



UNITED NATIONS  
SOUTH AFRICA



# COMMON COUNTRY ANALYSIS

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## FOREWORD FOR CCA 2019-2020

The Common Country Assessment (CCA) is a key element of the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) process. As part of this process, it provides independent analysis of the South African context, and of the opportunities and challenges the country faces in its efforts towards meeting the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the 2030 Development Agenda. It delves into the key issues of sustainable development, human rights, gender equality, and peace and security. It draws on the work and knowledge of the various UN agencies operating in South Africa, for a better-informed UNSDCF process.

The CCA 2019-2020 is unique for at least two reasons. The first reason is that it is the first CCA of South Africa prepared after the UN reform. The latter has been undertaken aiming for a UN Development System that is more cohesive, accountable and effective. That has implied a greater consultative process and coordination during the CCA preparation. The second reason is that, in covering long-term trends until after the COVID-19 lockdown, it tells a story of two halves.

The first half is a story of cautious optimism. The optimism comes from the fact that it reports progress in key development indicators, linked to several SDGs. Under SDG 2 (Zero Hunger), the proportion of South Africans with inadequate access to food declined from 23.6% to 20.2% between 2010 and 2018; under SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-Being), maternal mortality decreased from 276 per 100 000 live births in 2007 to 119 per 100 000 live births in 2017; under SDG 4 (Quality Education), South Africa has achieved near-universal access to primary education, and the number of out-of-school children between seven and 18 years old fell by a third between 2002 and 2014; under SDG 5 (Gender Equality), gender parity has been achieved both in primary and secondary education; under SDG 6 (Clean Water and Sanitation), the proportion of the population using managed sanitation services increased from 67% to 70% between 2015 and 2017; and under SDG 7 (Affordable and Clean Energy), access to electricity increased from 93% to 95% between 2014 and 2017.

Optimism, however, should be wrapped in caution because progress has been slow, uneven and punctuated by serious setbacks. Poverty remains stubbornly high, with 55% of South Africans living below the upper band of the poverty line. Some of the facets of poverty are hunger and malnutrition, especially among children. Stunting in children under 5 increased from 24% in 2008 to 27% in 2016. A major cause of poverty is unemployment, which has been rising from already extremely high levels: it reached the rate of over 30% at the end of the first quarter of 2020. And multidimensional inequality continues to stand as perhaps the most intractable issue in South Africa, with 70% of the country's resources held by just 20% of the population; women continue earning less and having less access to resources than men. Economic growth, which could help generate jobs and resources for investment in key social sectors such as health, education, and water and sanitation, has been exceedingly slow for several years. Moreover, this lack of dynamism makes it harder to support a fast transition towards a greener economy.

It is not hard to guess that the second half of the story is COVID-19 related. The rapid spread of the virus around the world and in South Africa from early 2020 onwards has had a devastating impact on the economy, and on the health, security and livelihoods of the people of South Africa. This CCA documents that real GDP growth is projected to decline by between 5,8% and 6,4% in 2020, as a result of the lockdown, but more recent projections indicate even deeper decline, of above 8%. This decline further compromises South Africa's ability to provide the basic social services that are so much needed for the achievement of the SDGs. But beyond the economy, the CCA shows that the impacts have been the strongest on the most vulnerable – that is, on migrants (many of which have lost their incomes); on persons with disability; on people living in informal settlements; and on women subject to gender-based violence. The latter registered a 37% increase in the first week of the lockdown alone, when compared with the weekly average reported in the year 2019. These vulnerabilities, which the COVID-19 has brought to the open, shows us that the two halves of the story in this CCA are not independent of each other. Had South Africa made more rapid progress in addressing the social and economic needs of the poorest and most disadvantaged, and thus towards the achievement of key SDGs, the impacts of COVID-19 would have been less severe and the conditions for post-COVID recovery would be now more favourable.

The lesson we take from this crisis, and that the UN System is advocating for adoption, is that we need to build back better. This means not just doing more of the good things we do or can do but doing them differently, including: tackling 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.

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## INTRODUCTION

The United Nations (UN) reform is an initiative to reposition the United Nations Development System. The aim is to build a UN that is more cohesive, accountable, integrated and stronger – and that serves as a more effective partner to countries in their pursuit of Agenda 2030. A more integrated UN system is hoped to contribute better to the needs of the national capacities. As part of the UN reforms, the new United Nations Sustainable Development Corporation Framework (UNSDCF) has been created to contribute towards this purpose. The UNSDCF is a five-year, results-based planning and monitoring tool for the UN's contribution to the development solutions of a country and is based on the UN principle of 'Delivering as One'.

The Common Country Analysis (CCA) is one of the mandated steps in the development of the UNSDCF. It analyses progress made with regards to the SDGs and Agenda 2030. It also assesses the key developmental challenges facing a country, as well as the potential role that the United Nations can play in supporting governments to achieve their national development goals. This CCA uses the new 2019 UNSDCF guidelines published by the United Nations Sustainable Development Group (UNSDG). The new guidelines call for a more substantive review of the country's situation and as such, the scope of the CCA has been expanded. It unpacks the country's progress, by looking into issues relating to inequalities, leaving no one behind, sustainability, environmental risk, resilience and accountability. The results of the CCA will play a crucial role in the implementation the new corporation framework.



The 2019-2020 United Nations Common Country Analysis of South Africa examines several components, namely: the progress and localisation of the SDGs; regional and cross-border perspectives; identification of gaps and challenges including, the impacts of COVID-19 on the development of the country and the SDGs; the financing landscape; risks and identification of areas where the UN could play a fundamental role. It draws on several data sources, approaches and reports to inform these components and to triangulate the findings.

**Specifically, this CCA covers the following areas:**

- CCA objectives, methods and processes
- Progress made towards the SDGs and the localisation of Agenda 2030
- Analysis of the South African situation, and the identification of gaps, challenges and opportunities moving towards Agenda 2030
- South Africa’s commitments to international norms and standards
- Financing landscapes and opportunities
- Cross-boundary, regional and sub-regional context
- Social compacting and partnerships
- Risks to achieving SDGs/Agenda 2030

**Common Country Analysis Methodology**

The main objectives of the CCA are to:

- Undertake a country specific multidimensional analysis of the national development context and highlight trends in socioeconomic progress
- Identify critical gaps and provide an understanding of key developmental challenges in relation to the National Development Plan, the Sustainable Development Goals, Agenda 2063 and agreed international standards
- Identify strategic areas and priorities of focus within the development plan for Government and potential partners doing related work
- Identify the United Nations’ comparative advantage in overcoming development challenges and gaps

**Methodology**

South Africa has produced research and indicators that assess the extent of development and service delivery progress. Statistics South Africa, the Department of Monitoring and Evaluation and the National Planning Commission are key institutions.

These institutions have data repositories that measure implementation and assess outcomes. Government departments such as Treasury, Health, Education, Water etc., have reports and data that are usable to assess South Africa’s development outcomes. These were important sources for the 2019-2020 CCA.

South Africa has mature data-sets, which permits the analysis of long-term trends and changes. For that purpose, up-to-date data and information on the status of various socioeconomic indicators aligned to the SDG were extracted. Statistics South Africa’s Sustainable Development Goals Country Report (2019) was an important source of information. Key indicators were sourced from this report and other reports as well.

Therefore, this CCA gives a high-level view of the trends in development. It focuses on key indicators associated with the SDGs to show long-term progress. The importance of the data is that it makes it possible to analyse the effects of development on the most vulnerable groups over time. This allows a nuanced view of long-term difficulties and challenges that, in some cases, are progressively getting worse.

Additionally, the Human Rights-based approach to ‘leave no one behind’, has been used to analyse the different facets of development throughout the report. The implication of this is that there are no dedicated sections for each of its cross-cutting elements. Instead, the latter are embedded in various sections of the report. Based on this analysis, the report reveals key issues, such as that children and youth with disabilities are the most vulnerable and emerge as the group whose human rights have not been fully achieved.

The initial stage of the CCA process involved presentation of the proposed methodology and tools to various UNCT structures to ensure that key parameters and expectations were addressed. Specific meetings were held with UNDSCEF results and reference groups to ensure that all available published sources of data relevant to the exercise were adequately provided and used for analysis.

A comprehensive list of the cited sources is provided at the end of this document. It includes journal articles and specific thematic assessments conducted by universities and technical bodies. While greater emphasis is placed on economic data and national level aggregates, sub-national data are also on priority themes are also included.



## COUNTRY CONTEXT

South Africa is the most diversified and financially integrated economy in Africa. It has good infrastructure and is the second most-favoured investment destination on the continent after Egypt. It is classified as an upper middle-income country with a GNI per capita (PPP) of USD12,600 in 2019. The youth aged 15-34 years comprise 37.8% of the population, while 29% are below 15 years. Approximately 51.1% of South Africa's population of 59.6 million are female <sup>1</sup>.

After centuries of Apartheid policy and subsequent transition to democracy in 1994, South Africa's democratic dispensation is guaranteed by the 1996 Constitution, which enshrines the rights of all people in the country and affirms the democratic values of human dignity, equality and freedom. The country has undergone transformational change under the governing party – the African National Congress (ANC), which proffered a chain of leadership: Nelson Mandela, Thabo Mbeki, Jacob Zuma and currently, President Cyril Ramaphosa. The World Bank describes South Africa's political transition as one of the most remarkable political feats of the past century. The ANC has been driving the policy agenda since 1994 <sup>2</sup>.

The ANC holds a parliamentary majority under South Africa's proportional representation system. The ruling party leads the Government in a tripartite alliance with the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) and the South African Communist Party (SACP). The political parties with the second and third largest representation in the National Assembly are the Democratic Alliance (DA) and the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF).

In August 2016, the country held the most competitive Local Government election since 1994 in which the ANC lost majority support in four of the eight metropolitan cities. Political parties negotiated coalition deals that saw the ANC unseated in the cities of Johannesburg, Tshwane and Nelson Mandela Bay. These developments marked South Africa's first experience of Coalition Government at such a large scale. The Coalition Governments formed after the 2016 Local Government elections have proven to be difficult to manage for the respective cities. The volatility of these coalitions has often affected the efficient functioning of the jurisdictions where they exist, compromising the ability of the affected local governments to optimally deliver services to local communities.

The most recent general elections (national and provincial) were held in May 2019 <sup>3</sup>. The ANC still obtained the majority of seats in Parliament, but its votes decreased from 62.1% in 2014 to 57.5% of the vote. This was the first time that the figure had fallen below the symbolically important threshold of 60%. The DA received 20.8% of the vote and the EFF 10.8% of the vote.

While the Government of South Africa under the ANC has promoted commendable social developmental changes, the party has been accused of embracing policies that are not far-reaching enough to address high unemployment, poor service delivery and inequalities between the rich and the poor. Specifically, under the former Presidency of H.E. Jacob Zuma, the ANC has been embroiled in allegations of corruption and 'State Capture' and failing State-owned Enterprises (SoEs), thus eroding its popularity and credibility with the people of South Africa and global investors. The Government recognises the negative impact of siphoned public funds on development, especially on the attainment of SDGs (1) poverty, (10) inequalities and (16) Governance but also on human development such as SDGs (3), Health (4) Education and (5) Gender Equality. The current Government, under H.E President Cyril Ramaphosa, has stepped up efforts in fighting corruption and has established a Judicial Commission of Inquiry to investigate incidents of state capture over the last 10 years, as well as other commissions to investigate the effectiveness of SoEs in order to improve service delivery.

Since 2008, South Africa has experienced ad-hoc incidents of xenophobic crimes. This resulted in loss of lives, and the looting and destruction of businesses belonging to African foreign nationals. During the most recent xenophobic attack in September 2019, South African businesses in Nigeria and Zimbabwe were attacked and destroyed in retaliation. The xenophobic incidents undermine South Africa's standing as a continental and global leader, as upcoming chair of the African Union in 2020 and non-permanent member of the United Nations Security Council, respectively. These incidents further erode the efforts by the President to attract and promote investments, create employment and promote social cohesion and regional peace (SDGs 16) as well as partnerships (SDGs 17).

<sup>1</sup> Mid-year population estimates, 2020 (Statistics South Africa).

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/southafrica/overview>

<sup>3</sup> Ibid

**Some of the issues raised during South Africa's 2017 Human Rights Council Universal Periodic Review included:**

- The ratification of outstanding treaties
- Establishment of a structure to address treaty reporting and follow-up
- Racism, xenophobia, hate crimes and hate speech
- Excessive use of force by security forces
- Human trafficking
- Protection of economic and social rights (focusing in particular on health and education)
- Gender-based violence and discrimination
- Child marriage

South Africa has a gender inequality index of 0.462, ranking 90 out of 148 countries in the world. Gender inequalities and Gender-Based Violence (GBV) continue to be major challenges despite wide-ranging intervention programmes anchored in a progressive constitution. On the ground, discriminatory practices, social norms and persistent stereotypes stifle equal access to opportunities, resources and power for women and girls. The unacceptably high levels of gender-based violence and femicide has prompted the President to declare an 'Emergency Action Plan' with a fund of R1 billion to fight Gender-Based violence and femicide.

Indicators of gender inequality show that poverty levels are still high among women, earnings of women are still lower compared to men's and comparable health indicators such as HIV prevalence also show a higher prevalence among women and girls compared to men.

Since the repeal of Apartheid in 1994, the Government has made commendable improvements to increase access to health care and education, resulting in a decrease in infant and maternal mortality, more black graduates from secondary and higher education and a more transformed parliament in terms of both race and gender. South Africa has significantly reduced the number of people living on less than US USD1,9 per day from 25,4% in 2007 to 18,8% in 2015. A big contributor to poverty reduction is the Government's extensive social protection programme, which covered 30.3% of the population by 2018. The Social Protection programme, while helpful in cushioning the poor against extreme poverty, raises concerns of dependency due to its extensive non-conditional nature.

The percentage of people reporting hunger dropped from 29,9% in 2002 to 15% in 2015. Maternal mortality decreased from 219 per 100 000 live births in 2010

to 118 per 100 000 live births in 2015 while infant mortality decreased from 33.4 per 1 000 live births to 22,3 over the same period.

The proportion of people using improved drinking water sources improved from 7,6% in 1996 to 88,4% in 2017, access to improved sanitation facilities increased from 49,3% in 1996 to 82% in 2017, and access to electricity was at 89,6% in 2017.

Notwithstanding some gains, South Africa continues to grapple with the triple challenges of poverty, inequality and unemployment. This can be seen through numerous service delivery protests countrywide. The South Africa Multidimensional Poverty Index (SAMPI 2016) shows that the root causes of poverty are attributed to unemployment (40%), limited education (14%) and poor access to water and sanitation (7%). By September 2019, the unemployment rate was 29,1%, with women unemployment at 30,9% and men at 27,7%. For youth (15-34 years), who constitute 35.1% of the population, unemployment rate was at 38%. With respect to the UN definition of youth (15-24 years), the national unemployment stands at 58,2% for the narrow definition of unemployment and at 70% for the expanded definition of unemployment.

South Africa is one of the most unequal countries in the world with a Gini-coefficient of 0.68, exhibiting the vestiges of Apartheid. The Government has managed to reduce inequality from 0,72 in 2006 to 0,68, at present, but inequality remains a challenge. According to the Living Conditions Survey (LCS 2014-15), 25,2% of the population are food poor (R441 per capita per month), 40% are below the lower-bound poverty line (R647 per capita per month) and 55,5% below the upper bound poverty line (R992 per capita per month). Deep poverty is widespread with the poorest 20% of the population consuming only around 2,7% of the country's total income (2011), while the richest 10% receive more than half of the national income (57%). The poverty gap with the upper bound poverty line, which means the space between the poor and the poverty line, stands at 27,7%. According to the UN Study on the Socio-economic Impact (SEI) of COVID-19 on South Africa, led by UNDP, when the level of poverty for both those under the Lower Bound Poverty Level (LBPL) and the Upper Bound Poverty Level (UPBL) increases, inequalities also increase, particularly affecting women, blacks, those with no education or primary education level only and those living in traditional areas and townships.



Since the democratic dispensation in 1994, the Government and people of South Africa have embarked on a quest to reduce poverty and improve service delivery for all South Africans, especially the previously marginalised majority. This quest is manifested in the various development plans that charted the priorities of the different administrations.

- The Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) gazetted in November 1994, is a child-oriented post-Apartheid programme that sought to reduce inequalities and usher social protection with the aim of creating a strong, dynamic and balanced economy
- The Growth, Employment and Redistribution strategy (GEAR 2000-2005) was a macroeconomic policy framework aimed at stimulating the economy through lowering inflation, maintaining exchange rate stability, decreasing barriers to trade and liberalising capital flows
- The Accelerated and Shared Growth Initiative for South Africa (ASGISA 2005-2010) aimed at improving on the first two plans by recognising that deep-rooted poverty is exacerbated by lack of jobs. In response, ASGISA implemented targets geared towards reducing unemployment and poverty
- The New Growth Path (NGP 2010-2012) placed an emphasis on the interconnectivity between the tripartite challenges of poverty, unemployment and inequalities
- The National Development Plan (NDP 2013-2030) and its Medium-Term Strategic Framework (MTSF 2014–2019), an implementation modality, is the policy blueprint for eliminating poverty and reducing unemployment and inequality in South Africa

Following the 2019 General Elections, the Government revised its MTSF and outlined priorities for the sixth administration for the period 2020-2024. The new MTSF integrates emerging issues like climate change and sustainability, youth unemployment, gender equity, gender-based violence, global and regional needs for trade and investments, migration, peace and stability.

While the NDP aspired to increase and sustain economic growth to at least 6% and reduce the unemployment rate to 14% by 2020, the economy averaged a 2% growth over the past decade and unemployment reached 29% by the end of 2019. Poor economic performance and weak governance, including public financial mismanagement, have contributed to junk status downgrades of the credit sovereign ratings of the country. The economic downturn has also been attributed to the decline in agricultural production, a consequence of the 2017 drought in the Western Cape and storms in the Mpumalanga province. The country

has experienced a fluctuation between drought and floods, due to climate change variabilities. Strategies have been adopted across all spheres of government to mitigate and adapt to the impact of climate change. However, the rising wave of climate change impacts is complicating Governments' efforts to respond to socio-economic challenges like poverty, inequality and unemployment. The performance of other key sectors such as manufacturing and transport also deteriorated while mining, construction and finance exhibited modest growth. With the advent of COVID-19, the Government responded by instituting lockdown measures under Level 5 and 4, aiming to restrict mobility in order to curb the spread of the virus. However, both supply and demand were disrupted and many industries such as construction, manufacturing, mining, transport and agriculture suffered<sup>4</sup>.

In 2017, the value of exports was R1.19 trillion, a 7.9% increase over 2016 while imports were recorded at R1.10 trillion. The country thus exhibiting a modest external trade surplus. Exports to the BRICS countries continue to increase and in 2017 constituted R181.1 billion, surpassing trade levels with Africa and all other regions for five consecutive years. The Government continues to pay special attention to its trade with China and India, which are key export destinations, while the scope and depth of engagement with Russia and Brazil needs to be better explored. At the same time, imports from the BRIC were significantly higher, reaching R281.1 billion. South Africa recorded a trade deficit with each member of the group, except for India, a country with which it had a surplus. It can be argued that South Africa's exports are relatively import intensive, thus partially explaining the magnitude of imports.

Exports to countries in the Common Monetary Area (Botswana, Lesotho, Namibia and Eswatini-BLNE) amounted to R133.86 billion in 2017, with Botswana and Namibia as the key export destinations. At the same time, imports from BLNS recorded just R37.25 billion, as South Africa enjoys a trade surplus with the sub-region.

The economy registered an improvement in the trade account of the balance of payments, from a surplus of 0.5% to 0.8% of GDP between 2018 and 2019. The current account, in turn, saw a deficit reduction from 3.5% to 3.0% of GDP over the same period. The financial account, however, registered a decline, from 3.1% of GDP in 2018 to 2.8% in 2019, and is expected to turn negative in the year 2020 due to a sharp reversal of capital flows in the wake of the COVID-19 shock.

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<sup>4</sup> Business impact survey of the COVID-19 pandemic in South Africa, 2020, Statistics South Africa

South Africa hosted the 10<sup>th</sup> BRICS summit in July 2018, when issues such as trading in goods and services, capacity building and knowledge exchange were discussed. South Africa, with its youthful population and emerging businesses, can potentially benefit from collaboration with other BRICS. In view of the theme of the summit, which was on promoting 'Collaboration for inclusive growth and shared prosperity in the 4<sup>th</sup> Industrial Revolution', South Africa first needs to integrate most of its people, especially the youth, into its development process. Building capacity and competency and ensuring that the majority of its people are participating effectively in the generation and development process, will foster more inclusivity. The UN agencies in South Africa can work together to examine the appropriate entry points, both in terms of processes and substance, in the areas of human and institutional capacity strengthening, and thereby support the Government in this development effort.

South Africa has been running an unsteady and increasing fiscal deficit for the past decade. The deficit saw an increase from 4,1% in 2018 to 6,3% of GDP in 2019. Wages and salaries constitute more than a third of the national budget and warrants serious examination. Some of the revenue measures taken to bridge the deficit include an increase in the VAT rate from 14% to 15%, the first since 1993. However, the fiscal policy is overall progressive and works to reduce inequality.

The objective of the monetary policy in South Africa is to maintain the financial markets stability and aim for low inflation in order to promote sustainable economic growth and development. South Africa's foreign debt increased from 46,8% to 50,4% of GDP between 2018 and 2019. Confronted with a modest trade balance and a negative current account deficit, the exchange rate was vulnerable to external shocks and witnessed a sharp depreciation as COVID-19 hit the world economy. That is, the Rand depreciated from R14,1 vis-à-vis the US Dollar on 31 December 2019 to R17,3 by end of June 2020.

Despite the exchange rate depreciation, inflation, which was already on a downward trajectory, is showing further decline in the year 2020.

## **SOCIAL DEVELOPMENTS AND PROGRESS**

South Africa is committed to the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (Agenda 2030) and the

Africa Union Agenda 2063. Through its quest to invest in marginalised communities and improve access to quality education, healthcare and citizen participation, the Government commits to the principles to 'Leave No One Behind'. South Africa is one of the first countries to develop a SDGs Baseline Report and in 2019 developed its Voluntary National Report, which serves as an action plan to foster the implementation of the SDGs and Agenda 2063.

### **Some of the major demographic statistics for South Africa show the following:**

- South Africa's population is unevenly distributed across its nine provinces. Gauteng province, for instance, is the smallest province in South Africa, accounting for only 1,5% of the country's total territory, but is home to approximately a quarter of the population
- At the national level, there are more females, (51%) compared to 48,9% males
- 46,6% of Blacks are poor, compared to 32,3% of coloured, 0,8% of Whites and 4,6% of Indians or Asian. Both gender and age affect poverty in South Africa, with females poorer in every age group.
- The pattern of distribution is also reflected by the gender of the head of family
- The provinces with the largest numbers of poor are KwaZulu-Natal at 20,6%, Gauteng 19%, Eastern Cape 14.2% and Limpopo 13,1%

Child poverty affects two out of every three children, despite representing one third of the country's total population. Women carry the burden of caregiving, with almost 40% of children living with only their mothers. Approximately 24% of children live with neither biological parent. Poverty also intersects with other causes of vulnerabilities, like the high rates of HIV/AIDS and TB.

Universal Health Coverage (UHC), the overarching target for Health in SDG 3, is a top priority of the Government. The President championed the cause of UHC by convening the Presidential Health Summit in October 2018. This compact laid out key actions to ensure effective implementation of the National Health Insurance (NHI). The key challenge in this area is the lack of monitoring frameworks, which makes it difficult to measure progress in a methodical and standardised manner.



The gap in implementation of laws, policies and programmes has been identified as one of the reasons for the perpetuation of inequalities, vulnerability, violence and deprivation. Structural, knowledge and capacity gaps at various levels of government, and the inequitable allocation and distribution of public finances have contributed to the poor implementation of laws, policies and programmes. One of the UN's responses is an innovative initiative to use technology to improve communication between citizens and Government and provide a platform for citizen-generated data regarding service delivery issues.

