

Public Sector

PUBLIC SECTOR / GOVERNMENT

Government

- National Government
- Provincial Government
- Local Government

SETAs

Chapter 9 Institutions

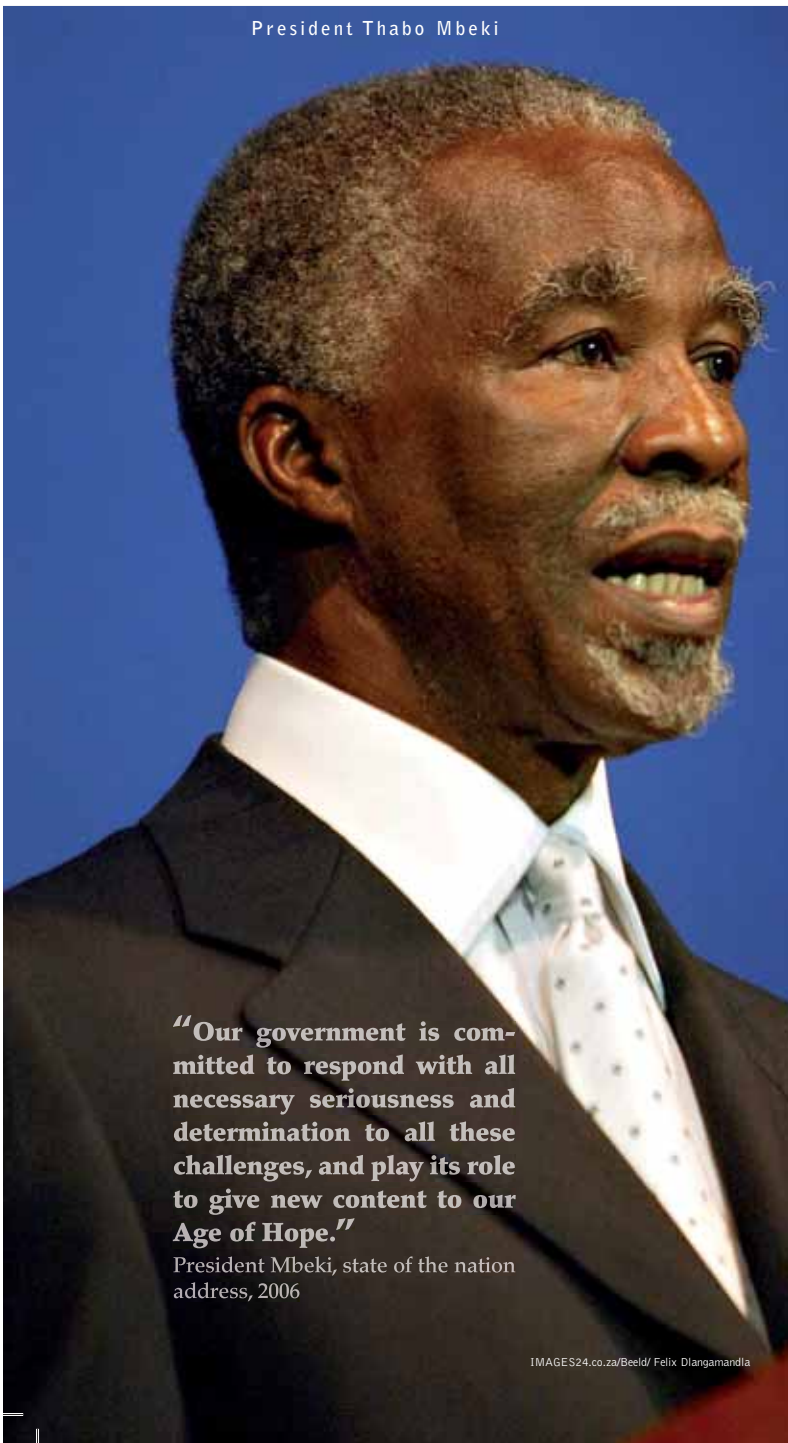
Unions

**Non-Governmental
Organisations**



South Africa's *democracy*: toward a more prosperous future

President Thabo Mbeki



"Our government is committed to respond with all necessary seriousness and determination to all these challenges, and play its role to give new content to our Age of Hope."

