102/lang-en/index.htm).

# Acronyms

<b>AML/CFT</b>	Anti-money-laundering and combatting of financing of terrorism
<b>ANC</b>	African National Congress
<b>BMA</b>	Border management authority
<b>CCA</b>	Common country analysis
<b>CEDAW</b>	Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women
<b>CESCR</b>	Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
<b>COGTA</b>	Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs
<b>COP</b>	Conference of the Parties
<b>CSOs</b>	Civil society organisations
<b>CPI</b>	Consumer price index
<b>DBE</b>	Department of Basic Education
<b>DSD</b>	Department of Social Development
<b>EU</b>	European Union
<b>IOM</b>	International Organisation for Migration
<b>FATF</b>	Financial Action Taskforce
<b>FDI</b>	Foreign direct investment
<b>GBV</b>	Gender-based violence
<b>GCM</b>	Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration
<b>GDP</b>	Gross domestic product
<b>HIV/Aids</b>	Human immunodeficiency virus infection and acquired immune deficiency syndrome
<b>ICESCR</b>	International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

<b>ILO</b>	International Labour Organisation
<b>JET-IP</b>	Just Energy Transition Investment Plan
<b>LGBTQI</b>	Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and intersex
<b>MPC</b>	Monetary Policy Committee
<b>NDP</b>	National Development Plan
<b>OHCHR</b>	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
<b>SAHRC</b>	South African Human Rights Commission
<b>SANAC</b>	South African National Aids Council
<b>SAPS</b>	South African Police Service
<b>SARB</b>	South African Reserve Bank
<b>SDGs</b>	Sustainable Development Goals
<b>SRD</b>	Social relief of distress
<b>TB</b>	Tuberculosis
<b>UN</b>	United Nations
<b>UNCT</b>	United Nations Country Team
<b>UNEP</b>	United Nations Environment Programme
<b>UNFPA</b>	United Nations Population Fund
<b>UNHCR</b>	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
<b>UNICEF</b>	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
<b>UNODC</b>	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
<b>UNSDCF</b>	United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework



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**UNITED NATIONS**  
SOUTH AFRICA



Metro Park Building, 351 Francis Baard Street, Pretoria, South Africa

PO Box 12677, Tramshed, Pretoria, 0126, South Africa

Telephone: +27 12 354 8507



@UNinSouthAfrica



@UNinSouthAfrica



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