South African life expectancy has increased from 58.5 years for males and 63.6 years for females in 2012 to 61.2 years and 66.7 years in 2017, respectively. The improvement in life expectancy is credited to the government-led response to HIV/AIDS in the country, which has included campaigns to educate people and make treatments such as antiretroviral therapy (ART) available. South Africa has the largest burden of HIV globally, yet it also has the largest national response, mostly funded from domestic resources. TB is the leading cause of death among people living with HIV, especially for men. AIDS-related deaths are the biggest cause of death for women of child-bearing age. Adolescent girls and young women (15-24 years) are at high risk of new infections. The country has made remarkable progress in scaling up access to lifesaving HIV treatment and in preventing mother-to-child transmission.

Parliament passed the Resolution for land expropriation without compensation in 2019. To support the Government to make informed decisions on land expropriation and to avoid the arbitrary introduction of land ceilings and land seizures, the UN launched the modelling research on the optimum agricultural land sizes for different commodities in each agro-climatic region of South Africa.

On partnerships, BRICS membership has encouraged South Africa to double its African diplomacy efforts to justify its 'leadership' role. South Africa's participation in BRICS reveals both its ambition to be taken seriously as a mid-sized power and its goal of promoting a world order through South-South cooperation.

The AfCFTA and SADC protocols are expected to expand South Africa's reach and influence on the continent. Three themes are emerging from South Africa's foreign policy stance. These include; i) countering the 'unilateral' projection of US power in the world and the legacy of 'undue' Western influence in international relations;

ii) playing a leading role in stabilising and developing Africa; and iii) fostering South-South cooperation through economic and political partnerships. South Africa is planning to use its state enterprises to reinforce links with Asia and Africa.

## COUNTRY PROGRESS TOWARDS THE 2030 AGENDA



### OVERVIEW OF THE STATUS AND PROGRESS OF THE SDGS

Children, women and youth are the face of poverty in South Africa: the country is experiencing a reversal in the once positive trends towards poverty reduction. An estimated 30.6 million (55.5%<sup>5</sup>) South Africans live below the Upper Bound poverty line. Of these, 51% are children aged between 0-17 years, 51% live in poverty; among youth (between 18-24 years), constitute 43.6% and women 57.2%. High levels of unemployment (the odds of being below the poverty line are almost 5.6 times higher for the unemployed and discouraged workers) contribute more than any other factor (education or living standards) to the poverty index (40% in 2011). Female-headed households, in rural areas are poorer and 2.7 times more likely than male-headed households to be at risk of poverty<sup>6</sup>.

The Government has, however, made commendable progress in the area of social protection. Through the provision of social grants and free basic services, the Government has been successful in preventing an estimated 17,5<sup>7</sup> million poor adults and children from falling deeper into poverty. Around 30.3% of the population is covered by the social protection system (which is up by 1% from 2016). Despite the considerable strides that the Government has taken in improving poverty related outcomes in the country, access to services (particularly improved water facilities) has declined, in spite of the increase in Government expenditure on essential services. Poor communities in South Africa are more likely to be affected by the increasing water scarcity and the increased weather unpredictability caused by climate change.

The most vulnerable to poverty, according to Statistics South Africa, are children under 17, women, non-white, and people living in rural areas and water-scarce regions. In geographical terms the provinces most vulnerable to poverty are the Eastern Cape, Limpopo and KwaZulu-Natal.

<sup>5</sup> South Africa (Republic of), Statistics South Africa, 2017, Poverty Trends in South Africa: An examination of absolute poverty between 2006 and 2015

<sup>6</sup> (Updated ref Country report Stats SA)

<sup>7</sup> South Africa, SDGs Country report, 2019



The 2018 General Household Survey (GHS) established that the proportion of South Africans with inadequate or severely inadequate access to food decreased from **23.6% in 2010** to **20.2% in 2018**. However,

high levels of malnutrition in children under the age of five years (16%) and increasing levels of obesity observed in adolescent girls are cause for concern. The prevalence of stunting in children under five increased from 23.9% in 2008 to 27% in 2016. This is a huge concern given that the child support grant<sup>8</sup> has been set far below the food poverty line and that an estimated 18% of eligible children do not benefit from the grant, due to a lack of documentation. Maintenance of food prices and agricultural productivity are critical in reducing hunger. Climate-smart agriculture and maintenance of fertile soil conditions will improve agricultural productivity.



Universal Health Coverage (UHC) is the overarching target (3.8) of goal 3 which is also a target of the NDP-2030. As per global estimates, nearly 67% of the population have access to key health services, one of the highest in the African region,

and the financial protection against healthcare costs is also high. South Africa has made considerable progress in improving the maternal mortality rate, which decreased from **276 per 100 000** live births in 2007 to **119 per 100 000** live births in 2017; (source: Maternal Mortality Estimates 2017 (MMIEG) UN-IGME 2018). Likewise, there has been a fall in the under-5 mortality rate (from 59 to 34 per 1 000 live births) and the infant mortality rate (from 46 to 28 per 1 000 live births) between 1990 to 2018. These results are largely due to the increase in the proportion of births being attended by skilled health personnel and high antenatal care coverage (92.9%). South Africa has halted the HIV epidemic although the prevalence of HIV (20.6%) and TB (567 per 100, 000) remains high. South Africa is seeing notable increases in the harmful use of alcohol (from 7.13 litre per capita per year in 2011 to 7.27 in 2017 ). Furthermore, South Africa is estimated to have the highest prevalence of Foetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (FASD) at 111.1 per 1 000 population.



In education, access and gender parity indicators are commendable. However, the quality of outcomes is poor. South Africa has achieved near universal access to primary education with close to 99% of children aged 7-13 years enrolled in

school. High levels of repetition in Grade 1 may point to poor quality of pre-school instruction despite the Government's commitment to early childhood development (ECD). Both international and national assessments have also demonstrated that the quality of learning remains a challenge in the country and it has been ascertained that a weak learning foundation in early grade literacy and numeracy is the cause of it. This has also resulted in consistently high drop-out rates, particularly among the 15-24 'year group', which was 25.1%<sup>9 10</sup> in 2017; males had a higher drop-out rate than females. The provinces that are most affected include KwaZulu-Natal, Northern Cape and the Eastern Cape. Another reason behind high drop-out rates stems from poor resources and limited learning and recreational facilities, a situation that is especially prominent in rural areas. According to UNICEF, the United Nations' children's agency, the number of out-of-school children between the ages of 7 and 18 fell by a third between 2002 and 2014 — from nearly 820 000 children to approximately 530 000. In spite of the higher levels of access to education, it found that only around 50% of the youth have completed secondary schooling. There's a significant difference in education levels for children from the poorest households, compared to children from richer households. In the richest households, approximately 85% of children complete secondary school compared to only 32% from the poorest households.



South African women are making progress in education (gender parity has been achieved in primary and secondary education) and political representation (45% of seats in Parliament), but not in the economy. South Africa has a raft of gender-friendly laws and

legislations and the parliamentary representation of women is well on its way to achieving the 50%. However, these facts and trends have not effectively translated into positive outcomes for women, as more women and girls have reported physical and sexual violence perpetrated against them and the fact that women still carry disproportionate responsibilities related to unpaid domestic and care work.

<sup>8</sup> The UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Right

<sup>9</sup> South Africa, SDGs Country report 2016

<sup>10</sup> South Africa, SDGs Country report 2016



Some of the key bottlenecks relate to poor coordination across the national departments, lack of adequate resources and the absence of a budgeted and well-resourced cross sector plan to address gender issues. High levels of Sexual and Gender-based violence require a concerted effort between the Government and key sector stakeholders.

## 6 CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION



The national water policy forms the basis for water and sanitation management in South Africa. After the end of Apartheid, South Africa's newly elected Government inherited huge service backlogs with respect to

access to water supply and sanitation. Since 1994, the Government has gone a long way in improving access to both water and sanitation and currently 80% <sup>11</sup> of the population has access to safely managed drinking water services nationally. Despite this progress, disparities between rural and urban areas still exist, with only 66% of the population in rural municipalities versus 87% in urban municipalities having such access. The percentage of the population utilising safely managed sanitation services increased from 67% (2015) to 70% (2017). While this is commendable, many still remain without this basic service. According to Statistics South Africa (StatsSA), approximately 3.1% (1.7 million people including women and children, the elderly and people with disabilities) in South Africa have no access to sanitation or are still using the bucket system. Following a series of accidents in which children fell into the pit latrines and died, the South African Government through the Department of Basic Education did a nationwide mapping to ascertain the status of infrastructure in schools. The findings were that 4 500 schools were still utilising pit latrines (SAHRC, 2019). According to the South African Human Rights Commission, 'delays in the provision of at least basic services to schools and informal settlements all over the country, compound violations to related rights such as health, education, privacy and most significantly – dignity, on a daily basis,' a reality that these attests to the importance of ensuring that the most vulnerable receive at the very least, basic services. Data from different sources indicates that young children are disproportionately more affected by poor access to basic services than older children and adults, which has a significant impact on their survival, protection and development.

## 7 AFFORDABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY



Between 2014 and 2017, the proportion of the population with access to electricity increased from 93.1% to 95.3%. Access to electricity is generally lower in rural areas versus urban areas. As the population continues to grow,

so will the demand for cheap energy, and an economy reliant on fossil fuels is causing drastic impacts on our climate. South Africa was one of four countries that had more than a fivefold investment jump in 2018 to build renewable energy capacity. <sup>12</sup> Cost competitiveness of renewable energy sources and the rapid decrease of the coal industry around the world will continue to increase business opportunities in this industry sector.

## 8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH



Economic growth has been extremely slow since the global recession and falling commodity prices and turned deeply negative following the COVID-19 shock. The economy is highly sensitive to global shocks. On the domestic front, frequent

and prolonged strikes in the mining sector, electricity and water shortages, falling tax revenues and dwindling investor confidence in the political climate have exacerbated the problem. In this context of poor growth, the country continues to experience one of the highest unemployment rates in the world. At the end of March 2020, just at the entry point of the lockdown, the unemployment rate stood at 30.1% for the general population and at 43% among the youth (15-34 years). For the population 15-24 years, the rate was further up at 59%. The significantly high unemployment rate among the youth means that South Africa is missing out on a great opportunity to reap the benefits of the demographic dividend accorded by the youthful population. Unemployment is especially high in urban cities and metropolitan areas. Poor labour force participation is a result of the abundance of unskilled labour that is not responsive to the needs of the market, especially in the fast-growing services (financial services, banking, real estate). Race dimensions are apparent in unemployment and despite large-scale 'corrective' policies and programmes such as Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment (B-BBEE), young black-South Africans continue to be the face of unemployment in South Africa. The current minimum hourly wage of R20 does not ensure that workers and their families have an adequate standard of living, with many workers not covered by the minimum wage bill.

<sup>11</sup> South Africa, SDGs Country report 2019

<sup>12</sup> Frankfurt School-UNEP Centre (2019) 'Global Trends in renewable energy investment 2019'

In addition, many workers, including the self-employed, are working in the informal economy without labour or employment rights and with insufficient social protection. The absence of a legislative framework regulating the informal economy exposes these workers to greater risks of abuse from employers and from law enforcement authorities. Mineworkers, and specifically the migrant population, remain an exceptionally vulnerable sub-group. The lack of labour inspections in this sector have led to a high incidence of occupational deaths, injuries and related diseases. Women mineworkers are constantly subjected to discrimination and exposed to sexual violence.

## 9 INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE



Investment in infrastructure and innovation are crucial drivers of economic growth and development. In South Africa, although there has been an increase in the number of full-time researchers (up from 438,2 per 1 million inhabitants

in 2007 to 475,1 per 1 million inhabitants in 2015), the investment for research and development by the private sector has declined. The network coverage as documented by the percentage of the population covered by a mobile network by 3G, increased from 97.8% in 2015 to 99.5% and by LTE, 53% in 2015 to 85% in 2017.

## 10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES



While South Africa is categorised as an upper middle-income country and the only African country to join Brazil, India and China as a group of progressive economies, its 2015 Human Development Index value, HDI (0.66) placed it in the medium

human development category. However, when discounted for inequality the HDI falls to 0.43 revealing a 34% loss in human development. Inequality still takes on a race and gender dimension in South Africa. An estimated 70% of the country's resources are held by 20% of the population. A high Gini coefficient of 0.68 reflects the poor distribution of wealth. While women have equal access to credit, they continue to earn less and have less access to resources than men. In calculating the Gender Development Index (GDI)<sup>13</sup> UNDP uses the Gross National Income per capita (GNI) for males and females.

In South Africa, the GNI per capita (female USD8,795 and male USD15,489) contributes the largest to the index and highlights the stark difference in command over resources between the sexes, with men earning twice as much as females. The inequality is not only a factor of income, but also a factor in the access to education, health and other social services. Populations living in the previous 'homelands' are still struggling with poor infrastructure that continues to marginalise them in terms of access to health and education facilities.

## 11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES



In South Africa the percentage of urban population residing in informal dwellings has increased from 11.3% in 2014 to 12.2% in 2017. This is a result of the critical lack of affordable housing in many poor and low-

income households. The UN commission noted that challenges are particularly acute in the context of informal settlements and inner-city 'slum' buildings, as those living in informal settlements are more likely to experience inadequate housing, lack access to basic services or maintenance and face the threat of evictions among other challenges. South Africa has one of the strongest legal frameworks and policies for adequate housing. However the implementation of the right to adequate housing has been plagued by poor planning, a lack of coordination, insufficient capacity, a failure to adequately monitor the implementation of Government policies, and a lack of political will<sup>14</sup>.

## 13 CLIMATE ACTION



Southern Africa is now considered to be a climate change 'hot spot', with rising temperatures, droughts, flooding, and unpredictable weather systems are set to become the new normal. In 2017, it was estimated that 15 000 South

Africans were internally displaced, namely, people who have been forced or obliged to flee or to leave their homes or places of habitual residence, as a result of natural or human-made disasters and who have not crossed an international border. It has also been estimated that, in the same year, 0.03 out of 100 000 deaths resulted from all forms of natural disasters.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>13</sup> The Gender Development Index (GDI) introduced in 2014, measures gender inequalities in health (male vs female life expectancy at birth), education (years of schooling-male and female) and command over resources (measured by male and female estimated GNI per capita).

<sup>14</sup> United Nations Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, Consideration of Reports submitted by States Parties under Articles 16 and 17 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, Initial Reports of States Parties due in 2017: South Africa, UN Doc. E/C.12/ZAF/1 (2017), para 100

<sup>15</sup> United Nations Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, Consideration of Reports submitted by States Parties under Articles 16 and 17 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, Initial Reports of States Parties due in 2017: South Africa, UN Doc. E/C.12/ZAF/1 (2017), para 100



Although South Africa has taken strides towards combating climate change and its impacts, through the development of 13 national and local disaster risk-reduction strategies which have been adopted in the country, as well as having the most advanced research, observation and climate modelling programmes on the continent, more needs to be done as South Africa remains particularly vulnerable to the effects of climate change. The most effective way to reduce climate change-induced disaster risks is through reduction of greenhouse gas (GHG) emission. Due to heavy reliance on coal, South Africa is the world's 14<sup>th</sup> largest emitter of GHGs. The Government committed to a major transition towards renewable energy, by not building any new coal power plants after 2030<sup>16</sup>. Considering the urgency of climate-related challenges in the country and globally, this target needs to be revisited and action needs to be taken sooner than later. South Africa can become the climate champion among African countries and leapfrog in green jobs and environmental technology.

**A recent report has identified opportunities for South Africa to enhance its ambition on climate goals as the following<sup>17</sup>:**

- Halt new proposed coal-fired power plants contained in the draft Integrated Resource Plan (IRP) for electricity
- Commit to a 2040 target for the phase-out of coal in the power sector
- Develop a climate-compatible industrial development plan for the long-term decarbonisation of the industry
- Accelerate the shift of freight transport from road to rail and to low-carbon road transportation such as hydrogen and electricity-powered options
- Continue to tighten standards to reach zero-emission buildings by 2030 and enforce existing and future standards.



SDG 14 speaks of the expansion of protected areas for marine biodiversity and examines the existing policies and treaties which encourage responsible use of ocean resources. These are still insufficient to combat the adverse effects of overfishing, growing ocean acidification due to climate change and worsening coastal eutrophication. As billions of people depend on oceans for their livelihood and a food source and on the transboundary nature of oceans, increased efforts and interventions are needed to conserve and sustainably use ocean resources at all levels. Currently South African statistics read as follows:

- Life below water: **15%** marine and **38%** coastal ecosystem types that are well represented in protected areas (domesticated indicator)
- South African Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) as a percentage of the Exclusive Economic Zone is sitting at **13%**
- Proportion of research budget allocated to marine sciences increased from 0.58% (2010/11) to **0.76% (2016/17)**
- Marine sciences as a proportion of total GERD increased from 0.26% (2010/2011), to **0.35% (2016/2017)**

Although South Africa has shown an upward trend regarding some of the targets, more data is required if we are to measure the impact of these trends and to fast-track the SDG.



SDG 15 is about ensuring that all forms of life on land are preserved. We need to protect, restore and promote the sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification and halt and reverse land degradation and biodiversity loss. In South Africa, the proportion of land that is degraded over total land area is **10.71% (2014)**. While the percentage of mountain ecosystem types that are well represented in protected areas increased from **41% (2010)** to **42% (2018)**<sup>18</sup>. With regards to the management of alien plant invasions, South Africa has developed a strategy for dealing with biological invasions which is coupled with poverty alleviation and job creation strategies. A national integrated strategy has also been developed to combat trafficking of endangered species.



Governance, including public sector delivery, rule of law and human rights are well established concepts. However, well-meaning and well-designed policies and plans are hampered by poorly coordinated initiatives between sectoral duty bearers. Gaps in legislation/contradictory policies and poor inter sectoral coordination hamper progress on the path to sustainable development. As a result, citizens receive poor services and resort to service delivery strikes which have been taking place more frequently. Recommendations from the various rights committees all point to the need to strengthen

<sup>16</sup> United Nations Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, Consideration of Reports submitted by States Parties under Articles 16 and 17 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, Initial Reports of States Parties due in 2017: South Africa, UN Doc. E/C.12/ZAF/1 (2017), para 100

<sup>17</sup> United Nations Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, Consideration of Reports submitted by States Parties under Articles 16 and 17 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, Initial Reports of States Parties due in 2017: South Africa, UN Doc. E/C.12/ZAF/1 (2017), para 100

<sup>18</sup> South Africa, SDGs Country report 2019

coordination between sectors e.g. gender and the creation of the development of budgeted national plans and the financing of bodies that are in place to coordinate activities across sectors, ministries and departments that have a mandate or responsibility in a certain sector, e.g. health, education, etc. The effective implementation of laws and policies, especially at the provincial and municipal level, is hampered by the poor capacity for planning and efficient resource management.

South Africa underwent the first cycle review of the United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC) in 2012-2013. Following the review of its chapters on criminalisation and law enforcement as well as international cooperation, several challenges were identified. In terms of criminalisation and law enforcement, these include recommendations to: continue to develop guidelines to address suspected cases of illicit enrichment; consider a statutory prohibition for the obstruction of judges and magistrates and to law enforcement officials; consider the adoption of further procedures to disqualify, for a period of time, persons convicted of UNCAC offences from holding public office or holding office in a public enterprise; consider mechanisms to facilitate video testimony of witnesses in safe houses or detention facilities; and continue to explore opportunities to incorporate provisions into bilateral agreements to relocate witnesses in need of long-term protection. In terms of measures to strengthen international cooperation, recommendations were made for South Africa to continue to develop bilateral and multilateral agreements with foreign countries, to continue to explore opportunities to conclude bilateral and multilateral agreements regarding the transfer of sentenced persons, and to continue to seek ways to address, where necessary, costs associated with requests for assistance made by South Africa. South Africa will be undergoing its second cycle review of the UNCAC in 2019-2020, in which the focus will be the implementation of the chapters on preventive measures (including measures to prevent money laundering) and asset recovery.

In 2018, the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights raised concerns regarding the prevalence of corruption, the large amount of illicit financial flows in and out of the country, high levels of tax avoidance, and the high incidence of irregularities in public funding. The Committee noted how this, accumulatively, has had a serious impact on the ability of South Africa to meet its obligation to mobilise the maximum available resources for the realisation of economic, social and cultural rights.

South Africa has demonstrated its commitment to combating illicit financial flows, money laundering and the recovery of assets through its support to countries in the region. In this respect, the Asset Forfeiture Unit of the NPA, in partnership with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime under the Asset Recovery Inter-Agency Network for Southern Africa (ARINSA), has hosted foreign prosecutors in a three-week session under the Prosecutor Placement Programme, which involves lectures as well as practical work on real cases. ARINSA is a network of practitioners working on transnational crime cases which was established with the objective of facilitating international cooperation within Southern and East African countries. Although resources for law enforcement initiatives remain a challenge, media reports indicate that investigations and seizures are being carried out.



South Africa has a particularly important role to play in the African region, by facilitating Global Partnerships and South-South Cooperation. As the largest economy in the SADC region, South Africa holds and plays a significant role both economically and politically in the immediate region and indeed throughout the continent. It can do so by deploying its assets, including skills development and technology transfer. The establishment of the development-funding arm of the South African Government is commendable and is a key step in solidifying the country's role in the region.

#### LOCALISING THE SDGs

The 2030 Agenda strives for a world that is just, rights-based, equitable and inclusive. As such, there needs to be a commitment from the pivotal stakeholders to work together in order to promote sustained and inclusive economic growth, social development and environmental protection and to benefit all, including women, children, youth and future generations. Realising that there is a need for a more coherent and integrated approach to the support provided by the UN to member states, the United Nations Development Group (UNDG) developed Mainstreaming, Acceleration and Policy Support (MAPS) as a methodology to support member states in their efforts of localising the SDG agenda in their respective countries. The methodology was primarily intended to create an effective and coherent approach that countries can use to integrate the SDG agenda into their national plans and swiftly move towards implementation.





The MAPS approach provides an easy to understand and implement framework for countries adapting the SDGs to their local contexts. Since the adoption of the SDGs by member states of the UN at the General Assembly in 2015, the UN Development Group has worked with various governments around the world to localise the SDGs to their countries and the methodology used by the UN in this process has been MAPS. South Africa has been a pipeline country for a MAPS mission since 2017. Several national developments, including a change of political leadership in the country in 2018 and an election accompanied by a subsequent appointment of a new Executive. For the UN, South Africa remains a priority country for a MAPS mission, as part of the comprehensive support provided to UN Member States in the localisation of the SDG agenda. Even though a MAPS mission has not been conducted in South Africa, various efforts have been undertaken by the Government and social partners to localise the SDGs, with the support of the United Nations in South Africa. This section of the Common Country Analysis is primarily intended to assess the extent to which South Africa has been able to localise the SDG agenda. To conduct this assessment, the framework provided by the MAPS approach will be utilised.

**For the purposes of conducting the assessment on South Africa's efforts of localising the SDGs over the past four years, 2014 - 2019, these seven points will be used as an analytical framework:**

- SDG alignment to the NDP
- Institutional coordination mechanism
- Accelerators
- Public engagement
- Development financing solutions
- Data, indicators and statistics
- Risk analysis

#### **SDG ALIGNMENT TO THE NDP**

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), their related targets and indicators were developed following comprehensive global consultative processes to review progress in the implementation of the Millennium Goals. The SDGs are, therefore, a comprehensive set of objectives whose themes and aims are interlinked and call for the eradication of poverty by 2030. The SDGs are considered broader and more encompassing than those of its predecessor. The Agenda for Sustainable Development encourages countries to view national development from an equity and human rights perspective under the tag 'Leave No One Behind'. Implementation of the Agenda for Sustainable Development commenced in January 2016. An assessment conducted by UNDP and DPME showed that there was a strong convergence between the SDGs and the NDP, despite the NDP development preceding that of the SDGs. Figure 1 shows how the NDP and the SDGs have a convergence ratio of 74%, meaning 74% of the SDG targets are covered by the NDP (of these 57% of the SDGs were fully addressed while 17% were partially addressed). A qualitative analysis of the structure of NDP interventions having the highest multiplier effects on SDGs suggests that those NDP objectives with high redistributive characteristics exhibit more influences on SDG targets.