President Mbeki, state of the nation address, 2006

IMAGES24.co.za/Beeld/ Felix Dlangamandla

Deputy President Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka



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The combination of South Africa's landscape, people, history and culture makes it one of the most enchanting countries in the world. The country is governed by a multiparty democratic system with one of the most progressive constitutions and bill of rights of any democratic nation in the world today.

South Africa is certainly a country of diversity, with a population estimated at around 46.9 million people according to Statistics South Africa (Stats-SA), a total of four broad racial groupings and 11 official languages. Recent surveys by government reveal positive results demonstrating that our citizens see themselves as primarily South African, rather than as members of a specific racial or ethnic group, contributing to a national culture of unity, a culture that South Africans work hard at growing and developing.

The public sector/government includes the following sectors and sub-sectors: National Government Departments; National Government Agencies; State Institutions Supporting Constitutional Democracy; Provincial Government; Local Government: Unincorporated/Metropolitan Municipalities, District Municipalities, Local Councils/Municipalities; Local Government Agencies & Bodies; Unions and SETAs.

South Africa: the country, the government, the people

The African National Congress (ANC) government, elected into power in 1994, embarked on a programme to promote the reconstruction and development of the country and its institutions. This called for the simultaneous pursuit of democratisation and socio-economic change, as well as reconciliation and the building of consensus founded on the commitment to improve the lives of all South Africans, and in particular, the poor and destitute. It required the integration of the country's economy into a complex world economy of rapid development and intense competition.

Pursuit of these objectives was a consistent focus of government during the first decade of freedom, seeking the unity of a previously divided society in working together to overcome the historical legacy of division, exclusion and neglect.

Says the South Africa Yearbook 2005/06, "A significant milestone in the democratisation of SA was the exemplary constitution-making process, which in 1996 delivered a document that has evoked worldwide admiration; and challenged many emerging countries to follow. So too have been the elections subsequent to 1994, which all took place in an atmosphere of peace, with high levels of participation – compared with the norm in most democracies – and accepted by all as free and fair in their conduct and results." Local government elections held during 1995 and 1996, and then again in 2000 following the transformation of the municipal system, gave the country its first democratically elected non-racial municipal authorities.

State institutions created to support constitutional democracy are the Public Protector; the Human Rights Commission; the Commission for the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Cultural, Religious and Linguistic Communities; the Commission for Gender Equality; the Auditor-General and the Electoral Commission.

Human rights are given clear prominence in the constitution, and appear in the first page of the founding provisions of the Republic of South Africa: "Human dignity, the achievement of equality and the advancement of human rights and freedoms." Among the rights stipulated are those of equality, freedom of expression and association, political and property rights, housing, health care, education, access to information, and access to courts.

Under President Thabo Mbeki's leadership South Africa is modelling itself as a leader in the 'African Renaissance', which looks to develop Africa as a continent. Says President Mbeki, "The African Renaissance will only succeed if it aims and objectives are defined by African's themselves, if its programmes are designed by ourselves and if we take responsibility for the success or failure of our policies."

"Since 2001, participatory democracy and interactive governance have been strengthened through the practice of 'imbizo', in which members of the executive, in all three spheres of government, including the Presidency, regularly engage directly with the public around implementation or programmes of reconstruction and development." (SA Yearbook 2005/06)

In the Presidential state of the Nation address on 3 February 2006, President Mbeki stated, "This year we will have occasion to remind ourselves of, and celebrate, the 15th anniversary of the holding of the first meeting of Convention for a Democratic South Africa (CODESA) on 20 December 1991, and the adoption of the vitally important Declaration of Intent the following day. The other is the 10th anniversary of the adoption of our Constitution on 8 May 1996."

The CODESA Declaration of Intent, as it appears on the CODESA website (www.codesa.co.za), says: "We ... declare our solemn commitment to bring about an undivided South Africa with one nation sharing a common citizenship, patriotism and loyalty, pursuing amidst our diversity, freedom, equality and security for all irrespective of race, colour, sex or creed; a country free from apartheid or any other form of discrimination or domination." And 15 years down the line, these words still ring true.

A positive nation

The Gallup International report released early this year reveals that South African people are generally highly optimistic about their future and the future of the country, and rank an overall eighth in the world in the optimism index. According to the report we have three times more optimists than pessimists in the country.

A recent domestic poll conducted by Markinor revealed similar results with 65 percent of our people who believe that the country is going in the right direction. Eighty-four percent think that our country holds out a happy future for all racial groups and 71 percent believe that government is performing well.

