



Information on the release of 'Towards a Fifteen Year Review'

Government released the results of the Fifteen Year Review which it initiated in 2007. It takes stock of progress, since the attainment of democracy, in achieving the objective of improving the quality of life of all South Africans.

The review is based on almost a year of research and analysis within government and by outside experts and organisations. It will feed into the long-term planning which helps direct national development. As such it is not only about taking stock of progress. It is equally about identifying shortcomings and challenges.

Government hopes that the review as the Ten Year Review did in 2003 will initiate public debate about South Africa's future. The preface states, "We would encourage social partners and citizens at large not only to articulate their own views on these critical matters, but also to assess the impact of their own activities on social dynamics within our nation and further a field."

While the review covers the whole period since 1994, it looks closely at the last five years to see how far government has succeeded with the programmes devised after the 2004 election, to speed up growth and development.

It takes a detailed look at the impact of government activities across the different clusters of government, including the special programmes and policies aimed at meeting the needs of women, children, persons with disabilities and young people. The picture it reveals combines progress with persisting and new challenges.

It takes into account major trends in our society and internationally, such as: changes in household size and structure; growth in the economically active population; migration; structural unemployment; social cohesion; inequality; state legitimacy; national leadership and social partnership; and the global context.

The main finding is that, as we enter fifteen years of democracy, much has been done to eradicate the legacy of apartheid and build a new, just society; and that the foundations laid in the first ten years together with new initiatives since 2004 have enabled South Africa to notch up to a faster rate of growth and development.

However, the report says that this is not yet enough: the challenges identified five years ago have in the main proved more deep-seated than was recognised; and success has brought new challenges. The state has had to learn new ways of doing things as it implemented, but may not always have been decisive and flexible enough. The global environment is less favourable than expected.

The review concludes with a choice: on the one hand merely to continue along a path that ensures some progress but barely dents the structural ills that have prevented the country moving as fast as it could; or on the other hand to achieve a big push based on a broad national consensus that drives the totality of national endeavours towards even better social impact. The latter would depend on a number of conditions including the agency of various social actors.

Based on its findings about the impact of the state and national and global trends, the review argues that whatever is done going forward, the main elements of strategy would need to revolve around some core ideas: speeding up growth and transforming the economy; fighting poverty; building social cohesion and state legitimacy; international co-operation; and building an effective developmental state.

Further details are available with the complete report on http://www.info.gov.za/otherdocs/2008/toward_15year_review.pdf and <http://www.thepresidency.gov.za>.

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