## NDP MAPPING TO SDGs

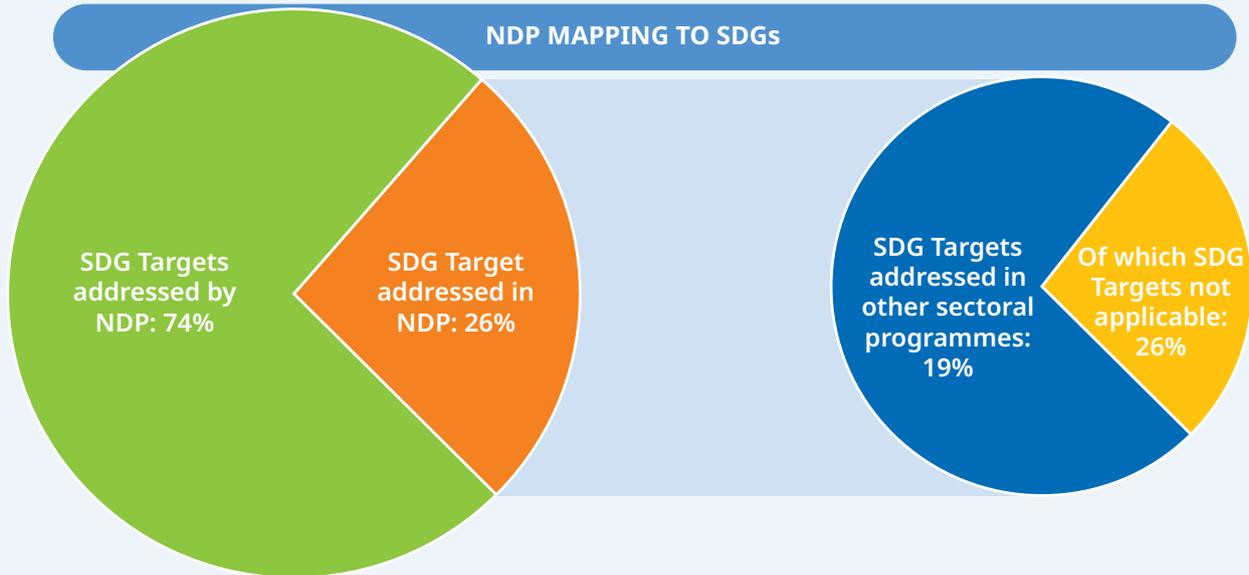


Figure 1: Convergence of SDGs and NDP

The assessment further demonstrated that out of the 26% (44 targets) that are not covered under the NDP, 32 targets were being addressed in other programmes

which are running at the sectoral level or in parallel to the NDP. The other 12 targets were found not to be applicable to the South African context.

Table 1: depicts the SDG/NDP alignment as per priority area and target.

Sustainable Development Goal	NDP Chapter and Objectives
1. No poverty	Chapter 11(2 Objectives)
2. Zero hunger	Chapters 5, 6 and 11 (4 Objectives)
3. Good health and well-being	Chapter 10 (6 Objectives)
4. Quality education	Chapter 9 (13 Objectives)
5. Gender equality	Chapter 11 and 12 (3 Objectives)
6. Clean water and sanitation	Chapter 4 and 5 (3 Objectives)
7. Affordable and clean energy	Chapter 4 and Chapter 5 (5 Objectives)
8. Decent work and economic growth	Chapter 3 (7 Objectives)
9. Industry, innovation and infrastructure	Chapter 4 (1 Objective)
10. Reduced inequalities	Chapter 3, Chapter 11, Chapter 15 (3 Objectives)
11. Sustainable cities and communities	Chapter 4, Chapter 5, Chapter 18 (8 Objectives)
12. Responsible consumption and production	Chapter 5 (2 Objectives)
13. Climate action	Chapter 5 (3 Objectives)
14. Life below water	Chapter 5 (1 Objective)
15. Life on land	Chapter 5 (1 Objective)
16. Peace, justice and strong institutions	Chapter 13 and Chapter 14 (6 Objectives)
17. Partnerships for the Goals	Chapter 7 (2 Objectives)

Table 1: SDG/NDP Alignment

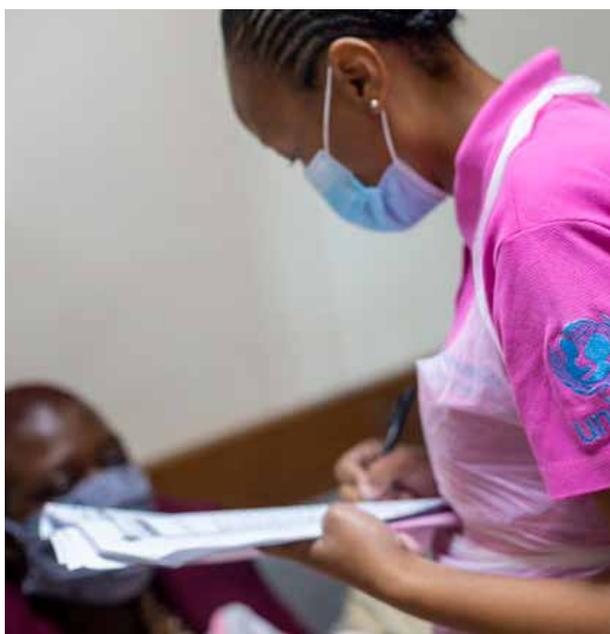


Beyond the alignment to the SDGs, the NDP also recognises South Africa's leadership responsibility and has prioritised inter-regional trade as a key instrument in promoting livelihoods, not only domestically, but also across the continent in a 'win-win' spirit. Four SDG targets are related to the NDP chapter focusing on South-South and regional cooperation, as well as adherence to various global trading regimes such as the Doha Round.

### SUB-NATIONAL AND LOCAL PLANS

The landing of the SDGs into the national plan is very evident as shown in Figure 1. One of the important elements of the localisation agenda is the mainstreaming of the SDGs into sub-national and local level plans. Although the localisation of the SDGs at sub-national level is still a work in progress, some work has been done to include the SDGs into the Provincial Growth and Development Plans (PGDPs) and the District Integrated Development Plans (IDPs). An assessment of the SDG targets done by the UN and DPME indicate that of the 169 targets, 110 of those would require action at local level i.e. by local governments.

The South African Local Government Association (SALGA) has commenced work with the municipalities to integrate the SDGs into their plans. Key instruments include the Integrated Urban Development Framework (IUDF). Examples of municipalities who have embraced the SDGs and used them for planning and budgeting purposes include eThekweni – the City of Durban and the City of Cape Town. Despite these two examples, the SDGs have not been fully integrated at the local level, providing an opportunity for the UN to collaborate with key partners such as the Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (CoGTA) and SALGA.



### COORDINATING AGENDA 2030 IN SA: STRUCTURES, SUCCESSES AND CHALLENGES

In line with SDG 17, the MAPS approach advocates strong national partnerships and coordination mechanisms that facilitate policy coherence. This is premised on the acknowledgement that sustainable development requires strong partnerships between the Government, civil society, Chapter Nine Institutions, trade unions, the private sector and academia.

#### Institutional Structures for coordinating the SDGs in SA

Coordination mechanisms for the localisation of the SDGs include a Cabinet-approved, Inter-Ministerial Committee on International Agendas including the SDGs supported by the Directors-General National Steering Committee. The Presidential Co-ordinating Council which is one of the structures provided for in the Inter-Governmental Relations Act, is also utilised to ensure that the sustainable development agenda is integrated across the three spheres of Government.

The National Sustainable Development Stakeholders Forum has been created and will serve as a national platform for dialogue with non-state stakeholders, including the private sector, civil society, Chapter Nine Institutions including SAHRC, academia, development partners and trade unions on the SDGs. This is a progressive move for the South African Government, as the IMC consisted mainly of government departments.

#### Localising SDGs at the Municipal level

For the last two fiscal years, eThekweni has aligned the SDG targets and indicators with its local government responsibilities and municipal budget. This alignment has focused on four main pillars: human rights, people, the planet and prosperity. This exercise has allowed the city's metropolitan area to introduce a system of benchmarking that permits more robust monitoring and provides a better reporting framework. In 2017, 66 out of 98 SDG indicators had been aligned with investment projects; in 2018, this number increased to 75. This was done through multiple mechanisms which include: ensuring that all communication that related to sustainable development reflects the relevant SDGs and their associated indicators; internally sensitising all senior- and middle-management on the global agenda; development of the SDG toolkit to promote its awareness and by aligning the SDGs to the integrated development plans. A similar effort has been undertaken in the City of Cape Town, which is currently in the process of linking the SDGs to its Preliminary Resilience Assessment and Index; this work was carried out within the framework of its Resilience Strategy.

## SDG Data availability

The MAPS process also includes contribution to the data revolution by helping to strengthen national capacities to collect and analyse information which will assist in monitoring progress towards the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs. Towards this end, the Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation, together with Statistics South Africa, have worked to coordinate the data collection of the SDG targets. Thus far, they have been able to collect baseline data in 2017, where they were also able to identify data gaps which exist in the country and prepare the first full SDG country report in 2019.

### Background to Statistics SA

Statistics South Africa (Stats SA) is the official national statistical office of South Africa and is governed by the National Statistics Act as well as the South African Statistical Quality Assessment Framework (SASQAF). The Act states that the Statistician-General as head of Statistics South Africa, is responsible for the collection, production and dissemination of official and other statistics, including the census of the population, and for co-ordination among producers of statistics. It is also the Statistician-General responsibility to establish a Statistics Council and provide for its functions; to repeal certain legislation; and to provide for connected matters. The SASQAF is the guiding document for ensuring that the data collected by Stats SA or other producers of statistics are credible, high-quality and conform to international standards. Stats SA ensures that all the data collected is transparent as it is easily accessible to anyone in the country through their official website. The statistics office is also responsible for ensuring that the individual data collected is strictly confidential and exclusively for statistical purposes. Beyond this, the guiding framework that is used by Stats SA 'calls on other producers of statistics to be transparent in informing users of the concepts, definitions, classifications, methodologies, and frameworks used in collecting, processing and analysing their data, as well as informing them on the accuracy of the data, and any other features that may affect the quality of the data or their fitness for use' (SASQAF, 2008).<sup>20</sup> The utilisation of these procedures for data quality control places Stats SA as a credible source of national statistics.

During the SDG baseline data collection, South Africa was able to report on several SDG Tier I and Tier II indicators. However, data gaps were identified for specific goals. Only 156 of the proposed 230 indicators have agreed standards and methods and can thus, strictly speaking, be measured. In addition, despite there being the metadata for the 156 indicators, some did not have data at the time of reporting. South Africa was able to report on 63% of the 156 indicators, which amounts to 98 indicators 23. Furthermore, there were also challenges centered around disaggregated data. And, since one of the main components of Agenda 2030 is leaving no one behind, this needs to be rectified so that vulnerable groups can be easily tracked. This challenge emanates from the fact that there is no agreed Monitoring Framework for SDGs that lays out the indicators, disaggregation levels, methodology and data sources as well as periodicity of data collection. This gap was clearly evident in the recently published National SDG monitoring report 2019 (Stats SA) which had several data elements missing, especially on the equity parameters and the new indicators post-MDG. This makes it difficult to measure the country's progress on SDGs in a methodical and standardised manner.

To address this issue, one of the recommendations from the SA Civil Society group on SDGs around data is the development of a monitoring framework highlighting a clear plan for closing data gaps, especially on the Tier I and Tier II indicators as well as on the disaggregation of data. The UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights recommended that South Africa improve its data collection system to enable the collection of comprehensive and reliable data, disaggregated by race, gender, province and other relevant criteria to enable the assessment of the level of enjoyment of rights covered by the Covenant, particularly among disadvantaged and marginalised individuals and groups.

### PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT AND AWARENESS RAISING

Raising public awareness and engaging national, sub-national and local stakeholders in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and SDGs is a critical step in successful implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Awareness is not the end-goal however, it should transcend beyond mobilisation to societal commitment that translates into implementation.

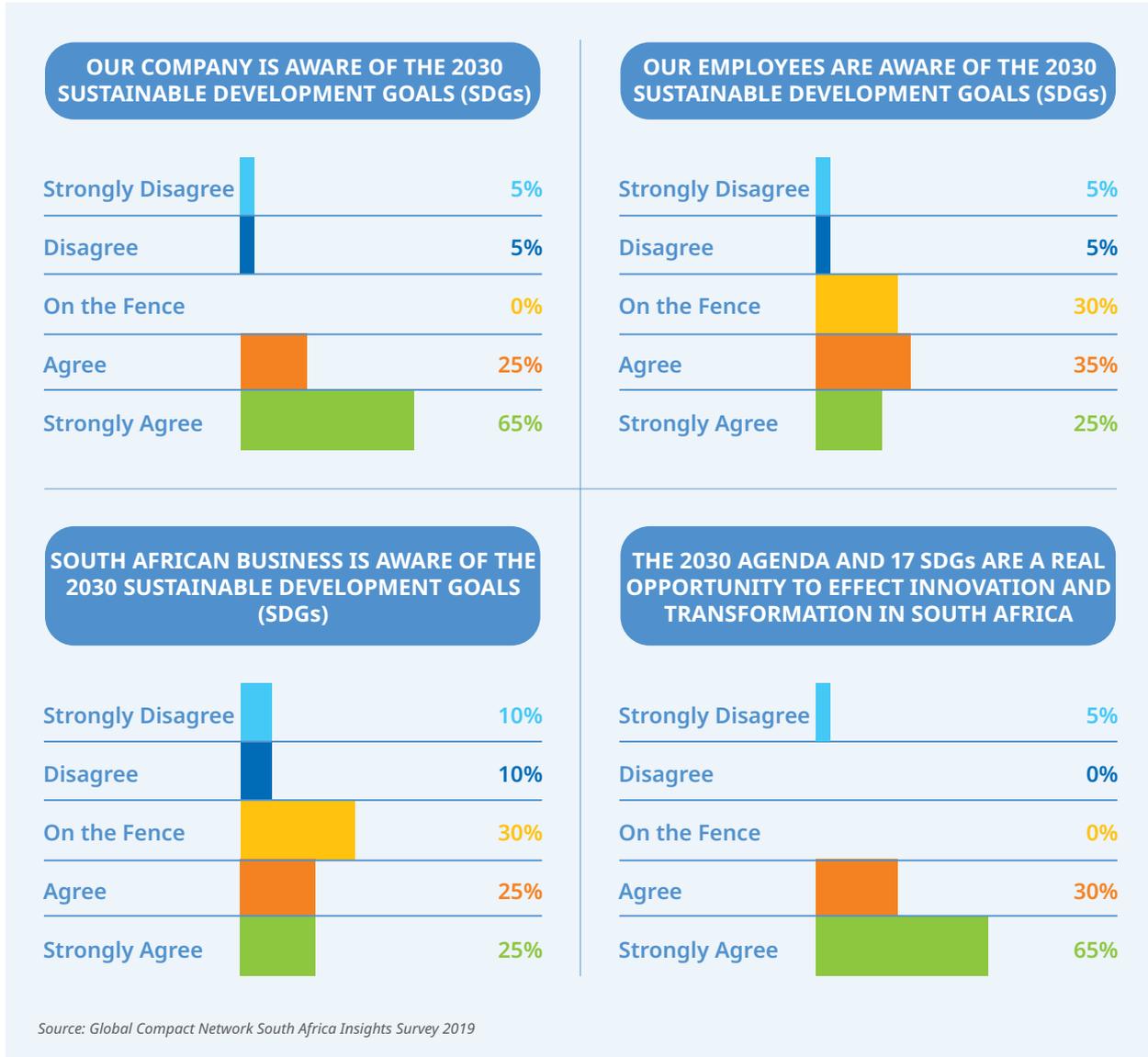
<sup>20</sup>South Africa SDGs Country report 2019



## PRIVATE SECTOR

- How are companies prioritising and aligning the SDGs into the business?
- How are businesses performing on the SDGs and what is the impact?
- Are there examples of private sector collaboration on the SDGs?
- How is business disclosing and communicating performance?

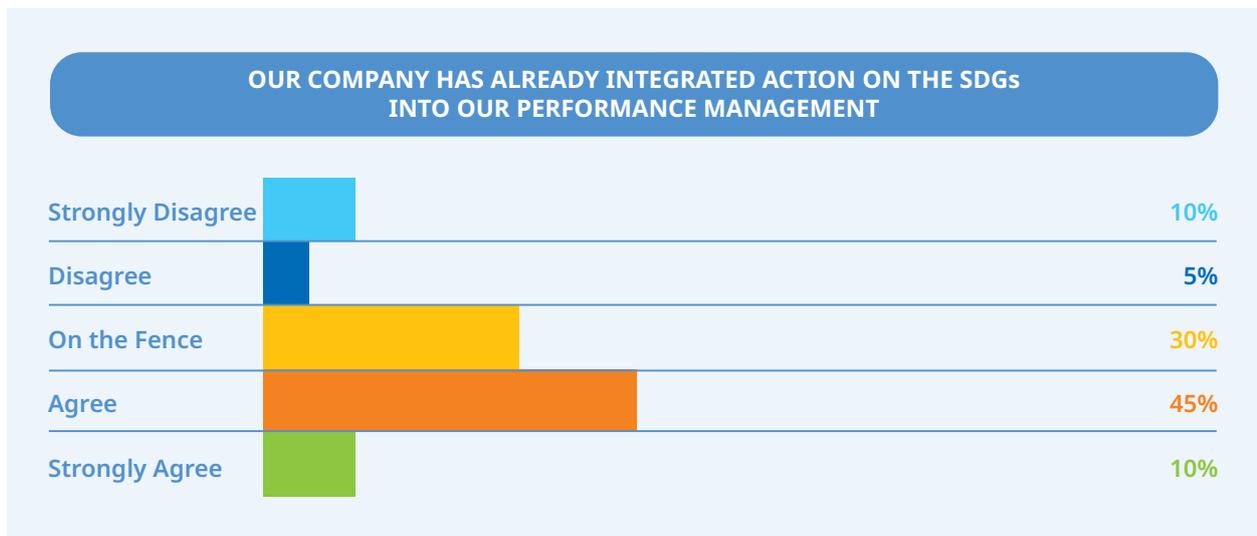
The UN Global Compact has collected some critical data on the awareness levels of the private sector on the SDGs. This data is presented below:



**Key observations:**

Most companies surveyed indicated that, as individual companies, they were aware of the SDGs with a positive response rate of 90% (65% and 25% for 'strongly agree' and 'agree'), while the same group of companies surveyed responded that the business sector as a whole had an awareness rate of 50%. A majority of respondents to the survey, 85%, indicated that the SDGs represent a real opportunity to effect innovation and transformation in South Africa. From the companies surveyed by the UNGC, we can conclude that the participating companies are positively disposed to the SDGs and see them as a real opportunity for taking South Africa forward.

The key recommendation made by the UNGC report is that more is to be done to create awareness of the 2030 Agenda and the 17 Sustainable Development Goals for companies of all sizes. This should include key messaging that communicates the value of participation for varied company stakeholders. The UNGC report goes further to look at how companies have dealt with the important issue of aligning their respective company strategies and operations to the SDGs.



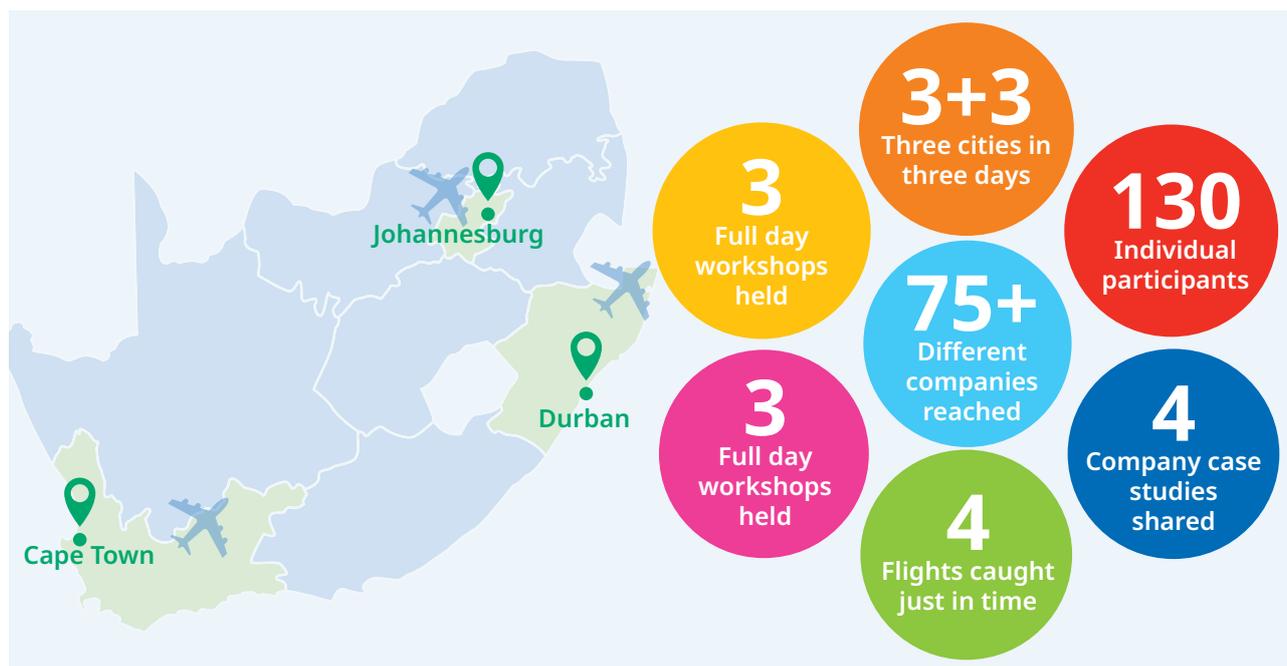
**Key observation:**

Of the companies surveyed, 55% have already started doing work to integrate the SDGs into their strategies, operations and performance management. The report proceeds to state that, relative to the global norm, an additional 3% of South African companies that had assessed the SDGs had gone on to include the SDGs within their business strategies (30%), and 29% more South African companies have gone as far as SDG prioritisation to include the SDGs within business strategies (83%). So, where companies have conducted prioritisation, the SDGs are regularly adopted.

An example of how the private sector is working to raise awareness on the SDGs is through the National Business Initiative (NBI), which is a voluntary coalition of South African and multinational companies operating in South Africa. The National Business Initiative, in partnership with the Confederation of Danish Industry, embarked on a SDG Roadshow to promote the alignment of company business strategies to the SDGs.



A summary of the statistics of companies reached during this roadshow is presented below:



Many companies have deliberately started to work with the SDGs as part of their business strategies across sectors. The challenge is that much of the work and the awareness-raising effort seems to be largely among big corporates. The small and medium sized firms appear to be lagging behind on the uptake and will need to be the area of focus going forward. The United Nations has convened several engagements with the private sector on integrating the SDGs into business strategies and operating models.

### CIVIL SOCIETY

On 1 September 2017, South African Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) and networks supported by the UN, convened a strategy workshop for the sector to facilitate a dialogue on how to build a strong CSO constituency for SDG implementation. Out of this workshop, the CSOs elected a core leadership group to lead all sector efforts on SDG engagements. The SA CSO Working Group, which has representation from provinces and sectoral coalitions, has actively engaged with the South African Government on the development of the 2030 Agenda and its implementation in the country. The group's purpose is to mobilise South African civil society around effective SDG implementation, ensuring that those most in need are prioritised in the mainstreaming of goals in the country's national, provincial, and Local Government strategic plans. It seeks to strengthen the follow-up and review mechanisms by bringing grassroots voices

into the process and enhancing multi-stakeholder engagement. The SA Civil Society Working Group on SDGs enjoys the membership of major CSO and CBO networks in South Africa, NGOs from across sectors, as well as people's movements (SA CSO Working Group on the SDGs, 2019).

Some of the key outcomes of the 2017 civil society consultation are presented below:

- The issues related to lack of financing for Non-Government Organisations (NGOs): Participants noted that receiving funding from Government weakens civil society
- Fatigue from communities: It was pointed out that discussions that are not followed by actions were making communities lose confidence in civil society organisations
- Inclusivity and openness: It was stated that the group needs to be inclusive of community-based organisations and requires strong leadership and presence at grassroots level if it is to have any impact at that level
- The participants reiterated the importance of educating people regarding the SDGs and translating the agenda into a language that can be easily understood by communities. They also pointed out that people cannot see the connection between their lives and the SDGs, and the entire process of the MDGs and the SDGs is still a bit confusing for citizens and CSOs at grassroots level.