Meeting delivery targets

Even with the majority of the country optimistic about the future, the Markinor poll, utilised by President Mbeki in his state of the nation





address, also revealed that the people of SA expect the government to combat the following:

- To move faster to address the challenges of poverty, underdevelopment and marginalisation confronting those caught within the Second Economy, to ensure that the poor in our country share in our growing prosperity;
- To make the necessary interventions with regard to the First Economy to accelerate progress towards the achievement of higher levels of economic growth and development of at least 6 percent a year;
- To sustain and improve the effectiveness of our social development programmes targeted at providing a cushion of support to those most exposed to the threat of abject poverty;
- To act more aggressively with regard to our criminal justice system to improve the safety and security of our people, especially by improving the functioning of our courts and increasing our conviction rates to strengthen the message that crime does not pay;
- To ensure that the machinery of government, especially the local government sphere, discharges its responsibilities effectively and efficiently, honouring the precepts of Batho Pele; and,
- To harness the Proudly South African spirit that is abroad among the people to build the strongest possible partnership between all sections of our population to accelerate our advance towards the realisation of the important goal of a better life for all.

“Our government is committed to respond with all necessary seriousness and determination to all these challenges, and play its role to give new content to our Age of Hope.”

- President Mbeki, state of the nation address, 2006

Asgi-SA

Government will provide R372-billion to the implementation of the above mentioned requirements, as well as the implementation of the Accelerated and Shared Growth Initiative for South Africa (Asgi-SA). The government also intends to pay particular attention to the Expanded Public Works Programme which is an important bridge between the two economies (First Economy – the developed or formal economy, and the Second Economy – the developing or informal economy) of our country and a significant part of our poverty alleviation programme.

Asgi-SA targets
Poverty
Half poverty by 2014
Target: 1/6 of the population
Unemployment
Half unemployment by 2014
Target: 15% or less
GDP Growth Rate 2004-2009
Average GDP Growth Rate of >4.5% per annum
GDP Growth Rate 2010 –2014
Average GDP Growth Rate of >6% per annum



The sense of national unity among South Africans and confidence in the direction of the country are at levels not seen since the 1994 elections. In this context with the confluence of possibilities in SA, the government under the leadership of the deputy president, Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, developed the Asgi-SA. The Initiative’s women focal areas aim to expand and accelerate access to economic opportunities including skills development and finance. Women in business need government to focus on issues of access to finance, development of cooperatives, fast-tracking women artisans and providing ‘set-asides’ for women in government and public enterprises procurement programmes.

Mlambo-Ngcuka says that “[Asgi-SA] takes advantage of a stable macro-economic environment, an economy that is growing at 4 percent plus in the past two years. Between 2005 and 2009 we seek an annual growth rate that averages 4.5 percent or higher. Between 2010 and 2014 we will seek a growth rate of at least 6 percent of GDP.” Such rates of growth, combined with improved labour absorption, would ensure that SA is able to halve unemployment and poverty in the second decade of freedom.

The implementation of Asgi-SA, which must still be adjusted and fine tuned in the context of ongoing consultations, has already begun. Asgi-SA has built the basis for a national effort to achieve faster and shared economic growth. With this programme social objectives can be met. As a governmental spokesperson for Asgi-SA remarks, “Our second decade of freedom will be the decade in which we radically reduce inequality and virtually eliminate poverty. We know now that we can do it, working together around an initiative which has the support of the nation.”

Asgi-SA has also identified particular sectors of our economy for accelerated growth, building on the work already done within the context of our existing Micro-Economic Reform programme. These include:

- Business process outsourcing
- Tourism
- Chemicals
- Bio-fuels
- Metals and metallurgy
- Wood, pulp and paper
- Agriculture
- The creative industries
- Clothing and textiles

Social grants provided by government have boosted the income of the poorest of the nation, although marginally. The beneficiaries have increased from 2.6 million in 1994 to 5.1 million in 2003. And the recipients of the largest amounts of the grants are the poorest 20 percent of households. Since 1994, government’s social spending has embraced a heavy bias towards the poor. Between 1993 and 1997, social spending has increased for the poorest 60 percent and decreased for the 40 percent who are relatively better off.

Improvement of South Africa’s infrastructure doesn’t end there; improvements have been made in terms of access to basic services such as



electricity, water and sanitation. SA's literacy rate is significantly higher now than ever before. StatSA reveals that adult literacy is up from 83 percent in 1996 to 96 percent in 2001.

The economic opportunities available to the population are being expanded, with specific focus on small business development. The possibility for the promotion of sustainable job creation has been boosted by initiatives such as the Small Business Council, Khula Enterprise Finance Corporation and Ntsika Enterprise Promotion Agency. Job creation is receiving serious attention. Recently the President launched a R20-billion Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) that will help government create more than a million jobs in the next few years.

Asgi-SA: Expanding women's access to economic opportunities through:
Human resource training
Ensuring they have access to finance (micro to mega bucks)
Fast-tracking them out of the Second Economy
Ensuring their significant participation in agriculture and creative industries
Improving their access to basic services
Increasing their participation in the Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP)

Black economic empowerment, equality and gender in South Africa in 2006 marks the 50th anniversary of the Women's March, and therefore brings into sharp focus the gender empowerment policies that government has in place, and the overall status of the women in SA.

2005 saw the dramatic change in government with the appointment of South Africa's first female deputy president Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka in June. The deputy president has been warmly received by the SA public, and her appointment comes with the promise of continued gender empowerment initiatives in the country; more than evidenced through president Thabo Mbeki's vocal advocacy of gender equity.

The implementation of the Technology for Women in Business (TWIB), and the South African Women Entrepreneurs Network (SAWEN) are just two of the initiatives in place that deal specifically with women in business. President Mbeki said, "South Africa is moving towards a situation where it will be normal for women and men to hold equally important positions" and in asserting an 'African-styled Democracy', President Mbeki has streamlined the government policy to include women at all levels of society.

TWIB aims to enhance the use of technology by women in business, promote innovation among women, and encourage young girls and women to choose careers in science and technology. By 2004, TWIB established itself in a variety of business sectors, including minerals and energy, construction, information technology (IT) and ICT, as well as agriculture, arts and culture, and science and technology.

The launch of the Girl Child Initiative is one of the TWIB's most important initiatives. This includes the establishment of Techno-Girls, which encourages young girls to pursue a career in the field of science and technology.

The South African Women Entrepreneurs Network (SAWEN) was established to assist aspiring and existing women in business. The Network advocates policy changes, builds capacity, and facilitates the access of women to business resources and information. The SAWEN together with the Johannesburg Securities Exchange (JSE) have implemented strategies to train these women entrepreneurs in the workings of stock, commodity and bond markets, the operations of the JSE, and how to engage with these markets and institutions. For more information on the JSE read 'Is listing on or investing in the JSE an option for YOUR business?' on page 52.

Black economic empowerment (BEE) in South Africa continues to be at the forefront of change, and with the department of trade and industry's (dti) codes of good practice in place, the strategies of transformation continue to be controversial through implementation is being embraced. Launched in March 2003 the broad-based BEE strategy aims to address employment equity, enterprise development, preferential procurement and investment, ownership and control of enterprises, and economic assets.

Government will use various regulatory means to achieve its BEE objectives, including a balance scorecard to measure progress made by enterprises and sectors in achieving BEE. The use of a common scorecard by different stakeholders provides a basic framework against which to benchmark the BEE process.

The National Empowerment Fund (NEF) Trust deals with the overall status of black economic empowerment in SA, and promotes and facilitates the economic equality and transformation of SA. The NEF trust received an initial capital injection of R2-billion from government in 2004/05.

NEF operates at several different levels, providing finance and business support to rural women and fledgling entrepreneurs, and large-scale financial support to BEE groups. The NEF partners with key business organisations that are focused on serving women. The NEF deploys its resources to optimise the empowerment dividend to government. Only those transactions that advance government's transformation and BEE objectives are supported.

Criminal Justice System and Government

South Africa has an independent judiciary, subject only to the Constitution and the law. It comprises the Constitutional Court, Supreme Court of Appeal, High Courts, Magistrates Courts, and other courts established or recognised in terms of an Act of Parliament. The Constitutional Court, Supreme Court of Appeal and High Courts have the power to protect and regulate their own processes, and to develop the common law.

The government will continue to focus on the critical challenge of further improving the country's criminal justice system. Among other things, it will focus on integrated law enforcement operations in priority areas, reducing the number of illegal firearms and ensuring better processing of applications for firearm licenses, reducing drug trafficking and substance abuse, and implementing social crime prevention measures. The improvement of case-load management in the courts; building four additional correctional