Towards South Africa's 2019 Voluntary National Review (VNR), the civil society sector came together to develop a shadow report for the sector. The CSO Working Group provides reasons for the development of a shadow report of its own as they felt that they had limited participation in the preparation of South Africa's Voluntary National Report. While the coalition acknowledged that Stats SA and Department of Planning Monitoring and Evaluation (DMPE) consulted non-Governmental networks, both the sectoral reports and the political report did not fully benefit from civil society's knowledge base and the day-to-day realities of the people of South Africa. While civil society was invited to provide written inputs to the VNR Report, this approach fell short of the standard set by the United Nations for a meaningful process review in which key stakeholders reflect on progress and, more importantly, determine how to improve delivery. Notwithstanding the establishment of the Civil Society Working Group on the SDGs and the work it has done leading to the development of the Voluntary National Review document and its own shadow report, there is acknowledgement that much more work needs to be done to better coordinate civil society around the SDGs. There is acknowledgement that the national civil society coordination structures are not connected with grassroots organisations, which therefore means that the Civil Society Working Group does not necessarily translate into grassroots awareness.

### Academia and Research Institutions

Various academic institutions have started incorporating the SDGs into their curriculums and focusing research activities on policies and implementation modalities to fast-track the SDGs in South Africa. These organisations range from research institutions, research councils as well as academic institutions.

In the following, there are some examples of how some of the leading Universities in the country have taken bold steps towards positioning themselves as thought leaders and implementation support partners to the county on the SDG Agenda.

- **University of Cape Town**

The University of Cape Town (UCT) has identified capacity building, collaboration, and engagement with Government and industry as areas for the university to contribute to achieving the SDGs. The university is taking practical steps to boost its own capacity to fulfil this role. To kick off the university's engagement on the SDGs, the University's Centre for Cities held three SDG seminars in 2019.

Working with these early movers on the Agenda to share their respective experiences with the rest of the sector could be a contribution that the UN can make. Beyond just facilitating conversations the UN could equally work with the higher education and research sector to bring innovative solutions for the SDGs including innovative policy ideas.



- **University of Pretoria**

**The university has undertaken very practical steps to align itself with the SDGs. Below are some examples:**

- An interdisciplinary team of researchers from the University of Pretoria supported the South African Government in their reporting on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)
- The University of Pretoria's Albert Luthuli Centre for Responsible Leadership has launched the South African SDG Hub – a resource aimed at linking South African policy makers with SDG-relevant research and innovation. The main areas of focus for the Hub include: (i) knowledge sharing, (ii) policy advice, (iii) dialogue promotion and (iv) capacity building
- The university has developed and rolled out new programmes that are focused on the SDGs. In this regard, it has introduced a new programme: 'Masters in Development Practice'. The programme is specially positioned to develop practitioners in Government, business and civil society who understand the complexity of developmental challenges and who have the leadership capacities to design and implement the integrated and multidisciplinary Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)



- **National Research Fund**

The NRF, through the Science Granting Councils Initiative in sub-Saharan Africa, is a founding member of the SDG Funders Forum.

These are examples of how various academic and research institutions in the country are aligning their work to the SDGs and how the Agenda is beginning to shape the areas of both research and innovation. Many more examples of good practices exist within this sector in the country. These examples, however, are not representative of the entire higher education and research sector in the country, with many universities still not as focused on this agenda as those mentioned above.

Working with these early movers on the Agenda to share their respective experiences with the rest of the sector could be a contribution that the UN can make in the sector. Beyond just facilitating conversations, the UN could equally work with the higher education and research sector to bring innovative solutions for the SDGs, including innovative policy ideas.

### **Conclusion**

South Africa has taken many strides to ensure that the SDG agenda takes centre stage in the development agenda. However, it is quite critical that this agenda plays a more prominent role in the lower levels of Government where implementation is based. It is also quite crucial for the SDGs to be translated into a language that civilians can understand, so that their voices are more evident in the discourse. The South African Government has, through their VNR, assessed itself critically to identify areas of improvement, which include establishing stronger partnerships with civil society and the private sector. Without strong partnerships between different stakeholders, the realisation of Agenda 2030 becomes more challenging. With COVID-19, some of the gains in achieving the SDGs will be affected. The slowdown of the economy and revenue loss will affect the Government's ability to increase investments in the social and productive sectors<sup>19</sup>. To mitigate some of the worsening impacts on poverty and inequality, the Government has proposed a R500 billion stimulus package to cushion the impacts on the poor and the most vulnerable and to support small and medium-sized businesses.

<sup>19</sup> United Nations Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, *Consideration of Reports submitted by States Parties under Articles 16 and 17 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, Initial Reports of States Parties due in 2017: South Africa, UN Doc. E/C.12/ZAF/1 (2017), para 100*

## 2. PROSPERITY

### 2.1 Context

One of the fundamental objectives of the SDGs is by 2030 to ‘ensure that all human beings can enjoy prosperous and fulfilling lives and that economic, social, and technological progress occurs in harmony with nature’<sup>20</sup>. The main objective of this section is to examine the key drivers and inhibitors of prosperity in South Africa. A deeper look at the SDGs’ definition of prosperity underscores the inherent rights of all people to have equitable access to and sustainable use of economic, social and other resources to allow for a cohesive and harmonious co-existence. The key SDGs driving the achievement of shared prosperity are SDGs 1, 2, 5, 7, 8, 10, 11 and 12.



The National Development Plan 2030 (NDP) continues to identify South Africa’s primary development challenges as poverty, unemployment and inequality. Poverty strives where unemployment and inequalities are significant. Therefore, committed effort to address unemployment and inequalities will engender less

poverty and promote shared prosperity. According to the Global Human Development Report (GHDR 2019), South Africa’s Human Development Index (HDI) value is recorded at 0,705 and ranked 113 out of 186 countries, a slight improvement from 0,699 in 2017. This improvement is on account of greater access to education and some health services. When the Inequality-adjusted Human Development Index (IHDI) is considered, South Africa’s human development falls to 0,463. This reflects a 34,4% loss in human development due to inequality, of which gender inequality registered at 0,422 is a critical contributor. Poverty is consistently highest among black-South Africans, the less educated, the unemployed, female-headed households, large families, and children.

The SDGs are in consonance with the aspiration of the NDP, which aims ‘to eliminate poverty and reduce inequality by 2030 through uniting South Africans, unleashing the energies of its citizens, growing an inclusive economy, building capacities’. This again resonates with President Nelson Mandela’s view on prosperity: “The task at hand will not be easy, but you have mandated us to change South Africa from a land in which the majority lived with little hope, to one in which they can live and work with dignity, with a sense of self-esteem and confidence in the future”<sup>21</sup>.

This section will analyse the inhibitors to prosperity with a lens on past and current situations, and provide an overview of performance while highlighting challenges, opportunities and lessons learned. It will also discuss how the UN in South Africa can contribute to shaping the future of prosperity in the country.

In 2012, the NDP aspired for an economic growth rate of 5,4% and for the unemployment rate to be reduced to 6% by 2030. In 2019, the growth rate registered at 0,5% and unemployment rose to 29%, while the inequality rate reduced negligibly from 0,70 to 0,68. Understanding the economy of the country is key to unravelling the nature of the declining growth, an impediment to prosperity.



<sup>20</sup> <https://unfpa.org/news/stories/factors-that-affected-the-economy>; [undation.org/blog/post/the-sustainable-development-goals-in-2019-people-planet-prosperity-in-focus/](https://undation.org/blog/post/the-sustainable-development-goals-in-2019-people-planet-prosperity-in-focus/)

<sup>21</sup> Speech of H.E Nelson Mandela at his inauguration as President, 10 May 1994.

The structure of South Africa's economy has undergone a major transformation over the past four decades (see Annex B). Generally, mining, finance, insurance and real estate dominate South Africa's economy. These sectors are characterised by high asset concentration, high capital absorption and skilled-labour intensity, which means that economic growth led by these sectors does not reduce inequality. In contrast, inequality falls or remains low if growth takes place in labour-intensive sectors such as manufacturing, construction and agriculture<sup>22</sup>.

It is noteworthy that the key performing industries in the tertiary and secondary sectors predominantly make use of highly-skilled workers and are capital intensive, while the country's labourers are mainly low-skilled. The decline of the manufacturing sector has been detrimental for the country because it was one of the major labour-absorbing sectors of the economy. The South African economy has been experiencing de-industrialisation since independence. The value added from manufacturing as a share of GDP declined from 18,47% during 1994-1999 to 14,39% and 11,95% in 2005-2010 and 2015-2018, respectively<sup>23</sup>. Contractions in the mining and agriculture sectors have further complicated de-industrialisation, which weakens the capacity to generate appreciably decent jobs.

Climate change has also negatively affected South Africa's economy as evidenced by the declining performance of the agricultural sector. Due to the prolonged drought from 2015 to 2018, occasioned by the El Niño phenomenon, the share of the agricultural sector to the economy registered negative growth of 5,9% and 10,1% in 2015 and 2016. In addition to the extreme weather conditions, this decline was also caused by high production costs and low productivity, which impacted negatively on food security, nutrition, and the diversification of non-agriculture rural economic activities. While the number of households living below the food poverty line has been decreasing, in 2015, 15,8% of households had inadequate access to food<sup>24</sup>.

South Africa's level of competitiveness has deteriorated over the decade: the country's ranking declined from number 44 in 2007 to number 67 in 2018 on the Global Competitiveness Index. Similarly, between 2008 and 2018, South Africa's ranking fell from 35 to 82 in

the World Bank's Ease of Doing Business report. The country's low business confidence is exacerbated by allegations of corruption and state capture, and the poor performance of state-owned enterprises.

Another challenge to South Africa's growth is that the liberalisation of trade post-1994 led to the decimation of the clothing and textile industry because of high amounts of (cheap) imports from overseas. This led to the shrinking of the sector, with downsizing, retrenchments and closures of factories<sup>25</sup>.

The Apartheid regime's labour and land requirements hampered the formation of a black rural middle-class able to grow food and expand rural-urban linkages through upstream and downstream linkages. Articulation was largely short-circuited between white commercial farming, supported with generous public interventions, while black farmers were left with very poor access to natural and economic resources, and markets. This constitutes the main economic argument for redistributive land reform, which is meant to reverse the trend of more capital-intensive farms in favour of smaller, more labour-intensive agriculture. If not by changing all large farms, then at least by changing enough of them to make a difference in aggregate. Only about 10% to 11% of commercial farmland has changed hands since 1994<sup>26</sup>. South Africa's declining growth is also attributed to weaker total investment, exports and global growth<sup>27</sup>. For example, South Africa's domestic investment, Gross Fixed Capital Formation (GFCF)<sup>28</sup>, is at 20% of the GDP, which is below the emerging market average of 32,5%.<sup>29</sup>

South Africa experiences two types of migration: 1) that which is caused by political unrest, civil war and ecological deterioration; and 2) that which is due to shifts in the global world of work - whether through internal migrants (usually from rural to urban areas) or external migrants (from poorer labour-sending countries to relatively wealthy labour-absorbing countries). These socio-economic factors have driven significant inflows of migrants into South Africa where they have come to constitute about 8% of the South African population and labour force. South Africa has experienced a spike in spates of violence and xenophobic attacks<sup>30</sup>.

<sup>22</sup> Cornia, G.A., Odusola, A., Bhorat, H. and Conceição, P. 2017. Introduction, motivation and overview. In *Income equality trends in Sub-Saharan Africa. Divergence, Determinants and Consequences*. Cornia, G.A., Odusola, A., Bhorat, H. and Conceição, P. (Eds). United Nations Development Programme Regional Bureau for Africa. New York

<sup>23</sup> World Development Indicators accessed February 2020

<sup>24</sup> <http://www.statssa.gov.za/publications/03-00-14/03-00-142017.pdf>

<sup>25</sup> House, K. and William, A.J. 2000. The status of employment in the South African clothing sector - Diverting a 'race to the bottom.' TIPS 2000 Annual Forum

<sup>26</sup> This may sound like a large sum of money, however in reality it is less than half of what is spent in one year on social grants. The land reform budget has never exceeded 1% of the government's consolidated budget

<sup>27</sup> Medium Term Budget Policy Statement, 2019; National Treasury, 2019

<sup>28</sup> Investment is measured by gross fixed capital formation made up of investment from the private sector, Government and state-owned enterprises

<sup>29</sup> Gauteng Treasury. 2019. The Socio-Economic Review and Outlook <http://www.treasury.gov.za/documents/provincial%20budget/2019/3.%20Estimates%20of%20Prov%20Rev%20and%20Exp/GT/1.%20Budget%20Overview/GT%20-%20EPRE%20-%20Budget%20Overview.pdf>

<sup>30</sup> Crush 2001:23. <http://uir.unisa.ac.za/bitstream/handle/10500/767/dissertation.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>

A survey revealed that only 20% of South Africans trust people from other countries living in the country – with 20,1% trusting people from other African countries, and 22,2% trusting people from other countries, but not African countries<sup>31</sup>. Against this backdrop, most migrants settle in socially and economically deprived neighbourhoods where they are regarded as unjustly sharing limited public resources or ‘stealing’ their jobs, thereby breeding resentment and acts of xenophobia and criminality. Likewise, horrendous and frequent incidences of gender-based violence and femicide (GBVF) propelled the President in 2019 to declare GBVF a national emergency and constitute a national oversight committee to ensure the empowerment of women, including measures to ensure cessation of GBVF and the gender pay gap.

Due to the history of segregation and Apartheid, many black-Africans live far from the economic centres and struggle to commute and access economic opportunities. The NDP describes the problems of the transport sector as ranging from outdated rail infrastructure, high port costs, and a shift of freight from rail to road that strains the road system.

The Government of South Africa has put in place many policies and programmes to reverse the downward growth trajectory and to reduce inequalities. South Africa has a comprehensive social protection programme benefiting one third of the population, with 80% of the beneficiaries being female. However, the increasing number of beneficiaries and problems of targeting has raised concerns about sustainability, especially with shortfalls in revenues and an increasing fiscal budget deficit.

To speed up land reform, the priority policies include the Land Redistribution Policy, the Land Donation Policy, the Beneficiary Selection and Land Allocation Policy, the Expropriation of Land without Compensation Policy, the Communal Land Tenure Reform Policy, and the Integrated Land Administration Framework. The Government advocates for land expropriation to promote food security and a more inclusive society, and cautions against drastic decisions that would destroy progressive gains of the country. To promote green and blue economies, the Government has embarked on building capacity in contract law focusing on bio-economy agreements, infrastructure and market assessments.

A Commission of Enquiry to investigate state capture and corruption charges was set up, and, so far, some high-ranking officials, including Ministers and Director-Generals were sacked portraying the Government’s

determination to fight corruption and restore its image and credibility.

Technology and innovation are duly recognised as a catalytic factor in promoting growth across many sectors and the Government has embarked on a massive 4IR strategy, establishing institutes of excellence and building the capacity and creativity of the youth. Programmes such as the Black Business Enterprises (BBEs) were introduced in 2005 to enhance the business acumen and skills among blacks, and to promote job creation and income generation. For two years now, the National Job Summit has been convened to explore possibilities of Public Private Partnerships (PPP) for job creation.

In 2019, South Africa assumed non-permanent membership of the UN Security Council and chairmanship of the Africa Peer Review Mechanism, and, in January 2020, the country assumed leadership of the AU.

South Africa is the most diversified economy in Africa and despite challenges of low growth and economic downturn, the country remains the foreign investment destination of choice in Africa. However, South Africa must address several threats and weaknesses to achieve shared prosperity within this decade of action towards the SDGs. The Government is working on different degrees, to address these challenges.

Within a myriad of developmental challenges, there are several areas where the UN can support and accompany the Government on its path to prosperity while ensuring accountability, community-resilience and that no one is left behind.



<sup>31</sup> IJR. 2019

## 2.2 Recommendations

1. Develop a National Labour Migration Policy consistent with the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) Labour Migration Policy and Management Framework that addresses the full spectrum of migration issues, including policy formulation, implementation and effective border management. The drafting of the policy provides an opportunity to ensure that it is underpinned by international instruments that protect the rights of migrants.
2. Improve disaggregated data collection, analysis and dissemination on all prioritised SDG indicators, and on youth, women, migration and governance issues across different levels of government to allow for evidence-based planning.
3. Explore major investment and innovation opportunities to be directed towards renewable energy and environmentally sustainable construction and retrofitting, with significant job creation and reskilling impacts while ensuring a net positive employment impact on job creation in the transition to a greener economy. Strengthen access to markets and value chain development, including in emerging and green sectors.
4. Promote and strengthen platforms for social dialogue, collective bargaining, Public-Private Partnerships (PPP) and collaboration with Civil Society Organisations (CSOs).

## 3. PEOPLE

### 3.1 Context

South Africa's tumultuous and violent past with Apartheid came to a political end in 1994. However, tensions remain high as the country struggles to reform the socio-economic realities that daily face South Africans. Hence, the NDP highlights social cohesion as one of the strategic goals for 2030, an objective echoed in the Constitution.

The country continues to face human rights challenges such as economic and social inequality, high incidence of poverty, food insecurity and malnutrition, particularly among children, dire living conditions in informal settlements, high unemployment, precarious employment conditions in the formal and informal economies, sexual and gender-based violence against women and girls, xenophobia and attacks against foreign nationals, and corruption. A vast majority of South Africans are living in conditions of poverty and are getting increasingly frustrated at the lack of

improvement in their enjoyment of economic, social and cultural rights. Communities are raising their voices in frequent protests about issues such as access to electricity, housing, water and sanitation, health, education, security and social rights. The resulting (protests) are also an effective means of political participation<sup>32</sup>. At the core of most of the protests is a perception that certain groups have unequal and uneven access to economic opportunities and public services.

Furthermore, the increased influx of migrants, asylum seekers and refugees exert pressure on limited resources and aggravate pre-existing service delivery concerns in the face of stark inequality and scarce resources within host communities. This is affecting social cohesion reflected in the violence and tensions between migrants and host communities.

South Africa ratified the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR)<sup>33</sup> on 12 January 2015. In the October 2018 review, it is noted that the Constitution does not include all the rights in the Covenant, such as the right to work and the right to an adequate standard of living. It is also noted that 1) the country's financial policy and tax laws do not enable it to raise sufficient resources required to reduce such inequalities, 2) the 2018 increase in value-added tax (VAT) was carried out without a human rights impact assessment targeting particularly low-income households, and 3) the prevalence of illegal financial flows and tax avoidance has seriously hindered South Africa to raise sufficient financial resources to implement its socioeconomic rights and obligations. The South African Government is required to report back on the implementation of the concluding observations by October 2020, and submit a full report to the Committee by October 2023.

The people dimension permeates through all the SDGs with 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 as the main drivers. In order to progress towards the SDGs, South Africa must urgently move towards a more cohesive society – a society which fights exclusion and marginalisation, overcomes social tensions and creates a sense of belonging, promotes trust and well-being, offers opportunities for upward mobility, and ensures the progressive realisation of economic and social rights especially for those furthest left behind.

<sup>32</sup> <https://issafrica.org/iss-today/is-protest-the-only-way-to-achieve-change>

<sup>33</sup> *Committee on economic, social and cultural rights* -<https://www.ohchr.org/en/hrbodies/cescr/pages/cescrindex.aspx>

## Gender equality and women's empowerment

South Africa is a highly unequal country in terms of gender, with distorted patterns of ownership and economic exclusion. National and provincial level statistics show that women in South Africa are more affected by poverty, unemployment and inequality. Further, despite the strong legal and institutional mechanisms in place and the Government having ratified regional and international agreements on the elimination of discrimination against women, the country continues to experience very high levels of GBVF and other forms of discrimination against women. The draft National Gender-Based Violence and Femicide Strategic Plan 2020-2030 states that 37,7% of women living in Gauteng have experienced physical and/or sexual intimate partner violence, 18,8% have experienced sexual violence, and 46,2% have never experienced economic or emotional abuse, while 37% of men from Gauteng report having raped a woman or girl. Patriarchal societal norms, harmful gender stereotypes, discriminatory practices and intersectional power inequalities (gender, race, class and sexuality) are the main causes of violence, compounded by high levels of poverty.

In general, black-African females in rural areas and those with no education are the main victims in the ongoing struggle against poverty. There is a higher proportion of females (41,7%) living below the lower bound poverty level compared to males (38,2%), which is a persistent trend since 1994 <sup>34</sup>.

The Government has made strong political and financial commitments to up-scale the State response to these challenges, including the GBV and Femicide Summit in 2018, the Presidential Declaration, the adoption of an Emergency Plan overseen by a multi-stakeholder Steering Committee, and the draft GBVF National Strategic Plan 2020 - 2030. The Minister of Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities is the head of the National Gender Machinery in the country.

## Youth

In 2019, young people under the age of 25 years made up more than 40% the world's population. In South Africa, young people below the age of 35 years constitute about 66% of the total population of 59,62 million <sup>35</sup>. This presents a powerful resource for the country, provided that the youth <sup>36</sup> are supported and able to become active members of society and reach their full potential.

Improvements in health and the transitioning from high mortality and fertility to low mortality and fertility has resulted in a 'youth bulge' - the emergence of a large population of young people. As the large group of young people reach maturity, they have massive potential to boost economic development if they are empowered and have appropriate skills and capacities. This 'demographic dividend' can, however, only be realised if the issues facing young people are addressed.

While educational opportunities have increased, young people find limited options for decent and meaningful work and experience high levels of violence, including gender-based violence. The situation impacts young people's health, development and well-being, and contributes to increasing HIV risk, poor learning outcomes and social exclusion. The National Youth Policy recognises this reality and places economic inclusion and participation, education, skills and training, as well as health and well-being central to its approach. In his 2020 State of the Nation Address, the President announced that South Africa will begin the implementation of the Presidential Youth Employment Intervention that focuses on six priority actions over the next five years to reduce youth unemployment.

## Poor learning outcomes and social exclusion

The National Youth Policy recognises this reality and places economic inclusion and participation, education, skills and training, as well as health and well-being central to its approach <sup>37</sup>. In his 2020 State of the Nation Address, the President announced that South Africa will begin the implementation of the Presidential Youth Employment Intervention that focuses on six priority actions over the next five years to reduce youth unemployment.

## People with disabilities

Stigmatisation and discrimination against persons with disabilities remains widespread in South Africa, especially against persons with psychosocial disabilities and persons with albinism, even within family settings. Furthermore, women and girls with disabilities, particularly black women and girls, face multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination in accessing education, employment and health care. Discrimination arising from traditional and cultural practices should also be addressed to ensure the full inclusion of women and girls with disabilities in all spheres of life. Some of the barriers in accessing

<sup>34</sup> Statistics South Africa, 2015 National Poverty Lines

<sup>35</sup> Statistics South Africa, 2020 Mid-Year Population Estimate

<sup>36</sup> South Africa's National Youth Policy 2020 defines youth as persons from 15-34 years old, accounting for about 36% of the total population

<sup>37</sup> De Lannoy A., Storme E., Mudiriza G. and Smith, C. (2018) *The State of Youth Well-being in South Africa*. Cape Town: Poverty and Inequality Initiative, Southern Africa Labour and Development Research Unit, University of Cape Town, South Africa. Accessed at [http://www.povertyandinequality.uct.ac.za/sites/default/files/image\\_tool/images/95/2018/Publications/Youth\\_Explorer-Policy\\_Brief\\_2018.pdf](http://www.povertyandinequality.uct.ac.za/sites/default/files/image_tool/images/95/2018/Publications/Youth_Explorer-Policy_Brief_2018.pdf)



health care include distance to health centres; physical, financial and attitudinal barriers; lack of information; and limited healthcare services, including services for sexual and reproductive health and rights and abortion.

Regarding education, a high number of students with disabilities, including girls with disabilities, those with intellectual disabilities or autism, and those who are deaf or hard of hearing, still remain largely outside the school system due to a lack of teachers trained in inclusive education, sign language, Braille and Easy Read. In addition to the continuing growth of special education schools as opposed to inclusive education, students with disabilities suffer from lack of safety. There has been reported cases of abuse, violence and neglect of children with disabilities at schools and school hostels. Extreme forms of violence, such as kidnappings, killings and attacks for practices of witchcraft, is also a concern particularly for persons with albinism and children with psychosocial or intellectual disabilities.

On a positive note, in 2015 South Africa's Cabinet approved a White Paper on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The White Paper guides interventions, programmatic initiatives and mainstreaming of disability into the broader Government agenda to ensure full inclusion, integration and equality of persons with disabilities. South Africa is also in the process of establishing an Independent Monitoring Mechanism (IMM) concerning the implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities <sup>38</sup>.

### Asylum seekers, refugees and migrants

Xenophobic violence against migrants, including refugees and asylum seekers, has resulted in the loss of many lives and damage to property. As of 31 September 2019, the country had experienced 597 incidents of xenophobic violence that resulted in 327 deaths and over 100 000 displaced people. In 2019 alone, more than 68 deaths occurred. While the urban informal economy of Gauteng, Western Cape and KwaZulu-Natal provinces remain the most affected, xenophobic violence is increasingly spreading across all the country's nine provinces.

The Government of South Africa, through the Department of Justice and Constitutional Development, has developed the National Action Plan on Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance and its implementation plan, reflecting the Government's commitment to the eradication of discrimination and intolerance in all its forms.

The country's efforts to promote social cohesion and address the challenge of xenophobic violence also includes the establishment of a National Anti-Xenophobia Task Team (NTT) to design and coordinate implementation of anti-xenophobia programmes in the country. The task team has commenced an anti-xenophobia programme in Gauteng. The UN established the Protection Working Group (PWG) in 2009, which has remained a platform for ensuring a more coordinated and collaborative response to the increased protection needs for the victims of xenophobic violence in the country.

The country has made major progress over the past decade as per the National SDG Monitoring report (2019). The incidence of tuberculosis (TB) decreased from 981 per 100 000 population in 2010, to 567 per 100 000 population in 2017, while prevalence among men and women aged 15–49 years increased (from 15,6% in 2002–2005 to 20,6% in 2012–2017). The number of new HIV infections had dropped by 44% in 2017 since 2012. Of all adults aged 15 years and over living with HIV, 62% were on treatment, while 63% of children aged 0–14 years living with HIV were on treatment. However, the disease burden is unmatched by the existing health systems that are fragmented and inequitable. On one hand, there is a large private sector with world class facilities, but which focuses on high-end curative services at very high costs. On the other hand, the public-sector facilities that provide care to nearly 83% of the population are over-crowded and under-resourced in relation to the number of medical professionals, medical equipment and medical expenditure, and at times provide inadequate quality of health services for mostly the poor and marginalised. Those most affected include poor communities, black women and children in the rural and less affluent urban areas, asylum seekers, people living with HIV and mine workers <sup>39</sup>. With the advent of COVID-19, the Government has marshalled all resources and is working with partners to reduce the spread of the virus and treat those infected.

The NDP's targets for 2030 are well aligned to SDG 3 on health, which aims at achieving universal health coverage (UHC) so that all people in South Africa would have equitable access to quality healthcare and no-one would face financial hardship when using health services.

The NDP aims to address health challenges so that by 2030 'South Africa will have a life expectancy of at least 70 years for men and women; the generation of under-20 should be largely free of HIV; the quadruple burden of disease will have been radically reduced,

<sup>38</sup> Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2018), CRPD/C/ZAF/CO/1, available at: [https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/\\_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolNo=CRPD/C/ZAF/CO/1&Lang=En](https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolNo=CRPD/C/ZAF/CO/1&Lang=En)

<sup>39</sup> UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (2018), E/C.12/ZAF/CO/1, available at: [https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/\\_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolNo=E/C.12/ZAF/CO/1&Lang=En](https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolNo=E/C.12/ZAF/CO/1&Lang=En)

with an under 5 mortality rate of less than 30 per 1 000 live births'. The risks posed by the social determinants of health and adverse ecological factors should also have been reduced significantly.

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The South African Government, together with provincial Departments of Health and municipal corporations, are implementing several policies, strategies and programmes on health within the overall framework of the National Health Strategic Plan. Most notable of these are the following: South Africa's National Strategic Plan for HIV, TB and STIs (NSP) 2017–2022; the 'She Conquers Campaign for Girls and Young Women'; the Framework and Strategy for Disability and Rehabilitation Services in South Africa; and the National Adolescent and Youth Health Policy.

The highest priority is being accorded to National Health Insurance (NHI), which is being directly overseen from the President's Office. The aim of the NHI is to move South Africa towards achievement of UHC that is the overarching target of SDG 3 and a goal in the NDP. The NHI seeks to establish a more efficient, equitable and sustainable health system through the establishment of the NHI fund. To effectively meet people's health needs for sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR), HIV, TB, and non-communicable diseases (NCDs), a comprehensive package of essential health interventions is to be provided under the NHI. Attributes such as equity in access, quality of care and accountability across implementation levels in public and private sectors would be central to the envisioned package.

The key success factors in the health sector include concerted government commitments for addressing specific diseases, yet this vertical approach takes away focus from the broader aim of strengthening health systems, and improving the quality, efficiency

and equity in access to health services. The national averages also mask several underlying inequities at sub-national level, inter- and intra-provinces and between different population groups.

### Food and nutrition security

In 2013, the South African Cabinet approved the National Policy on Food and Nutrition Security (NFNSP), the Household Food and Nutrition Security Strategy and the Fetsa Tlala Integrated Food Production Initiative. These policy frameworks are intended to streamline, harmonise and integrate the diverse food and nutrition security interventions in South Africa. The National Food and Nutrition Security Plan (NFNSP) 2018-2023 aims at ensuring that all individuals have reliable access to sufficient quantities of affordable, nutritious food for a healthy life. The NFNSP sets out impact targets to address vulnerability to hunger, undernutrition, overweight and obesity, which are as ambitious as the global targets and in some cases (e.g. stunting and exclusive breastfeeding rates) even more ambitious.

The National School Nutrition Programme (NSNP) remains one of the key programmes that reaches over 9 million learners among the poorer primary and secondary schools around the country. The school feeding programme alleviates short-term hunger and thus improves concentration in class.

As part of strengthening the Food and Nutrition Security Programme, the Government is currently operating Food Distribution Centres linked to Community Nutrition and Development Centres (CNDs) in the provinces. The aim of the centres is to meet the immediate nutritional needs of the most vulnerable and food insecure members of society.

Despite the above-mentioned initiatives, access to food and prevailing hunger remain challenges in South Africa. The largest percentage of people experiencing hunger live in urban informal settlements (32,4%) and in rural formal settlements (37%<sup>40</sup>). Poverty and inequality inhibit a household's capacity to access affordable, nutritious, and diverse diets, while the increasing population and urbanisation compound the factors that constitute the poverty trap that many South Africans are in. The UN estimates that 71,3% of South Africa's population will live in urban areas by 2030, and nearly 80% by 2050. Two-thirds of South African youth live in urban areas.

<sup>40</sup> South African National Food and Nutrition Security Plan (NFNSP) 2018-2023



## Quality and relevant education accessible to all

The right to education is echoed in Section 29 of the Constitution and entrenched in several international treaties that South Africa has ratified since the advent of democracy<sup>41</sup>. South Africa has further embedded the right to education in several domestic laws and policies. The NDP, for instance, positions education as a critical determinant to building national capabilities needed for the country's development. It highlights the significance of an education system that provides for 'high-quality, universal early childhood education; quality school education with globally competitive literacy and numeracy standards; and further and higher education and training that enables people to fulfil their potential<sup>42</sup>.' Further, South Africa is pursuing SDG 4, which aims to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.

Education in South Africa is structured into three phases – early childhood education (from birth to six years); school education (primary and secondary schools); and further and higher education and training (focusing on post school education) – that is implemented through Government, Government supported institutions and private providers. Early childhood education and school education (from grades R to 12) are the responsibility of the Ministry of Basic Education, while higher education and training are the responsibility of the Ministry for Higher Education and Training. The responsibility for further education is shared between the two Ministries.

## Early childhood development and education

Early Childhood Development (ECD) refers to the 'early childhood' period of life, with specific reference to what constitutes 'development' and how development occurs<sup>43</sup>. ECD has been established as a core intervention for the country's development and future capabilities. The NDP confirms that South Africa will 'make early childhood development a top priority among the measures to improve the quality

of education and long-term prospects of future generations<sup>44</sup>, and commits to integrate ECD into the full education system of the country<sup>45</sup>. Data shows that in 2018, 38,4% of children under four years attended an early learning and development programme in an ECD centre or pre-school (compared to 8% in 2002<sup>46</sup>), while 5,5% were with child minders that provided a mix of early learning opportunities and care to mostly the younger children in the age cohort<sup>47</sup>. The proportion of children under five years attending ECD centres or pre-schools since 2010 has been stagnant at an average 35,1%<sup>48</sup>. Early childhood education is described in Government policies as a seamless process starting at birth with no policy differentiation between 'early childhood development' and 'pre-school'. The associated programme is embedded in the South African National Curriculum Framework for Children from Birth to Four (NCF)<sup>49&50</sup>.

## Basic education

Compulsory entrance into school is at age seven<sup>51</sup>, but the education system allows for five and six year-old children to be enrolled in Grade R and/or Grade 1 before this age. In 2018, 99.2% of children aged 7-15 years attended school with gender parity reached. Attendance rates for those aged 7-13 years (primary school) were at 99,3% in 2016<sup>52</sup>, compared to 96,7% in 2002. The attendance rate of children aged 14-18 years (secondary school) also increased to 90% in 2016 from 88% in 2002, with notable gender parity.

The education system is largely able to retain learners during the compulsory years of schooling. While the drop-out rate before Grade 9 in the South African education system is relatively low (less than 1%), the trend changes in the subsequent levels. The high enrolment rates referenced earlier tend to conceal the fact that up to 15% of learners do not complete Grade 9. By the end of Grade 12, 26% of the cumulative cohort have dropped out of the school system<sup>53</sup>. Frequent learner absenteeism, disciplinary incidents, trauma, and mental health issues also contribute to drop-out. Vulnerable children are often faced with more than

<sup>41</sup> *Universal Declaration of Human Rights (article 26); International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (article 13); Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (article 10); Convention on the Rights of the Child (articles 28 and 29); Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (article 24)*

<sup>42</sup> *The Presidency, National Planning Commission. 2012. National Development Plan 2030. Our future – making it work. Pretoria: The Presidency*

<sup>43</sup> *United Nations Children's Fund. 2017. UNICEF's programme guidance for early childhood development. New York: UNICEF (p. 13)*

<sup>44</sup> *The Presidency, National Planning Commission. 2012. National Development Plan 2030. Our future – making it work. Pretoria: The Presidency (pp.48.69)*

<sup>45</sup> *The Presidency, National Planning Commission. 2012. National Development Plan 2030. Our future – making it work. Pretoria: The Presidency (p.48)*

<sup>46</sup> *Republic of South Africa, Statistics South Africa, 2019, General Household Survey 2018*

<sup>47</sup> *Statistics South Africa. 2019. General Household Survey 2018. Pretoria. StatsSA (p.10)*

<sup>48</sup> *Statistics South Africa. 2011. General Household Survey 2010. Pretoria. StatsSA. (p.8); Statistics South Africa. 2012. General Household Survey 2011. Pretoria. StatsSA. (p.7) Statistics South Africa. 2013. General Household Survey 2012. Pretoria. StatsSA. (p.7); Statistics South Africa. 2014. General Household Survey 2013. Pretoria. StatsSA. (p.16); Statistics South Africa. 2015. General Household Survey 2014. Pretoria. StatsSA. (p.17); Statistics South Africa. 2016. General Household Survey 2015. Pretoria. StatsSA. (p.8); Statistics South Africa. 2017. General Household Survey 2016. Pretoria. StatsSA. (p.9); Statistics South Africa. 2018. General Household Survey 2017. Pretoria. StatsSA. (p.10); Statistics South Africa. 2018. General Household Survey 2017. Pretoria. StatsSA. (p.10); Statistics South Africa. 2018. General Household Survey 2017. Pretoria. StatsSA. (p.10); Statistics South Africa. 2019. General Household Survey 2018. Pretoria. StatsSA (p.10)*

<sup>49</sup> *Department of Basic Education. 2015. The South African National Curriculum Framework for children from Birth to Four. Pretoria: DBE (p.2-3)*

<sup>50</sup> *The National Integrated Early Childhood Development Policy (2015)*

<sup>51</sup> *South African Schools Act 84 of 1996, section 3(1)*

<sup>52</sup> *Statistics South Africa. 2017. General Household Survey 2016. Pretoria. StatsSA*

<sup>53</sup> *Lilenstein, A. & Weyss, B. 2019. Barriers and bottlenecks in education in South Africa. Report prepared for UNICEF South Africa. Pretoria: UNICEF South Africa*

one barrier to education. While statistics show that learner drop-out becomes a real problem only after Grade 9, the underlying causes build up in the earlier grades. Learners who perform poorly and drop out are disproportionately represented in the three poorest schooling quintiles. Only 6% of Grade 3 students performed at an appropriate level in mathematics in 2015<sup>54</sup>, and 78% of Grade 4 learners could not read for meaning in any of South Africa's 11 official languages in 2016<sup>55</sup>. Poor learning outcomes are the primary driver of grade repetition (15% for secondary education) and school drop-out of adolescents, with nearly half of the cohort dropping out between Grade 10 and Grade 12.

### Higher education and training (post-school education and training)

South Africa's post-school education and training system comprises of 26 public Higher Education Institutions (HEI), 123 registered private Higher Education Institutions, 50 Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) colleges, 279 registered private colleges, and 9 Community Education and Training (CETs) institutions<sup>56</sup>. The Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER)<sup>57</sup> at South African universities increased from 14,6% in 2001 to 18,6% in 2015. The ratio is low compared with the averages for other middle-income countries at 46,0%<sup>58</sup>. The GER is higher for women than for men. The NDP aims for a headcount of 1,6 million by 2030, which requires a growth rate of 3,2% between 2015 and 2030 compared to the current 1,5% growth rate<sup>59</sup>. Since 1994, the number of high school graduates has grown in South Africa. The Grade 12 pass-rate has also consistently increased from its lowest point of 70,7% in 2015 to 75,1% in 2017<sup>60</sup>.

While South Africa has made significant improvements in basic and tertiary education enrolment, the country still suffers from significant challenges in the quality of educational achievement by almost any international metric (IMF, 2019). Moreover, quality in the provision of and support for early learning, development and education of children under five and in Grade R remains poor. A substantial part of the low rates of retention in secondary education is caused by the low quality of early learning, development and education. Clearly, inadequate finances are not the main issue since South Africa's education budget is comparable to

OECD countries as a % of GDP and it exceeds that of most peer sub-Saharan African countries in per capita terms. South Africa invests as much as 7% of its GDP and 20% of its total public state expenditure on education. In the 2019/2020 financial year, R262,4 billion was allocated to education. The main explanatory factors for the current poor quality in education outcomes are complex and multifaceted, and associated with factors such as insufficient subject knowledge of some teachers, history, race, language, geographic location, and socio-economic status. Low educational achievement contributes to low productivity growth and high levels of poverty, unemployment, and inequality.

Although the education budget is relatively high, lack of accountability, inequitable spending, and uneven development between rural and urban areas threaten improvements in the overall quality of education and its outcomes. There is need to interrogate public spending in education. For example, South Africa has not sufficiently increased its public-sector research personnel, the number of PhD graduates, and its research outputs. There is also a need for high-quality teachers in mathematics and science. Some of the significant challenges in education are low throughput rates, as only 27% of the age cohort that begins school graduates with a university degree<sup>61</sup>. Compared to the population, South Africa's National System of Innovation (NSI) is minute. Finally, the education sector is not spared from the challenges of HIV and AIDS, teenage pregnancy, and violence against women and girls that the country faces. These challenges contribute to school drop-outs, absenteeism and poor academic performance. Ensuring access to equitable education for all requires prevention and response initiatives that address school violence, bullying, HIV and teenage pregnancy. Furthermore, many children with disabilities, particularly those from low-income families, do not attend school and do not benefit from no-fee schools. Similarly, people with albinism face discrimination in their enjoyment of the right to education. It is also important to note that approximately 30% of undocumented migrant, refugee and asylum-seeking children are not enrolled in formal education<sup>62</sup>.

<sup>54</sup> Spaul N & Kotze J. 2015. Starting behind and staying behind in South Africa: The case of insurmountable learning deficits in mathematics. *International Journal of Educational Development*, 41 (March): 12-24

<sup>55</sup> Mullis, I. V. S., Martin, M. O., Foy, P., & Hooper, M. (2017). *PIRLS 2016 International Results in Reading*

<sup>56</sup> Stats SA, 2019

<sup>57</sup> Total headcount enrolment relative to the population 20–24 years old

<sup>58</sup> 50.6% for Brazil and 26.9% for India

<sup>59</sup> <http://www.dhet.gov.za/Planning%20Monitoring%20and%20Evaluation%20Coordination/Investment%20Trends%20on%20Post-School%20Education%20and%20Training%20in%20South%20Africa%20-%202018.pdf>

<sup>60</sup> Department of Education. 2018. *Annual performance plan 2018/2019*. <https://www.education.gov.za/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=ojYWuMxIXyA%3D&tabid=92&portalid=0&mid=4358&forcedownload=true> Accessed: 17 October 2019

<sup>61</sup> South Africa's Voluntary National Review Report (SAVNR) 2019. *Empowering people and ensuring inclusiveness and equality*

<sup>62</sup> UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (2018), E/C.12/ZAF/CO/1, available at: [https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/\\_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=E/C.12/ZAF/CO/1&Lang=En](https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=E/C.12/ZAF/CO/1&Lang=En)



### 3.2 Recommendations

In addressing concerns relating to social cohesion, the UN is strategically positioned to support the Government in closing highlighted gaps relating to inequalities and unemployment, focusing especially on rural dwellers, gender, youth, people living with disabilities and migrants. The thrust is to ensure no one is left behind.

## 4. PEACE

### 4.1 Context

Over the years, South Africa has put in place several policies and legislations to ensure that citizens enjoy the benefits of a growing and inclusive economy. However, multiple dimensions of inequality have persisted over a long period and challenges with full implementation remain. The post-Apartheid era has not offered the country enough capacity to fully transform the society, rather the country is still negotiating growing demands around inequality and social exclusion.

In 2015, South Africa's Gini Coefficient was 0.62, surpassing both Brazil and Costa Rica in terms of levels of inequality<sup>46</sup>. The country has continued to grapple with challenges of inequality in almost all spheres of the country, resulting in slow progress towards building a more peaceful and cohesive society that is founded upon respect for the rights of all citizens and everyone residing in the country.

As a result, South Africa is far from attaining social cohesion with the most significant obstacle for this being inequality. The country continues to experience violent protests, xenophobia, gender-based violence, violence against children, and femicide. These occurrences reflect the deepening nature of inequality and social exclusion. In 2019, the rate of sexual offences and other types of violent crime, in many cases linked to substance abuse, increased by 19%. The increase contributes to a strong sense of insecurity among the population at large and calls for the Government to step in with immediate response.

An understanding of inequality as the persistent source of divisions is a matter of priority in attaining social cohesion in South Africa, which according to the World Bank, is the most unequal country in the world. Thus, SDGs 16 is the centrepiece for this section as the promotion of social cohesion and inequality share an interrelatedness that is also acknowledged

by the NDP. Furthermore, ensuring peace and stability has strong linkages with all SDGs, in particular 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 8, 10 and 11. This section of the report deals with the multiple dimensions of inequality, including income, employment, earnings, assets, social mobility, health, education, and access to basic services and infrastructure, with a specific focus on their impact on social cohesion.

There is growing recognition that persistently high levels of inequality may negatively affect the character of a society. Studies on the correlation between multiple measures of social problems, including health, mortality, crime and substance abuse, indicate that the resultant heightened psycho-social stressors lead to a systemic breakdown of the social structure.

The NDP identifies pillars for nation building and social cohesion that combine values contained in the Constitution, namely an inclusive society and economy, interaction between South Africans, as well as an active and responsible citizenry.

South Africa has made considerable efforts to promote good governance in order to have a peaceful and cohesive society. The country has ratified seven out of the nine core international human rights treaties and optional protocols. At the regional level, South Africa has ratified the African Charter on Human and People's Rights, the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (Maputo Protocol), the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa, and the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child. In addition, South Africa is a party to the UN Convention against Corruption, the UN Convention against Transnational Organised Crime and Supplementing Protocols, as well as the Drug Control Conventions.

South Africa as a signatory to the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration, pledges to ensure that migrants are well-integrated into communities, with access to schools, jobs, entrepreneurship options and health care services. South Africa participated in the first Global Refugee Forum to pledge better asylum management for asylum-seekers and it continues to work through the Global Compact for Refugees on improving refugee protection. South Africa also regularly discusses the situation of the stateless persons on its territory with a view to address, prevent and reduce the risks of statelessness.

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<sup>46</sup> *Ibid*

With a continually widening gap between the rich and the poor, foreigners, including refugees and asylum-seekers, become vulnerable to violent attacks. Such attacks can be said to be triggered by rampant unemployment, challenges with service delivery and unequal access to material resources.

Over the years, a number of policy positions and legislation have set out to level the playing field in South Africa, so that all citizens may enjoy the benefits of a growing and inclusive economy. These include the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) of 1994, which sought to address the social imbalances, the Growth, Employment and Redistribution (GEAR) strategy of 1996, which had a negative impact on labour and employment, as well as the NDP 2030 and the MTSF 2014-2019. The goal has been to eliminate poverty and reduce unemployment and inequality in South Africa.

Extensive work has been done in transforming the legislative environment to align to the South African Constitution and International Human Rights treaties. Equality is a core founding principle of the Constitution (Section 9, 1996 Constitution of South Africa), which has promoted the development and establishment of various laws and institutions that seek to realise this objective.

In response to the high prevalence of violence, the Government has put in place protective laws and policies. These include the revised Sexual Offences Act (No. 32, 2007) and the Domestic Violence Act (1998), which articulates and provides the police with a course of action in responding to the incidents of domestic violence. Furthermore, the National Action Plan (NAP) to Combat Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance affords a key platform for a diverse and multi-layered stakeholder response to the issue. In addition, a Cabinet-level inter-ministerial committee was established in 2012 to examine and develop strategies to deal with the high levels of violence against women.

On the ground, the Thuthuzela Care Centres (TTCs), linked to public hospitals in areas of high prevalence of violence against women are managed and coordinated by the Sexual Offences and Community Affairs Unit (SOCA) of the National Prosecution Authority. The TTCs provide immediate medical and psychosocial response services for the victims of sexual violence, which has increased during the COVID-19 period.

Gender-based violence falls within the responsibility of the Department of Social Development (DSD), who led the development of the National Strategic Plan on Gender Based Violence (2019 – 2030). This will be buttressed by a legislated national Gender-Based Violence multi-sector coordinating structure. This process has seen renewed commitment for close collaboration between civil society, development partners and Government to address Gender-Based Violence.

South Africa has significant structural enablers to sustainably tackle poverty, inequality and unemployment. The country has strong financial systems, bears diverse knowledge centres of excellence and vibrant CSOs, and hosts a media with rich experience in civic engagement. These enablers are underpinned by the country having the most acclaimed constitutional order in Africa. However, there remains entrenched systemic post-Apartheid divides that continue to perpetuate poverty, inequality and unemployment, which are disproportionately skewed against women and youth.

With a diversified economy that is the second largest on the continent (after Nigeria), and a large and established private sector with significant operations beyond the country's borders, South Africa is a gateway for Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) to the continent. South Africa dominates trade in the SADC region, accounting for the nearly 50% of SADC exports and imports. The country exports almost four times as much as it imports from other SADC countries.

While South Africa enjoys strong economic performance, it simultaneously faces the challenge of significant illicit financial outflow. Addressing the Financial Times Africa Summit in London in October 2019, President Ramaphosa acknowledged that corruption has cost South Africa as much as R1 trillion.

At the bedrock of South Africa's foreign policy are values of Pan-Africanism and solidarity with people of the South - Ubuntu diplomacy. This entails the pursuit of regional political and economic integration, promoting Africa's development through sustained South-South solidarity and mutually beneficial relations, and engaging in multilateral systems and processes of global governance to advance national development. This is achieved through some 125 diplomatic missions in 108 countries in which South Africa has representation <sup>64</sup>.

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<sup>64</sup> <http://www.dirco.gov.za/foreign/bilateral/index.htm>





South Africa is thus well positioned to enhance multilateral cooperation and has been a permanent member of the G20 since its inception in 1999. South Africa has been elected to serve on the UN Security Council from January 2019 to December 2020, representing South Africa's third term on the Council (2007-2008 and 2011-2012). South Africa was elected to chair the African Union in 2020.

The capacity of the state to deliver services and implement policies is worsening because of corruption, lack of accountability and poor skills. In 2019, South Africa ranks 73 out of 180 countries, with a score of 43.

There is a need to close the gap between legislation, implementation of programmes and provision of services by the Government. In addition, there is a lack of interdepartmental coordination and collaboration, which hinders the ability to effectively and efficiently address inequalities and subsequent consequences. The Government has recently sought to address the widely reported allegations of corruption in various State institutions by establishing several commissions of enquiry.

Despite the constitutional principles of gender equality and non-discrimination and the plethora of laws and institutions such as the Equality Courts, a considerable gap exists in their practical realisation. GBV is rooted in patriarchy that gives rise to gender conditioning and stereotypical attitudes. Women and girls are subjected to high levels of rape, sexual offences, femicide, domestic violence and intimate partner violence. Discriminatory practices, social norms and persistent harmful stereotypes continue to shape inequitable access to opportunities, resources and power for women and girls. While the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) Committee has acknowledged South Africa's progress regarding women in Parliament, it has expressed concern about the representation of women in the private sector, the judiciary and local government.

## 4.2 Recommendations

The Government's measures to close the gap between the available legislation and the implementation of programmes and the provision of services need to address the following:

1. Institutional capacity and leadership towards a common vision: Working towards a common vision, national unity and fostering of a civic spirit in line with the Constitution should be key manifestations of leadership.
2. Widespread corruption, money laundering/ illicit financial flow and unethical practice in both the public and private sectors have become endemic, hence the concerns over weak leadership relate to all sectors (the State, civil society and the private sector). Desires for a new generation of leaders have increasingly featured in the narrative among young people. In addition, society at large calls for stronger measures to address corruption, illicit enrichment and money laundering in the public sector and prevent illicit diversion of public resources from much-needed investment into development.
3. Reducing inequalities will require changes to the structure of the economy and the improvement in the quality of services the Government provides. Job creation and inclusive economic growth remain vital pillars towards achieving the country's long-term objectives around improving the lives of all, especially in the areas of poverty and inequality.

## 5. PLANET

### 5.1 Context

South Africa is richly endowed with a great diversity of biomass, ecosystems and species, and its protected areas are world famous. According to the South African National Biodiversity Institute (SANBI) (2018)<sup>65</sup>, the country is one of the top 10 nations globally for plant species richness out of the world's 17 mega diverse nations. It is ranked second and third highest in plant and marine species endemism respectively. Despite the country's land surface representing just 1.2% of the earth's total land surface, it contains approximately 7% of the world's vascular plant species, 5% of mammal, 7% of bird, 4% of reptile, 2% of amphibian, 1% of freshwater fish and 16% of shark, skate and ray species. Juxtaposed against these natural endowments, the country is grappling with various environment-related challenges.

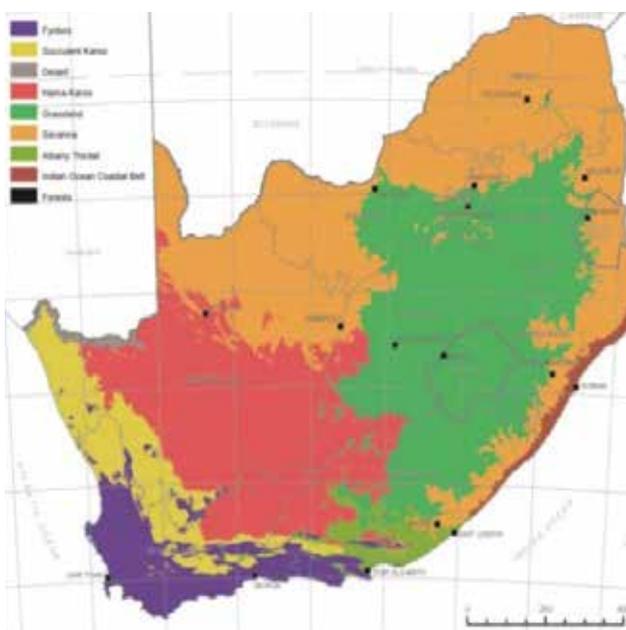


Figure 1: Biomes of South Africa

Significant among these include climate change-induced extreme weather events and vulnerability due to low adaptive capacity; rapid loss and degradation of biodiversity and ecosystems; inequitable access to and benefit-sharing from natural resources; poor waste management; air, water and land pollution; food insecurity; diminishing freshwater resources; as well as proliferation of invasive species. These challenges are exacerbated by the carbon-intensive nature of South Africa's production, underpinned by historical reliance on fossil fuels for power generation and petroleum.

South Africa's key policy positions in many spheres reflect a recognition of the intractable links between environment on the one hand, and social and economic development on the other. The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Act 108 of 1996)<sup>66</sup> is the foundational document that provides the legal principles to all legislative instruments, policies and plans. Section 24 (b) of the Constitution aims to secure ecologically sustainable development and the use of natural resources, while promoting justifiable economic and social development. The Constitution is augmented by the NDP, which dedicates Chapter 5 to environmental management as an integral part of social and economic development. It acknowledges the triple developmental challenges of poverty, inequality and unemployment, and envisages how South Africa should transition to an environmentally sustainable, climate change resilient, and low-carbon economy and a just society.

Many of the key policy documents and legislative frameworks in South Africa embed the principles of sustainable development that recognise environmental management and social and economic development as key pillars for a stable, secure and prosperous society. Within the environmental sector, notable policies include: the Green Economy Accord, the National Climate Change Response White Paper, and the nine focus areas identified at the National Green Economy Summit. In the international sphere, South Africa is signatory to various multilateral environment-focused agreements. The country has also shown outstanding commitment to the implementation of the SDGs relating to environmental sustainability and a healthy planet.

This planet section thus converges around one fundamental question: How can South Africa leverage its vast natural resource endowments to overcome the current environmental challenges, and enter a pathway to a sustainable, greener, low carbon and climate resilient development trajectory that delivers social and economic prosperity for all? This is aligned to the principle of 'Leaving No One Behind' – now, and for generations to come.

The key driving SDGs for the planet dimension are SDGs 6, 12, 13, 14, and 15. However, the most pertinent issues highlighted in this section are furthermore aligned to the following SDGs: 1, 2, 3, 6, 7, 9, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15 and 17. The section looks at eight inter-related issues that are central to the overall integrity of development in South Africa.

<sup>65</sup> SANBI, 2018. *National Biodiversity Assessment. The Status of South Africa's Ecosystems and Biodiversity*

<sup>66</sup> Republic of South Africa. 1996. *The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa Act No. 108 of 1996. [on line] <http://www.gov.za/sites/www.gov.za/files/images/a108-96.pdf>, Accessed 28 January 2020*

## Natural resources, biodiversity and ecosystems

Natural ecosystems provide many essential services, such as food, clean water and air, prevention of soil erosion, pollination of crops, medicinal plants, nutrient cycling, provision of food and shelter, and meeting spiritual, cultural, aesthetic and recreational needs. Large portions of the country's economy are heavily dependent on biodiversity (e.g. agriculture, fishing, game and livestock ranching, traditional and commercial use of medicinal plants and ecotourism). The total value of the ecosystem services provided by South Africa's terrestrial, freshwater and estuarine habitats is estimated at approximately R275 billion per annum<sup>67</sup>. Some of the key sectors that are dependent on the integrity of biodiversity and ecosystems include tourism and agriculture. In recent years, the biodiversity economy has shown a constant annual growth of 6%<sup>68</sup>.

Loss and degradation of South Africa's biodiversity has serious implications on the economy and the communities who depend on them for their sustenance. The first implementation of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Red Listing of Ecosystems (RLE) for South Africa's terrestrial ecosystems covered 458 vegetation types and resulted in the listing of 35 critically endangered and 29 vulnerable ecosystems<sup>69</sup>. Furthermore, National Red List Assessments indicate that 10% of South Africa's birds and frogs, 20% of its mammals and 13% of its plants are considered threatened.

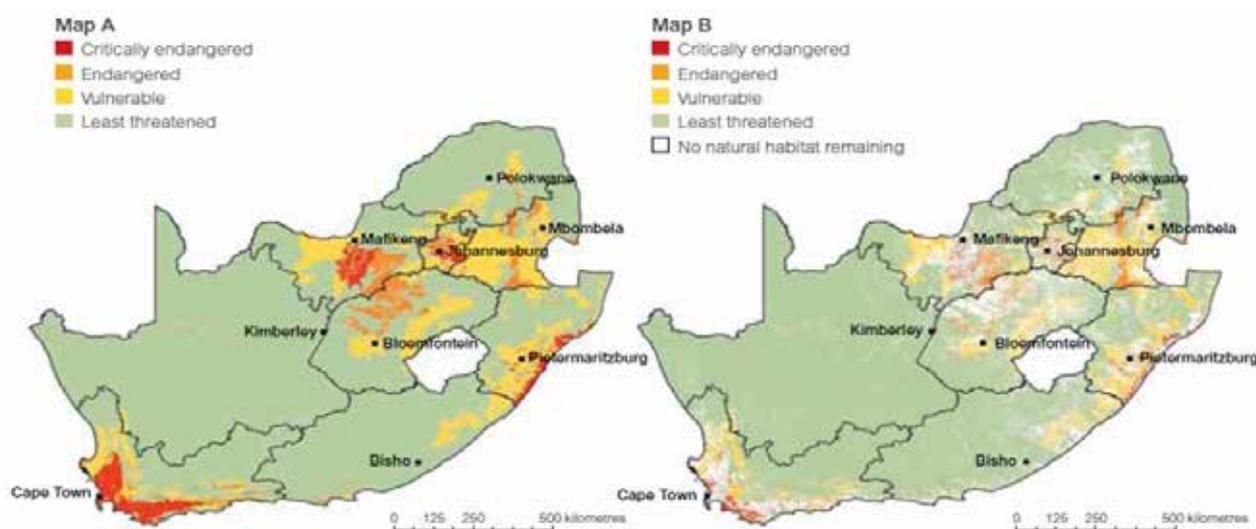


Figure 2: Map A: The original footprint of terrestrial ecosystems. Map B: What remains of those ecosystems.

Wildlife economy is significant to employment, poverty reduction and economic growth. Notwithstanding this, illegal wildlife trade and criminal syndicates are targeting iconic species, including the cycad, rhino, elephant and lion. In the last decade, there has been

an escalation in the intensity of poaching, and the range of species targeted. It is becoming apparent that the loss of biodiversity and ecosystems and the recent surge in illegal wildlife trade poses a serious threat to not only tourism, the economy and the livelihoods of many, but is also a cause for concern from a national security viewpoint.



<sup>67</sup> Turpie et al., 2017. Mapping and valuation of South Africa's ecosystem services: A local perspective. *Ecosystem Services*, Volume 27, Part B, October 2017, Pp 179-192

<sup>68</sup> Modise, A. 2018. Strengthening indigenous governance, benefit sharing and capacity building for traditional phytomedicines. Department of Environmental Affairs Available at: [https://www.environment.gov.za/sites/default/files/docs/geneticresources\\_sustainabledevelopment.pdf](https://www.environment.gov.za/sites/default/files/docs/geneticresources_sustainabledevelopment.pdf)

<sup>69</sup> Skowno, A. 2019

## Climate change

Over the last six decades (1960-2020), significant changes in climate have been observed in South Africa<sup>70</sup>. There are observed changes in temperature and/or rainfall patterns with more intense storms, floods and droughts, coupled with fluctuations in soil moisture, increased surface run-off, as well as increased evaporation. Consequently, climate zones across the country are already shifting, and ecosystems and landscapes are degrading due to fires and heat waves. Ultimately, this has, in some parts of the country, translated into natural disasters, vector borne diseases, as well as food and water insecurity<sup>71</sup>, which consequently threatens livelihoods.

In the four years preceding 2019, the country's drought situations were more frequent and severe, with substantial impacts on crop production and water security. Overall vulnerability has been highest in rural areas, small towns and informal settlements. Geographically, the eastern half of the country has been most affected, particularly in rural areas corresponding to former homeland areas. Administratively, twenty municipalities have been classified as highly-vulnerable, of which seven are in Limpopo, five in the Eastern Cape, four in North West, three in KwaZulu-Natal, and one in Mpumalanga.

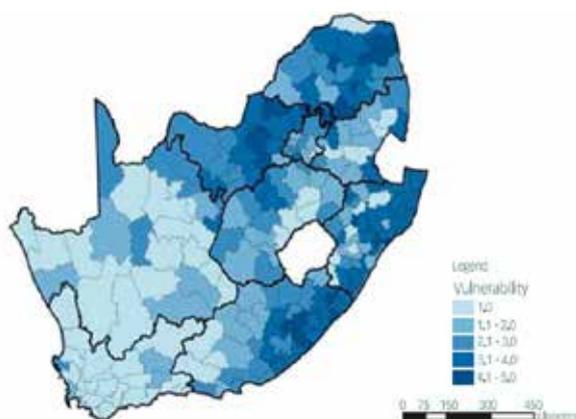


Figure 3: Climate Change vulnerability across Municipalities  
Source: Financial and Fiscal Commission 2013-2014

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## Agriculture

Agriculture is one of the major drivers of biodiversity loss, environmental degradation and water usage in South Africa. Dominated by large-scale commercial farms which, over the years, have become more capital-intensive, the sector contributes about 7% of the country's national greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. As a key sector of the economy (it contributes 4% of GDP and accounts for 10% of employment), the agricultural sector faces a range of challenges, including in relation to the water-food-energy nexus, competition for water, and climate change. Currently, water availability is the single most critical factor that limits agriculture production in South Africa and the situation is likely to become worse as adverse climate change impacts are intensifying the competition for water.

Further, the carbon footprint of chemical fertilisers and production systems based on fossil fuel consumption is very high, especially in fertiliser manufacturing and the highly centralised food processing and distribution system that incurs high numbers of 'food miles' due to the prevalence of imports. Ecologically, South African agriculture is in a precarious situation. The country's relatively small share of arable land (14%) is losing on average 13 tonnes of topsoil per hectare per year, and acidification has affected tens of thousands of hectares. Irrigation consumes over 60% of the surface water resources, while population growth and adverse climatic trends are intensifying competition for water. The situation for small-scale farmers is worse: although they are in general far less dependent on industrial inputs, decades of over-crowding and limited support in the former homelands has left a legacy of depleted soils, degraded rangelands and a compromised productive capacity. The dualistic agrarian structure reflects the historic patterns of racial and gender oppression, as well as land dispossession and economic exclusion. Smallholder farmers are being squeezed out from the formal sector due to increasing industrialisation and market concentrations where a few production, processing and retail companies determine choice, control supply and influence policy.

<sup>70</sup> The Long term Adaptation Strategy (LTAS) presents climate trends and projections at a national scale, for South Africa's six hydrological zones

<sup>71</sup> All provinces have (to varying extents), grappled with climate-related water shortages due to increased competition for scarce water between various uses such as domestic, agriculture, mining, energy and industrial and commercial activities

Despite the existence of enabling policies, there is substantial gender bias in the sector in terms of access to and control over land and other productive resources, as well as access to technologies and services that could alleviate women's burden of work. This is due to discriminatory inheritance practices and land access under traditional and customary law, and unequal access to land markets and gender-biased land reform.

To address some of the above challenges, the Government has embarked on several policy initiatives to encourage Climate Smart Agriculture (CSA). For instance, in 2018, the then Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (DAFF) issued a draft of the Conservation Agriculture Policy, which is now being reviewed by the relevant Cabinet cluster. Also, in 2018, the Department gazetted the draft Climate Smart Agriculture Strategic Framework for Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries to promote effective adaptation responses and increase adaptive capacity to reduce vulnerability and increase overall resilience of South Africa's agriculture systems. The policy also emphasised the need for CSA programmes to reflect the complex reality of smallholder farming.

### Forestry

South Africa is richly endowed with more than 1,700 tree and shrub species. Some are threatened, and 47 species are protected under the National Forests Act, 1998 (Act 84 of 1998). The country's forestry landscape is a tapestry of commercial timber plantations – or tree farms – interwoven by natural spaces of unplanted land to enhance and conserve biodiversity, grasslands, wetlands and indigenous forests. South Africa has nine biomes, which constitute no less than 440 vegetation types.

The National Forests Act, 1998 (Act 84 of 1998), and the Forestry Laws Amendment Act, 2005 (Act 35 of 2005), reflect the vision for the future of forestry in South Africa. The Government sees afforestation as one of the low hanging fruits for the achievement of national climate and biodiversity goals.

### Freshwater resources

Ensuring water security is one of South Africa's key sustainable development challenges. Chapter 4 of the NDP envisages a South Africa that recognises the importance of secure and equitable access to water and sanitation as catalysts for socioeconomic development. The Long-Term Adaptation Scenarios (2013) show that rainfall and river flow in South Africa are unpredictable in time and unevenly distributed in space (i.e. rainfall variability). Only 12% of the land area

generates 50% of the potentially available surface water resources. In addition, in five of the nineteen water management areas, surface water resources <sup>72</sup> were already over-allocated by the year 2000. The sector is coming under increasing pressure due to population growth, high rates of urbanisation, recurrent droughts, pollution, and expansion in agricultural and industrial enterprises. Estimates indicate that the country's total requirements for water use will double by the year 2050. In addition to water availability, water quality will be a challenge due to threats emanating from pollution and contamination of various water sources.

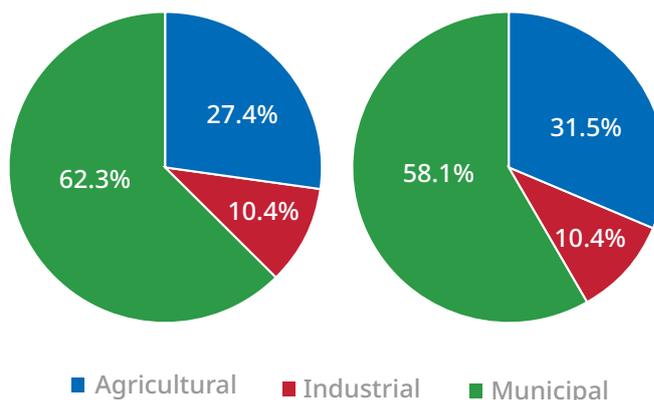


Figure 4: Water Withdrawals by Sector in 2017 (left) and projections for 2035 (right); Source FAO 2016, Aquastat data

The Department of Water and Sanitation (DWS) focuses on investments in water infrastructure, improving planning and regulation of the water sector, and monitoring and protecting South Africa's water resources. The main legislation in the sector is the National Water Act of 1998 (Act 36 of 1998), whose aim was to fundamentally reform the previously unjust and discriminatory water use and related laws.

In 2018, the DWS released a National Water and Sanitation Master Plan (NWSMP). The NWSMP observes the following challenges:

- Over 3 million people still do not have access to a basic water supply service and 14,1 million people do not have access to safe sanitation
- Under current trends, it is projected that the country will have a 17% water deficit by 2030
- 56% of wastewater treatment works and 44% of water treatment works are in a poor or critical condition, and 11% are dysfunctional

<sup>72</sup> National Water and Sanitation Master Plan (NWSMP)

The NWSMP from 2019 <sup>73</sup> is based on five key objectives that define a new 'normal' for water and sanitation management in South Africa. These are:

- Resilient and fit-for-use water supply
- Universal water and sanitation provision
- Equitable sharing and allocation of water resources
- Effective infrastructure management, operation and maintenance
- Reduction in future water demand

These five objectives enable the achievement of the NDP's vision for 2030 of affordable and reliable access to sufficient and safe water and hygienic sanitation for socio-economic growth and well-being, with due regard to the environment. The National Water Resource Strategy (NWRS) 2014 is another potential entry point for engagements with the sector. The NWRS aims at ensuring that water is efficiently and effectively managed for equitable and sustainable growth and development. Other strategies whose enhanced implementation could benefit from UN support include: the Water for Growth and Development (WfGD) Strategy; the Raw Water Pricing Strategy; the National Groundwater Strategy; and the Re-Use Strategy.

## Waste management

Waste contributes to GHG emissions and pollution of water resources. It is becoming a serious challenge to the environment, human health and the well-being of the ecological assets in the country. Poor communities living close to dumpsites are especially exposed to hazards such as polluted air, lead, and mercury from industrial and other sources. Waste generation in South Africa is driven primarily by the growing population, economic growth, urbanisation and rising consumption. South Africans generate roughly 54 million tonnes of general (municipal, commercial, and industrial) waste per year. Out of this amount, only about 10% is recycled or recovered for other uses, while at least 90% is landfilled or dumped <sup>74</sup>.

In addition to traditional waste, there has been an alarming growth in the generation of waste from electrical and electronic equipment (WEEE), or e-waste. This can be attributed to rising incomes, urbanisation, and falling prices of electrical and electronic devices with short replacement cycles. While WEEE can be a valuable source of secondary materials, it is toxic if handled and discarded improperly. It is estimated that every South African generates about 6.1 kg of WEEE annually and the total annual amount for the country was in 2016 estimated to amount to 44,6 tonnes (DEA,

2018, *ibid*). According to Dataweek (2015) <sup>75</sup>, only around 12% of the e-waste is being recycled, while the remainder is either kept in storage or ends up in landfills. Collection systems are focused around the major cities, with most rural areas faced with a barrier of transportation cost to get the e-waste fractions to recyclers for processing or export for environmentally-sound treatment.

Despite the benefits and need for recycling, a StatsSA study (2017) reports that only 12,9% of metropolitan households undertook recycling, followed by 10,8% of households across urban areas and 3% of households in rural areas. Of the rural households, recycling is more common in households on farms than in households in traditional areas.

South Africa is fast adopting the principles of a circular economy where the linear model of 'make, use and dispose' is being abandoned in favour of a more sustainable (and profitable) eco-cycle model. This model emphasises longer term design of products, maintenance, repair, reuse, re-manufacturing, refurbishing, recycling, upcycling, or energy production.

The circular economy presents significant opportunities for the country and the UN system to work together to deliver on the twin goals of more inclusive economic growth and employment opportunities, and positive environmental practices. Waste-to-wealth opportunities include water recycling and conversion of waste into fertilisers, energy, proteins and animal feed.

## Energy

South Africa derives most of its energy from fossil fuels, of which coal is relied on the most for both power generation and petroleum. The country is currently saddled with a fleet of old and inefficient coal-fired power plants that are nearing the end of their design lifecycles. By and large, this explains South Africa's high carbon footprint, which in 2015 amounted to 460 million tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent (MtCO<sub>2</sub>e) <sup>76</sup> and meant that the country was ranked the 14<sup>th</sup> largest emitter of GHG in the world. This development trajectory has serious impacts on the environment and biodiversity, and is a key contributor to climate change challenges. From the second half of 2019 and throughout 2020, the access to energy worsened as evidenced by more frequent electricity shortages and load shedding that has invariably affected poor people and small businesses <sup>77</sup>. Further, mining activities are harming the health and livelihoods of people in the surrounding communities. Violations of environmental rights are on the rise and there has been numerous accounts

<sup>73</sup> <https://www.gov.za/documents/national-water-and-sanitation-master-plan-28-nov-2019-0000>

<sup>74</sup> Department of Environmental Affairs. 2018. *South Africa State of Waste. A report on the state of the environment. First draft report.* Department of Environmental Affairs, Pretoria

<sup>75</sup> Dataweek 2015. *Electronics Manufacturing and Production Handbook 2015.* Johannesburg Technews

<sup>76</sup> Sweeney R., et al. (2018)

<sup>77</sup> [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/343670969\\_Setting\\_up\\_for\\_the\\_2020s\\_Addressing\\_South\\_Africa%27s\\_electricity\\_crisis\\_and\\_getting\\_ready\\_for\\_the\\_next\\_decade\\_and\\_now\\_Covid-19](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/343670969_Setting_up_for_the_2020s_Addressing_South_Africa%27s_electricity_crisis_and_getting_ready_for_the_next_decade_and_now_Covid-19)



of threats, attacks, and other forms of intimidation faced by environmental human rights defenders in KwaZulu-Natal, Limpopo, Northwest, and Eastern Cape provinces. From an environmental justice perspective, it is thus imperative that the country moves towards more sustainable and less carbon-intensive energy options. Renewable energy in the form of solar, wind or micro hydropower generators should form part of a growing energy mix.

There is growing recognition that renewable energy (RE) is the pathway to a more environmentally sustainable development trajectory for South Africa. With the introduction of the Renewable Energy Independent Power Producer Procurement Programme (REIPPPP) in 2011, South Africa has emerged as a major hub for RE investment globally. REIPPPP has been lauded as the most accelerated energy investment in Africa. This is part of the efforts to create a more diversified and cleaner energy generation portfolio. Since 2011, the REIPPPP has attracted R209,4 billion in committed private sector investments (24% FDI), creating 38 000 full-time jobs for one year, reduced carbon emissions by 33,2 million tonnes of carbon dioxide (as at December 2018), with 6,329 MW of renewable energy procured. Of these, 80% is connected to the grid. Despite the relative successes of public-private partnerships (PPPs) in South Africa, new project transactions have declined. The transactions decreased from an estimated R10,7 billion in 2011/12 to R5 billion in 2017/18, mainly as a result of massive cost over-runs, delays and/or cancelled projects, political interference, poor business planning and communication.

Through a well-thought-out green energy transition and action plan, South Africa can become the climate champion among African countries and leapfrog into green jobs and environmental technology. Most provinces prioritise renewable energy strategies. During the State of the Nation Address (SONA) in February 2020, the President announced plans to rapidly increase power generation from renewable energy, natural gas and hydro-power.

### **Invasive plant species**

South Africa is home to a large and growing number of invasive species. The impacts of invasive alien species vary widely in type and magnitude depending on the invasive potential of the species and the extent to which they have invaded. Furthermore, factors such as the nature of the invaded environment, the socio-economic context and the likely interaction with other global changes, such as climate change, land degradation and pollution, determine the impact of invasive species.

The greatest impacts associated with invasive alien species in terrestrial habitats include reduced carrying capacity of rangelands, reduced surface water run-off and groundwater recharge, increased fire hazards and intrusion into biodiversity. Due to the lack of natural enemies and the resistance to local diseases, these plants tend to spread aggressively, which threatens biodiversity, reduce water availability and increase the risk and intensity of wildfires. The most recent full list of invasive and alien species was published in Government Notice 864 of 29 July 2016. The list contains a total of 378 invasive species. Given the large and growing impacts of invasive species, effective and efficient measures to contain and reduce these impacts are economically justifiable.

In 2004, the Alien and Invasive Species Regulations of the National Environmental Management: Biodiversity Act, 2004 (Act No.10 of 2004) was published with the aim to:

- Provide for the management and conservation of South Africa's biodiversity within the framework of the National Environmental Management Act, 1998
- Enhance the protection of species and ecosystems that warrant national protection
- Promote the sustainable use of indigenous biological resources
- Facilitate the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from bioprospecting involving indigenous biological resources
- Provide the mandate for the establishment and functions of a South African National Biodiversity Institute (SANBI)

### **5.2 Recommendations**

A key message from the foregoing is that South Africa needs to find a pathway through which to use the existing resource endowments to fund the transition to a low-carbon and more prosperous, inclusive, equitable and secure future, in which national priorities of eradicating poverty and reducing inequality are addressed. Shared prosperity for current and future generations is an imperative to ensure a stable and peaceful society. No one should be left behind.



## 6. PARTNERSHIPS

Due to its middle-income country status, South Africa receives minimal development aid or grants (less than 2% of its budget 2017/18) <sup>78</sup>, despite a large presence of multilateral and bilateral partners. Partners provide, however, strategic advice and technical expertise across different levels of government and in all development areas. The limited financial partnership base is an impetus for South Africa to explore innovative resource mobilisation measures to complement its own resources.



At the domestic level, partnerships with the private sector, foundations and with the South African diaspora remain largely untapped. Furthermore, options and instruments for joint financing and collaboration, such as blended financing, need to be harnessed. The Government is also positioning the country as a viable investment destination both regionally and globally. In addition to enhancing trade relations with the West and the fellow BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India and China), industrial development and trade will need to be reinforced within the African region beyond SADC. The UN in South Africa has already initiated partnership discussions with the private sector, academia and civil society as it implements the UNSDCF 2020-2025.

<sup>78</sup> <http://www.statssa.gov.za/publications/P91194/P911942018.pdf>

The successful implementation of the UNSDCF 2020-2025 would require the following:

- 1. Ownership.** The possibilities for maximum gains is enhanced when the Government owns and drives the initiatives outlined in the UNSDCF. Joint programmes with strong government ownership such as the Joint Programme on HIV/AIDS has had more tangible impact than programmes where government ownership has been absent or lukewarm.
- 2. Coordination.** The absence of a functioning SDG coordination mechanism before 2019 has undermined a harmonised approach in the implementation and monitoring of the SDGs and hence weakened impact.
- 3. Partnerships.** Private sector, CSOs, academia etc., are crucial in the planning, implementation and monitoring of the MTSF 2019-2024 and the UNSDCF. Partnerships will be strengthened by working in collaboration with the Government both at the national and local levels, and by building strategic partnerships, engaging key stakeholders in the public and private sector, civil society and communities.

## 7. IMPLICATIONS FOR UN ENGAGEMENT IN SOUTH AFRICA

In developing the CCA, the UN in South Africa consulted widely and thoroughly with various levels of government and with key partners and specific interest groups, such as civil society, the media, private sector, development partners, young people and women. In addition, partners participated in the development of the Theory of Change (ToC), which identified the root and underlying causes or impediments to addressing South Africa's development challenges of unemployment, inequality and poverty. The ToC also assisted in identifying the tenets on which the UNSDCF 2020-2025 will be anchored.

The Agenda 2063 and the SDGs are largely aligned. According to a study by UNDP <sup>79</sup>, there is a 74% convergence between the NDP and the SDGs. Situating South Africa within the global discourse, a deliberate approach was taken to identify and understand gaps, risks, challenges and opportunities, and to align the UN's contribution to national priorities and the localisation of the SDGs.

The following four strategic priorities were identified to guide UN engagement in South Africa:

- 1. Inclusive, just and sustainable economic growth:** reduce persistent social and economic inequalities for both men and women in the public and private sector, re-structure the economy to make it more representative and inclusive for all citizens, promote equality for youth and other marginalised groups, and increase productivity and enhance value chain development across economic sectors towards a greener, more diversified and more people-centred economy in South Africa.
- 2. Human capital and social transformation:** improve access to social services, such as health, well-being and quality education, and strengthen enjoyment of human rights and protection from violence, discrimination and abuse for the most vulnerable and marginalised populations.
- 3. Effective, efficient and transformative governance:** improve rights-holders' access to justice and participation in democratic processes, and ensure effective delivery of public services and functioning of oversight institutions.
- 4. Climate resilience and sustainably managed natural resources:** accelerate South Africa's just transition to a low-carbon society and strengthen climate change resilience of vulnerable and marginalised communities, and improve efficient and environmentally-sound management and utilisation of natural resources.

Within the four strategic priorities there are nine multi-sectoral and inter-dependent outcomes to which the UN in South Africa, in collaboration with Government and other national and international partners, will contribute. The UNSDCF will be implemented through Joint Work Plans agreed with Government Ministries and Agencies and carried out with a range of implementing partners. The UN will prioritise joint strategies to mobilise resources for the UNSDCF and for supporting SDG financing in South Africa. The Joint Steering Committee, co-chaired by the Government and the UN, will annually review progress against the framework and unlock potential programmatic or governance bottlenecks to ensure delivery of results.

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<sup>79</sup> Mapping the National Development Plan – Vision 2030 to the Sustainable Development Goals. Assessing the convergence between the NDP and the SDGs

Key entry points for UN engagement include:

### Prosperity

1. Rural poverty is a big challenge in South Africa. Key stakeholders in rural communities, including women, youth, smallholder farmers, farm workers and landless people, are among those most likely to be left behind. The UN will adopt the District Development Model (Khawuleza) of the Government and focus on urban poverty and those most likely to be left behind.
2. Rural area and township transformation. Beyond social protection, South Africa has developed two ambitious strategies: (i) the Comprehensive Rural Development Programme (CRDP) with Rural Enterprises, and (ii) the Industries Development (REID) Strategy and Rural Economy Transformation Model (RETM) with the Agro-parks strategy. In addition, the National Agriculture and Agro-Processing Masterplan (NAAM) with sub-sectoral plans, including subsistence farming, is being developed with October 2020 as the completion date. Measures to be undertaken include strengthening implementation of the existing strategies and facilitating access to financing, markets, land reform, information sharing, human and institutional capacity strengthening, as well as mechanisms for coordination and participation that promote accountability. There is a need to develop local food markets, value chains and territorial pacts of co-operative governance for creating labour-intensive agriculture and agro-processing, as well as investment in mainstreaming conservation agriculture and agro-ecology. These initiatives will reduce the high input costs associated with conventional agriculture, address environmental degradation that threatens to undermine the spectrum of farming systems, and create more resiliency. Environmentally-sound practices also offer a huge opportunity for stimulating locally manufactured labour-intensive low-carbon services, technologies and equipment for small and middle-scale farms.
3. Local economic development that promotes private sector partnerships in enterprise and supplier development, as well as value chains with small, medium and micro enterprises (SMMEs).
4. Prioritisation of a strategy for integrating agriculture, rural development and social protection policies in order to eradicate extreme poverty and food insecurity, and foster inclusive growth in disadvantaged territories.
5. Enhancing targeting and monitoring of social protection programmes and interventions.

6. Building social cohesion, human security, tolerance and safeguarding human rights.
7. Supporting the Government to design and implement pro-employment, pro-gender economic policies that can stimulate job growth.

### People

1. Support gender equality and women's empowerment through the following initiatives: supporting and strengthening the coordination, planning and monitoring capacities of the gender machinery; supporting gender-responsive budgeting and reporting; strengthening data collection and analysis including capacity for coordination of sex disaggregated data collection with a special focus on GBV; ensuring women's access to sexual and reproductive health services; strengthening business and entrepreneurial skills for women entrepreneurs; supporting social and behaviour change on gender norms and cultural attitudes including engagement with men and boys; strengthening traditional authorities on prevention and response; and strengthening the judicial and criminal justice system.
2. Support South Africa to harness the demographic dividend and promote active and productive participation of young people in the social, economic and political life of their communities. The UN can support investments that empower young people to optimise their health, life-skills and well-being, and encourage young people to pursue appropriate education for decent jobs, entrepreneurship and gainful employment in line with market needs.
3. Design and support programmes that engender and promote values of racial, cultural and religious tolerance for all people within institutions of learning. Thus, the UN can undertake: community mapping of major hotspots of xenophobic violence to help communities understand the underlying causes of the problem; address social, economic and environmental determinants of xenophobic violence, as well as integrate interventions on promotion of safe, orderly and regular migration into the local development plans; support community initiatives and quick impact projects in communities; mobilise communities and media through community conversations; and facilitate dialogues to change negative perceptions about migrants and strengthen social cohesion and peace building between migrants and host communities.



4. Strengthen national and sub-national health systems to improve access to quality health services aimed at addressing the 'quadruple burden' of disease.
5. Support legislation and implementation of the National Health Insurance (NHI) towards Universal Health Coverage (UHC) so that all people can use the health services they need (preventive, promotive, curative, rehabilitative and palliative) throughout the course of life, without financial hardship.
6. Provide implementation support for the National Action Plan on Health Security to strengthen mechanisms for timely detection, response and containment of any health emergencies.
7. Address social and environmental determinants of health and risk factors as well as integrate interventions on nutrition, safe water and sanitation, mental health and violence in health and well-being programmes.
8. Support transformation of the rural economy including agricultural and land reform for growth, poverty reduction, food security and nutrition, employment creation and overcoming inequalities in the country.
9. Promote the right to food. Support Parliamentarians and government officials in taking legislative actions, designing policies and strategies, and setting up accountable institutions and bodies to respect, protect and fulfil the human right to adequate food.
10. Promote nutrition-sensitive agriculture, which is a food-based approach to agricultural development that puts nutritionally rich foods, dietary diversity, and food fortification at the heart of overcoming malnutrition and micronutrient deficiencies.
11. Support livelihoods of small-scale food producers, improve the resilience of food production systems and encourage sustainable use of natural resources.
12. The NDP identifies the following persistent challenges in the education sector: (1) funding for infrastructure and staff; (2) training for teachers; (3) learner support materials and equipment; (4) strengthening of support agencies; (5) reaching the most vulnerable children and families; and (6) quality in early childhood development, basic education and post-school education. In addition to these areas, South Africa needs to accelerate implementation of school safety and school health policies, constantly review and revise the curriculum in line with emerging issues and challenges and foster equitable distribution of resources ensuring

that they reach the most left behind first. The NDP emphasises that education is a critical determinant of building national capabilities through quality early learning programmes, policies and strategies; inclusive, equitable and quality basic education in the foundation, intermediate and senior phase; and tailored learning of science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) and access to post-school education. Post-school education needs to respond to the country's skills needs in all sectors (business, industry and Government), while ensuring that it produces highly-skilled professionals and technicians, together with sufficient research output.

## Peace

1. South Africa is a signatory and has ratified most international human rights conventions, treaties and protocols. The UN will continue working with the Government for the ratification of outstanding conventions, treaties and protocols. More importantly, the UN will work with the Government and strengthen the implementation of policies, conventions, treaties and protocols geared towards reducing inequalities, GBVF, and xenophobia and promoting a more cohesive society.
2. Support to overcome the bottlenecks impeding people-centred development and contribute to shaping the future of people-centred development in South Africa.
3. Enhance institutional capacity strengthening and promote good governance through supporting leadership skills, patriotism and accountability.

## Planet

1. **Natural Resources, Biodiversity and Ecosystems:** South Africa has put in place several policies, legislative frameworks and programmes to manage and sustainably-utilise biodiversity and enhance the flow of economic benefits, including access and benefit-sharing to a wider cross-section of society, as contemplated by the Constitution and the NDP. The focus of these efforts has been to consolidate and strengthen the biodiversity economy and its various value chains. Some of the key policies and programmes include: Access Benefit and Sharing (ABS) 2008, the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP) 2015, the National Biodiversity Economy Strategy (NBES) 2015, the Environmental Protection and Infrastructure Programme (EPIP) 2000, Operation Phakisa – Ocean Economy 2014, and the programmes for combating illegal wildlife trade.

## 2. Climate Change:

- The National Climate Change Strategy White Paper (2011) identifies water, agriculture and forestry, health, biodiversity and human settlements sectors as areas for immediate and future climate change intervention. Further, it identifies rural women as particularly vulnerable to the negative impacts of climate change. Due to gender differences in social and economic roles and responsibilities, women constitute the majority of the poor and are in many instances more dependent on natural resources for their livelihoods.
- Nationally Determined Contributions: South Africa ratified the Paris Agreement in November 2016 and committed to contribute to the global GHG emissions reduction goals and communicate progress through the Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs). The NDCs outline how national commitments for adaptation will be met over the period 2020-2030 through a set of six goals<sup>80,81</sup>. Consequently, South Africa has developed a countrywide monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system and the Climate Change Annual Report which track the country's transition to a low-carbon and climate-resilient economy and society. The Climate Change Annual Report offers a good framework for the UN to engage with the country's efforts of monitoring and responding to climate change trends and the various threats that it poses. The UN should continue to monitor and raise public awareness around the six goals for adaptation as presented in the NDCs.
- Ecosystem based Adaptation (EbA): A number of EbA projects/programmes (e.g. restoration of degraded wetlands, mangrove conservation, conservation of medicinal plants used by local and indigenous communities, sustainable management of grassland, climate resilient livestock production on communal lands) are being implemented across the country to support poor and/or vulnerable (e.g. rural) communities who are relatively, or directly, dependent on natural resources and ecosystem services in adapting to climate change. With its partners, the UN Environment World Conservation Monitoring Centre (UNEP-WCMC) is working

with South Africa (among other countries) to gather practical evidence and develop policy guidance for government on how EbA can best be implemented.

- Data for reporting and early warning: South Africa continues to grapple with a lack of data, and poor early warning and response systems. The UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR) could partner with relevant agencies in the country to develop a coordinated framework for data collection, early warning and response under the auspices of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction.

**3. Agriculture:** Strengthening governance and institutional coordination for effective implementation of the Climate Smart Agriculture Framework Programme at the national, provincial and local levels is a key intervention that UN may focus on. The support should aim at creating a sufficient and compelling body of knowledge, information and capacity that addresses the food, water and energy nexus, indigenous knowledge systems and agroecological innovations to inform CSA mainstreaming at policy and implementation levels.

**4. Forestry:** The UN could mobilise public and private finance to support large-scale landscape restoration of land affected by erosion, deforestation and degradation. The UN could also assist by facilitating the scaling-up of restoration projects and establishing carbon markets on existing farms to raise awareness for restoration of degraded lands, carbon dioxide absorption and income generation. In addition, the UN could raise awareness on the link between sustainable management of forestry resources and green income-generating activities.

**5. Freshwater resources:** Support implementation of the water and sanitation objectives of the NDP. In addition, support the Water for Growth and Development (WfGD) Framework; the Raw Water Pricing Strategy; the National Groundwater Strategy; and the Re-use Strategy.

<sup>80</sup> Develop and operationalise the National Adaptation Plan; Mainstream climate considerations in national development at all Government levels; Build the necessary institutional capacity for climate change response planning and implementation; Develop an early warning, vulnerability and adaptation monitoring system for key climate vulnerable sectors and geographic areas; Develop vulnerability assessments and adaptation needs framework by 2020; Communicate past events in adaptation for education and awareness and for international recognition

<sup>81</sup> South Africa's 2nd Annual Climate Change Report (DEA, 2016)





## 6. Waste management:

- Work with municipalities to create and enhance value chains for municipal solid waste management which has potential for job creation, particularly with respect to unskilled or semi-skilled labour.
- Develop an Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) Policy and implementation roadmap. By drawing on experience from other sectors and countries, the roadmap should address the roles and responsibilities of stakeholders; prioritise categories of e-waste; data collection and market intelligence; expected policy targets over time; development of the collection channels and recycling infrastructure; as well as export of hazardous materials.
- Engage in the process of developing the Industry Waste Management Plan (IndWMP) for the paper and packaging industry. Such a plan would see producers of packaging materials held responsible for managing their waste by belonging to industry bodies that represent their interests and drive their own recycling and collection efforts.
- Good Green Deeds Campaign: support advocacy on mobilising every inhabitant of South Africa to play a role in cleaning their neighbourhood and ensuring that public spaces are clean and tidy, and free from litter and illegal dumps.
- Foster Innovation Hubs for green technologies that address waste management.

7. **Energy:** Promote and scale-up investments in mini-grids and renewable energy, natural gas and hydro power.

8. **Invasive species:** Support SANBI's Invasive Species Programme (ISP) through deployment of technology to detect invasive species, assess the risk these species pose to South Africa and attempt to eradicate high-risk species with limited distribution, in particular, Category 1a listed species.

## Partnership

1. Provide technical advice and support to the development and refinement of policies, strategies, norms and guidelines which focus on addressing food and nutrition security.
2. Provide implementation support and capacity building in food and nutrition security at the national and provincial levels through integrated, diversified and nutrient-dense small holder and household food production.
3. Provide implementation support and capacity building on food-based nutrition and health promotion through education and behaviour change communication.
4. Provide best practices to inform policies and strategies for food and nutrition security.

## 8. RISK ANALYSIS

Methodology/approach used to develop risk matrix:

The preceding sections have extensively considered the key gaps and challenges to achieving the objectives of the National Development Plan and the SDGs in South Africa.

Utilising this analysis, specific risks that could pose threats to achieving the NDP and the SDGs are identified below

Risks to achieving the SDGs/NDP South Africa			
1. Economic Risks	Drivers	Likelihood	Impact
1.1 South Africa's economy continues to grow at the slow rates experienced over the past decade	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Failure to restructure the economy</li> <li>b. Weak education outcomes undermine long-term national competitiveness</li> </ul>	High	High
1.2 Inequality in South Africa remains stagnant or increases	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Structural unemployment</li> <li>b. inability to fully effect policies aimed at transforming asset ownership</li> <li>c. Inability to fund the Social Security System</li> </ul>	High	High
1.3 Levels of public debt continue to rise and over time become a challenge to the national fiscus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Poor governance and leadership of State-Owned Enterprises</li> <li>b. Growing public expenditure not matched by increase in Government revenue</li> </ul>	Medium	High
2. Social Risks	Drivers	Likelihood	Impact
2.1 Government and its institutions start to lose legitimacy among citizens	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Growing levels of corruption</li> <li>b. Declining service delivery to citizens</li> </ul>	Medium	High
2.2 South African society is unable to consolidate its national building programme and experiences further polarisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. High poverty levels which breed discontent</li> <li>b. High unemployment among the youth</li> <li>c. High inequality</li> <li>d. Youth exclusion</li> <li>e. Gender-Based Violence</li> <li>f. Growing tensions between South Africans and migrant populations</li> <li>g. Inability to create a social compact which binds all national partners to one national vision</li> </ul>	Medium	Medium
2.3 The most vulnerable sections of South African society are further left behind in terms of development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Deteriorating political situation which breeds an extractive elite class</li> <li>b. Weakening State institutions</li> <li>c. Growing levels of corruption</li> <li>d. Poor quality of public expenditure, compromising quality and access for the poor</li> <li>e. Policy not deliberately targeted towards vulnerable groups</li> </ul>	Medium	High



Risks to achieving the SDGs/NDP South Africa			
3. Regional Risks	Drivers	Likelihood	Impact
3.1 South Africa is further isolated from the region and the broader African continent	a. Continuation of xenophobic attacks	High	High
3.2 Politically and economically declining sub-region	a. Deteriorating political and economic situation in countries within the sub-region	Medium	High
4. Environmental	Drivers	Likelihood	Impact
4.1 National partners are unable to agree on the elements of a just transition to a low carbon economy	a. Inability to create a social compact around the just transition	Medium	High
4.2 South Africa experiences further droughts which leads to a national crisis of water shortages			
5. Governance and Institutional	Drivers	Likelihood	Impact
5.1 Weakening of public institutions continues unabated	a. Lack of political will to strengthen accountability within Government b. Growing levels of corruption c. Declining quality of public servants	Low	High
5.2 Service delivery to citizens continues to decline	a. State of local government continues to decline b. Government is unable to efficiently respond to its challenges of coordination c. Lack of political will to strengthen accountability within Government d. Growing levels of corruption e. Declining quality of public servants	Medium	High



## 9. SOUTH AFRICA'S COMMITMENTS UNDER INTERNATIONAL NORMS AND STANDARDS

The Constitution embodies a separation of powers between the legislature, the executive and the judiciary. As per the Constitution, the President appoints and receives heads of mission, conducts state-to-state relations, and negotiates and signs all international agreements. Parliament approves South Africa's ratification of, or accession to multilateral agreements. International agreements that are not of a technical, administrative or executive nature are binding only after Parliamentary approval. Hence, all international agreements are tabled in Parliament for information purposes.

In terms of South Africa's multilateral relations, the country has ratified all major treaties, conventions and declarations<sup>131</sup> and has, by and large, domesticated and recalibrated these into legislation and policy reform actions. Most recent, are notably on nuclear proliferation, climate and human rights. In 2019, South Africa submitted its Instrument of Ratification of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) to the UN, thus complementing other international instruments towards fulfilling the nuclear disarmament obligations under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. South Africa is signatory to the Paris Agreement of the UNFCCC, with ambitious targets (Nationally Determined Contributions, NDCs) for reducing carbon emissions in order to build a low-carbon, more resilient economy. South Africa has ratified key international human rights treaties and protocols, though under consideration and observation are the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers, International Convention on the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearances, and optional protocols on child and cultural rights respectively.

## 10. FINANCING LANDSCAPE AND OPPORTUNITIES

### Introduction

It is vital to note that South Africa has significant structural enablers to sustainably tackle poverty, inequality and unemployment. These include the most advanced and diversified economy in Africa. The country has strong financial systems, bears diverse knowledge centres of excellence and vibrant CSOs, and has a media with rich experience in civic engagement. These enablers are underpinned by the country having the most acclaimed constitutional order in Africa.

However, there remains entrenched systemic post-Apartheid divides that continue to perpetuate poverty, inequality and unemployment which is disproportionately skewed to women and youth.

When tabling the 2019 Medium Term Budget Policy Statement (October 2019), South African Finance Minister Tito Mboweni, lamented the difficult global and domestic environment, recalling South Africa's subdued economic performance being well below 2% for the last decade. Global rating agencies that investors and markets use as guideposts, have downgraded the economy to junk status since 2017, hence currently, the economy is in technical recession. In terms of government debt, net savings is 0.6 (as a % of GNI); the total debt service stands at 12,2% (export of goods, services and primary income) (Source: Human Development Report 2019, UNDP). Public finances have deteriorated, accelerating in recent years. Low growth resulted in significant revenue shortfalls, which in turn, led to public debt to the point where interest payments have begun crowding out social and economic spending programmes. In recent years, Government has lengthened the debt maturity profile and managed to refinance risk in the long-term debt portfolio. The longer maturity profile allows Government to consider increased issuance in the 5- to 10-year maturity bracket to reduce debt-service costs. 40% of the country's population is at the lower band of the national poverty line (R647 or USD44 per month), one of the highest among upper middle-income countries.

The income share of the poorest 40% stands at -0,2 (Source: Human Development Report 2019, UNDP). Income inequality (Gini-coefficient of 0,68) remains one of the highest globally, despite reduction from 0,7 in 2006. (Source: Living Conditions Survey, 2014-15 Stats SA). The national unemployment rate, as of June 2019, was 29% with women at 31,3% and men at 27,1%, while youth (15-34 years) stands at 41,1% (Source: Quarterly Labour Force Survey, July 2019 Stats SA). Over 17 million people, about a third of the population, rely on social grants (Source: Stats SA General Household Survey). In terms of the quality of human development, South Africa ranks 113 in the world, with an HDI score of 0,705. Government expenditure per person declined for three successive years since 2016/17. (Source: Institute for Economic Injustice,) , citing corruption, large amounts of illicit financial flows in and out of the country, high levels of tax avoidance, and the high incidence of irregularities in public funding.



According to recent estimates, South Africa has lost more than USD100,7 billion in illicit financial flows from 2002-2011 (Source: from Global Financial Integrity, 2013). South Africa is ranked number 13 among developing countries. Illicit financial outflows continue to deny South Africa much needed capital for its development, and there has been increasing efforts to address this scourge. South Africa's National Prosecuting Authority (NPA) reported that from April - May 2019, there were 66 new seizures amounting to some USD88, 750,471.

### Government Budget and Funds

Expenditure in 2019 is expected to be R1,83 trillion, with State wages and compensation remaining the largest category of spending, accounting for 34,4% of consolidated expenditure. Main budget expenditures, excluding the contingency reserve, are set to increase at an average annual rate of 2,1% in real terms over the MTEF period, from R1,46 trillion in 2019/20 to R1,65 trillion in 2021/22. (Source: National Treasury website). Personal Income Tax (PIT), Corporate Income Tax (CIT) and Value-added Tax (VAT, 15%) in aggregate remain the largest sources of tax revenue and comprise about 80,7% of total tax revenue collections, with PIT in 2017/18 accounting for more than 38,1% of total revenue (MTBPS: 2018). In 2017/18, for the first time since the 2008 global financial crisis, tax revenue growth did not exceed GDP growth. Tax under-collections from R7,4 billion (2014/15) increased to R49 billion (2017/18). (Source: Budget Review: 2019).

In 2016/17, the national Government transferred R764 billion (57% of total spending) in the form of grants to other levels of government and international organisations (Source: Stats SA, National Government Funding Allocations). Provincial Government received the bulk of grants (almost two-thirds), given that South Africa's nine provinces are responsible for administering some of the core functions of government (for example, education and health). Some 14% of the financial grants were transferred to the 257 municipalities, with over 11% (or R87 billion) paid to South Africa's 252 extra-budgetary accounts and funds (8% more than in 2015/16).

R46 billion (6%) was paid to foreign organisations and international institutions. A sum of R39 billion of this amount was paid to the Southern African Customs Union (SACU), of which South Africa is a member. The New Development Bank (NDB), established by countries belonging to the BRICS group (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa), received R3,5 billion in 2016/2017.

South Africa's 26 higher education institutions received R28 billion (4%) of national Government grant transfers in 2016/17.

The UNDP-led UN study on the SEI of COVID-19 on South Africa projects a decrease in GDP by 5,8% in the optimistic scenario and a decline by as much as 6,4% in the pessimistic scenario due to restrictive productivity during the lockdown period. Consequently, government revenue will also decrease and will therefore affect the Government's ability to invest in productive and development initiatives, as previously planned, thus compromising the attainment of the national priorities and the sustainable development goals. Now, more than ever the importance of consolidating partnerships with traditional partners and building new partnerships and exploring different financing mechanisms is evident.

Government encourages businesses to invest in the economy, and seize opportunities by reinforcing several initiatives that support business development. Likewise, there exists a plethora of specialist government funds (including grants), stimulus packages and incentive schemes and mechanisms via Government's subsidiary agencies which actively promote economic development, black economic empowerment, implementing commercial law, promoting and regulating international trade, and consumer protection. Developing energy, water, telecommunications, tourism and boosting transport infrastructure investments is seen to contribute to growth in the short run, and to job creation. Regulatory restrictions are still relatively high, ranging from centralised government involvement in the economy, barriers to domestic and foreign entry, complex rules for licences and permits, and protection of existing businesses from competition.

The Industrial Development Corporation (IDC) is a national development finance institution set up to promote economic growth and industrial development, offering loan amounts of a minimum of R1-million with a maximum of R1-billion. Priority sectors include green industries (renewable energy, energy efficiency and waste management and recycling), agriculture, manufacturing (clothing, textiles, pharmaceuticals, plastics and chemicals), strategic high-impact projects (logistics industrial infrastructure, mining value-chain, tourism and high-level services, media and motion pictures, ICT, and biotechnology). In tandem, the Development Bank of Southern Africa (DBSA) which was established in 1983, has a focus on expanding access to development finance.

Its priority market is in the preparation, funding and building phases of the infrastructure development value chain in South Africa (mainly municipalities) and on the African continent, leveraging funds committed by the Government. It has R37,2 billion in capital and reserves, and generated R3,1 billion in net profit (Source: DBSA 2019 Integrated Annual Report).

In an effort to reposition itself in the world economy with incentives and allowances, the Special Economic Zones (SEZs) exist to attract FDI. With SEZs being a critical tool to mobilise FDI, the current investment value of SEZs is over R19 billion, with the most significant concentrated in the Coega SEZ in the Eastern Cape. The number of direct jobs associated with SEZs increased from 13,466 to 15,737 from 2018-2019 (Source: dti website. The number of signed but non-operational SEZ investors is estimated as R33.64 billion.

Slow reform of SOEs is weighing on the economic climate and confidence, and their widespread underperformance is known to be due to mismanagement, corruption, overstaffing and an uncontrolled wage bill. According to the Auditor-General, irregular spending by national and provincial governments rose from R45,3 billion (March 2017) to R45,5 billion (March 2018). The number of government departments and entities that received clean audit outcomes (those who accounted properly for public funds) had declined during the period under review and had been doing so in the last four years. Of the 295 departments and entities that received unqualified audits, only 99 (or 25%) obtained such audits with no findings at all, while 196 were unqualified audits with findings. The country's corruption score deteriorated from 0,495 in 1997 to 0,430 in 2018 (Source: Corruption Perception Index 2018, and 1997 Transparency International).

### Private Sector

South Africa's overall business environment is well developed and ranks 82 out of 190 countries (Source: World Bank 2018, Doing Business Report). The key sectors of the national economy are mining, manufacturing, synthetic fuels, tourism, health and fruit production. The major challenges are notably in energy supply, and enabling conditions for cross-border (regional) trade.

Foreign Direct Investments (FDIs) in South Africa fell from USD8,2 billion in 2013 to USD1,5 billion in 2015, but recovered in 2016, reaching USD2,25 billion. The main investors are the UK, the Netherlands, the US, Germany and China. Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) have made a significant recovery in 2018 after several years of low-

level inflows (Source: 2019 UNCTAD, World Investment Report). Investment flows more than doubled to USD5,3 billion in 2018, largely ascribed to equity inflows, intra-company transfers by established investors, and the early success of a consistent Presidential Campaign to attract USD100 billion of FDI by 2023.

With a diversified economy that is the second largest on the continent (after Nigeria), and a large and established private sector with significant operations beyond the country's borders, South Africa is a gateway for FDI on the continent. South Africa dominates trade in the SADC region, accounting for almost 50% of SADC exports and imports. The country exports almost four times as much as it imports from other SADC countries.

The Public Investment Corporation (PIC) is South Africa's state-owned asset management company that invests, responsibly, across various sectors of the economy. With assets under the PIC's management exceeding USD145 billion, the PIC is the biggest investor on the African continent, and its clients are mostly public sector entities. South Africa's pension fund industry's combined assets under management amounts to USD500 billion, owning approximately 40% of the assets on the Johannesburg Stock Exchange (JSE). The JSE is the largest in Africa and among the top twenty globally.

Infrastructure development has conventionally been viewed as the business realm of government – embodied in monopolistic public utilities and private captains. Since the various waves of privatisation, private sector involvement in infrastructure has somewhat deepened and matured. Economic infrastructure, such as railways, roads, airports and ports, as well as key services such as health, education, water and electricity are usually delivered through PPPs. A dedicated public-private partnership unit in the National Treasury has the overall function to enable the national and provincial treasuries to regulate partnerships, provide technical aid to public institutions through project feasibility procurement and management, and to promote an enabling environment for such partnerships.

South Africa's Renewable Energy Independent Power Producer Programme (REIPPP) has been lauded as Africa's most accelerated energy investment drive. (Source: 2014, World Bank Report, Eberhard et al. South Africa's renewable energy IPP: procurement programme - success factors and lessons).



Since 2011, the REIPPP, a PPP tender process, has attracted R209,4 billion in committed private sector investment (24% FDI), creating 38 000 full-time jobs (for one year), reduced carbon emissions by 33,2 million tons of carbon dioxide (as at December 2018), with 6 329 MW of renewable energy procured (80% connected to the grid). Despite relative successes of PPPs in South Africa, new project transactions have declined, decreasing from an estimated R10,7 billion in 2011/12 to R5 billion in 2017/18, mainly as a result of massive cost over-runs, delays and/or cancelled projects. Cited factors relate to political interference, poor business planning and communication, and market dysfunctions, and uncertain enabling conditions. Gautrain, E-Tolls and the City of Tshwane's Prepaid Meter Service (TUMS) are but some of the well-known highly controversial PPPs. Based on the projects currently at an advanced planning stage, PPP transactions are expected to increase from R5 billion in 2017/18 to R6,4 billion in 2020/21.

### **Philanthropy, Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and ODA**

Companies spent an estimated R10,2 billion on Corporate Social Investment (CSI) in South Africa in 2019, a 5% year-on-year increase in nominal terms (2018: R9,7 billion) (Source: Annual Dialogue Business in Society Handbook, 2019). Education, social and community development, and health were the key CSI sectors, although for the first time, CSI spend on food security and agriculture markedly increased. CSI spend on disaster relief, albeit 2%, increased significantly, from 28% in 2018 to 41% in 2019. Some 54% of CSI funding was channelled to Non-Profit Organisations (NPOs) in 2019, followed by state-owned schools, universities, hospitals and clinics.

Government's Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) fund received grants and donations from foreign donors to assist in achieving the goals set out by the NDP. During the 2016-17 financial year, grants and donations to the RDP fund increased by 22%, and predominantly allocated for health services, education, general budget support programmes, rural development and land reform, and renewable energy. From 2010-2015, South Africa received an average of USD127 million per year in foundation

funding, the majority of which was allocated to health, education, peace-building and justice, and institutional strengthening. Institutions (Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, Ford Foundation and the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation).

South Africa accounts for only 4% of the ODA share of sub-Saharan Africa [USD964,3 million in 2016] (Source: OECD DAC Aid Data), with the main sources being US, Germany, EU, France and global funds. Most of the ODA went to the Health and Population sector (41%), Economic Infrastructure and Services (37%) (Source: OECD DAC Creditor Reporting System). In 2017, South Africa received 6% (USD2,3 billion) of total Country Programmable Aid for South-South Cooperation. Increasingly, development financing through market mechanisms is taking centre stage (impact investments) with key players being the African Development Bank, China, European Investment Bank, KfW, Development Bank of Southern Africa and World Bank.

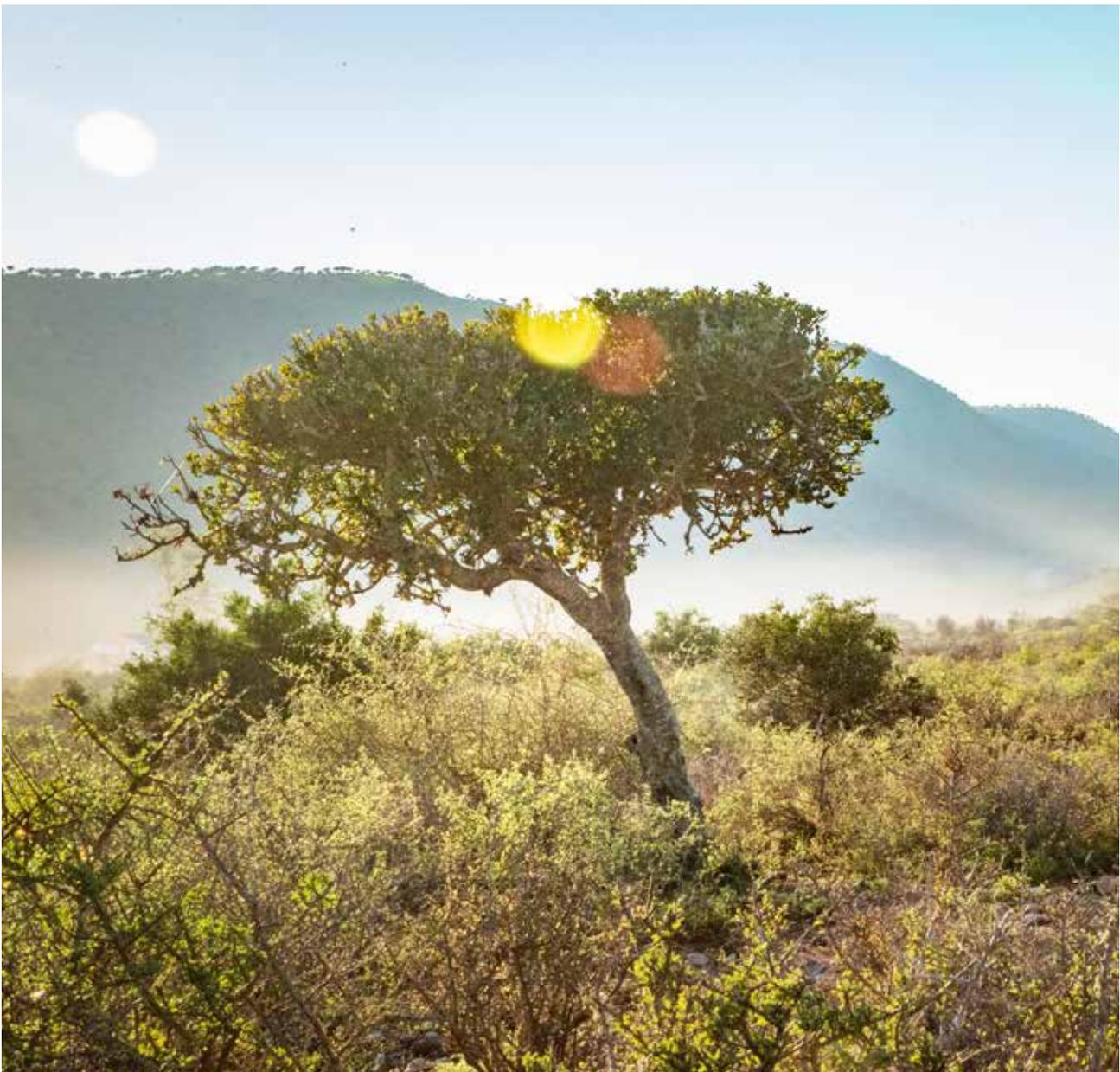
### **Sub-Regional & Regional Context**

At the bedrock of South Africa's foreign policy are the values of Pan-Africanism and solidarity with people of the South-Ubuntu diplomacy. This entails the pursuit of regional political and economic integration, promoting Africa's development through sustained South-South solidarity and mutually beneficial relations, and engaging in multilateral systems and processes of global governance to advance national development. This is achieved through some 125 diplomatic missions in 108 countries in which South Africa has representation (<http://www.dirco.gov.za/foreign/bilateral/index.htm>). South Africa is thus well positioned to enhance multilateral cooperation. South Africa has been a permanent member of the G20 since its inception in 1999. South Africa has been elected to serve on the UN Security Council from January 2019 to December 2020, representing South Africa's third term (2007-2008 and 2011-2012). South Africa was elected to chair the African Union in 2020.

South Africa is the third largest African contributor (after Ethiopia and Nigeria) to UN peace operations. The country contributes to sub-regional, regional, and UN peace operations and at a level that is not in keeping with the size of the economy.

The integration of SADC remains critical for South Africa's global competitiveness. The revised Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan 2015-2020 and the Industrialisation Strategy and Roadmap 2015-2063 are the key regional blueprints for this. The key issues for South Africa and SADC include overcoming implementation challenges for regional integration, and defining funding and implementing new strategies and models that will drive rapid improvement in infrastructure, energy, health and well-being, reducing hunger and poverty, strengthening peace and institutions, and addressing issues of social inclusion.

The geographic and economic placement of the country provides both opportunities and threats to its progress. There are significant sensitivities about South African domination ostensibly in the business and political space on the continent. An under-developed neighbourhood offers opportunities for business expansion. However, under-development also comes with insecurity and is a push-factor for migration and a risk factor to the security of the country. Proximity also creates risks for spill-over effects making it in the country's interests to address transboundary issues. Thus, South Africa must balance a local focus, a regional and continental focus, and a global focus.

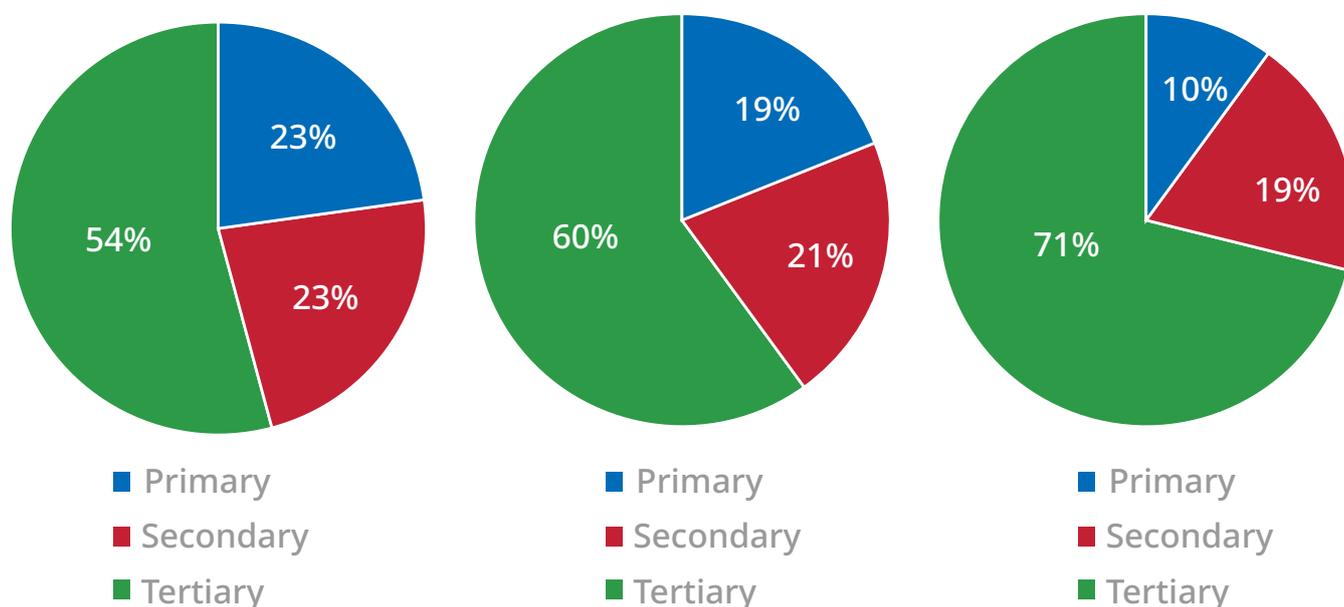


## ANNEXES

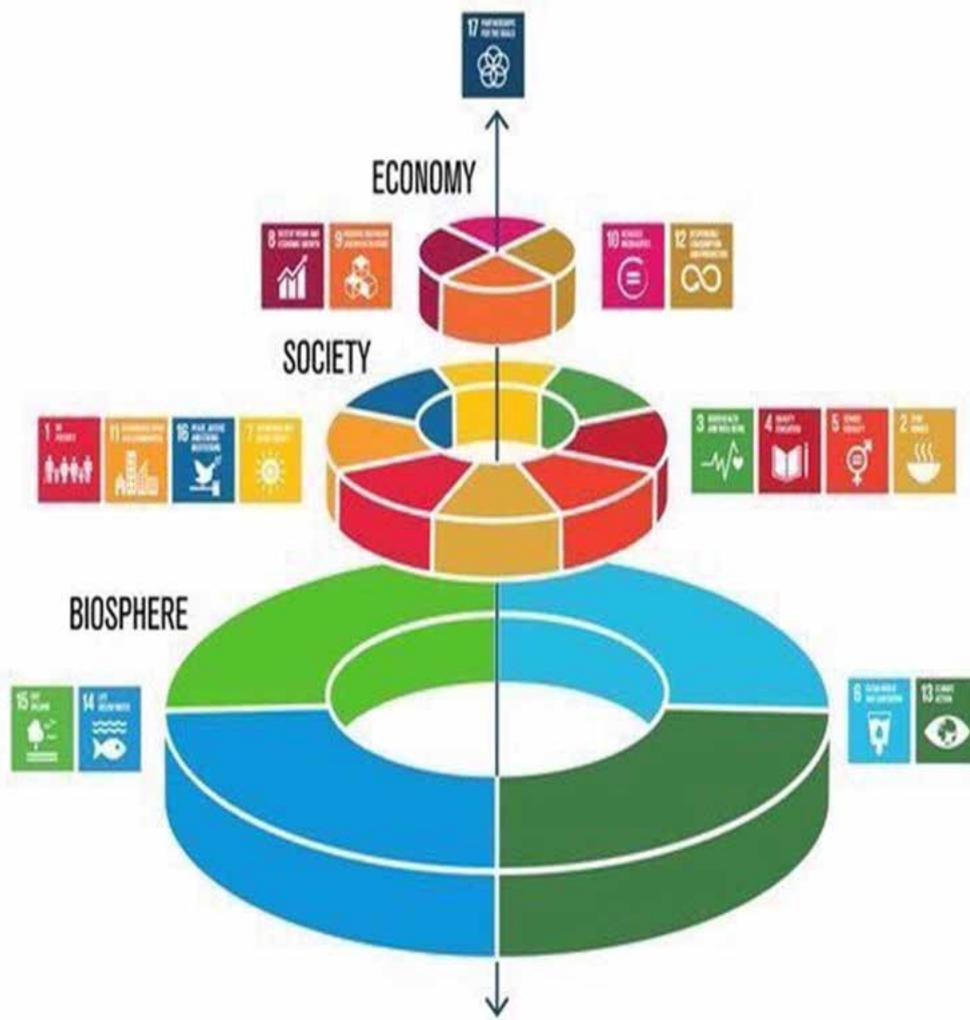
### Annex A: Emerging strategic priority areas for UN interventions

Strategic Priorities	Inclusive, just and sustainable economic growth and development	Investing in human capital as well as a cohesive and safe society, with emphasis on youth and women	Enhancing institutional capacity, good governance and accountability	South Africa is greener, resilient to climate change impacts, benefits from its vast natural resources and is on a sustainable development pathway
OUTCOMES	By 2025, social and economic inequalities, particularly for women, youth and other marginalised groups, are reduced through equitable access to resources and decent employment opportunities	All persons in South Africa, especially girls, vulnerable and marginalised populations enjoy increased social cohesion, freedom from violence and discrimination and have access to justice and human rights	By 2025, State institutions can deliver effective public services to all	Vulnerable and marginalised communities are more resilient to adverse effects of climate change
	By 2025, South Africa has an improved enabling environment for a strong, accelerated, inclusive and sustainable economy	Improved health and well-being for all, especially vulnerable and marginalised populations	South Africa serves as a champion on good governance, accountability and respect for the rule of law in SADC	Natural resources are managed and utilised sustainably for improved livelihoods and well-being of vulnerable communities
		All, especially children and young people have equitable access to quality education relevant to a changing society	Women and marginalised groups can participate meaningfully in decision making and access justice	

### Annex B: Structure of the economy and sectoral contribution to GDP over time



Annex C: List of Sustainable Development Goals by sectoral groupings









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