

**The Impact of Democracy on
Development:
The case of South Africa**

Maxine Reitzes

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1. INTRODUCTION

The brief for this study was to present and discuss post-1994 changes, marking the advent of democracy in South Africa, to the socio-economic position of households, to assess improvements in service delivery, political changes, and public perceptions on government performance and politics in South Africa in general.

This paper proceeds as follows:

1. It provides a brief outline of the research methods used.
2. It summarises the main political developments since 1994.
3. It benchmarks some of the major social development indicators, such as basic services, housing, education, health and social welfare in 1994.
4. It explores the main socio-economic development programmes implemented by the post-1994 South African governments.
5. It presents a number of public perceptions concerning social development and political legitimacy and accountability.

Based on the evidence, it concludes with a brief discussion of the impact of democratisation on development in South Africa.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

The material used for this report is drawn from primary and secondary data sources. Primary research was undertaken in May 2008; in-depth interviews were carried out with a range of people, including:

- Ordinary citizens
- Members of Ward Committees
- Community Development Workers
- NGO and CBO representatives
- Officials from other organisations, such as the Public Protectors Office.

Secondary data was collected from academic literature, government and non-governmental reports and surveys.

3. POST-1994 POLITICAL CHANGES IN SOUTH AFRICA

In 1994, the first democratic election was held. The African National Congress won with a majority vote of 62.6 per cent (<http://electionresources.org/za/>). In 1999 it increased its majority to 66.35 per cent of the vote, with a further consolidation of its earlier gains to 69.69 per cent in 2004 (The Independent Electoral Commission, <http://www.elections.org.za/library1asp?KSID=13&kid=3>)

The new government ushered in widespread changes. This section of the report describes the most significant spatial, institutional, administrative and procedural transformations which have been instituted in South Africa since 1994. It examines the structure of South Africa's three-sphere system of government, as well as the democratic and good governance institutions established in post-apartheid democratic South Africa.

3.1 The structure of government

This section describes the structure of government on National, Provincial and Local Government levels.

The 1996 Constitution provides for the structure of a post-apartheid South African government. It established the three arms of government: an independent legislature, the executive, and the judiciary.

Additionally, government structure is made up of three separate but co-operative and interdependent spheres of government. These are the National, Provincial and Local Government spheres, which are intended to work based on a strong principle of inter-governmental relations in the execution of their mandates, powers and functions.

At the **national level**, two houses constitute parliament: the National Assembly and the National Council of Provinces. Both participate in the legislative process, with the former consisting of political party representatives, and the latter of delegations from the nine provinces. The Cabinet consists of ministers and their deputies, and an executive president. At national level, elections are held on the basis of a party list system.

Each **province** has a provincial legislature, which also consists of political party representatives, based on their election on the basis of party lists. There are nine provinces, namely: Eastern Cape, Western Cape, Gauteng, Free State, Northern Cape, Limpopo, Mpumalanga, KwaZulu-Natal and North West.

Gauteng is the smallest province, but the most densely populated, and generates the most wealth. It is land-locked, and has no international borders. Mining, technology, finance and manufacturing are its main activities. It has the highest income per capita, highest literacy rate, and more than 90 per cent of its population lives in metropolitan areas (Johannesburg, Tshwane and Ekurhuleni). It is mainly urban, and consists of large industrial

and urban areas, and mines. Tshwane is the executive capital. The poorest and largely rural provinces are the Northern Cape, Limpopo, Mpumalanga, North West and Eastern Cape. The Eastern Cape has the ports of East London and Port Elizabeth. North West has a thriving platinum-mining industry, and borders Botswana. Limpopo is the northernmost province, bordering Botswana, Zimbabwe and Mozambique. The Northern Cape covers the largest area of all the provinces, but has the smallest population. The Western Cape and KwaZulu-Natal have a narrow seaboard, and the ports of Cape Town and Durban respectively. Cape Town is the legislative capital. Free State is land-bound, borders on Lesotho, and as the location of the Supreme Court of Justice, can be considered as the judicial capital of South Africa.

3.2 Overview profile of provinces

Table 1 highlights some key demographic, spatial and economic characteristics of South Africa's nine provinces.

Table 1: Profile of provinces

Province	Population	Area (km sq)	Total area%	Total GDP%
Mpumalanga	3 508 000	79 490	6.50	6,8
Free State	2 958 480	129 480	10.60	5,5
KZN	10 014 500	92 100	7,6	16,7
W. Cape	4 839 800	129 370	10,6	14,4
Limpopo	5 635 400	123 910	10,2	6,7
Gauteng	9 526 200	17 010	1,4	33,3
North West	3 374 200	116 320	9,5	6,3
Northern Cape	1 094 500	361 830	29,7	2,2
Eastern Cape	6 906 200	169 580	13,9,	8,1

Source: <http://www.info.gov.za/aboutsa/landpeople.htm>).

Local government exists throughout the country. It has a mixed electoral system of proportional and direct representation through councillors elected to wards, and councillors elected on the basis of party lists. The intention of the ward system and the setting up of ward committees is an attempt to encourage more direct participation and representation in the level of government deemed to be developmental and closest to the citizenry. Local governments are divided into three types: metropolitan, district, and local.

It can be argued that whereas policies are mainly formulated at national level, provincial and local government are also responsible for policy implementation. for functional areas of national and provincial legislative competence, and provincial and local government mandates). According to s152 (1) (a) - (e) of the Constitution, local government is charged with:

- providing democratic and accountable government for local communities
- ensuring the provision of services to communities in a sustainable manner
- promoting social and economic development
- promoting a safe and healthy environment
- encouraging the involvement of communities and community organisations in the matters of local government (The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996, Act 108 of 1996).

Thus, arguably, local governments are primarily responsible for implementing developmental policies. Local governments in South Africa are also meant to be the sphere of government exhibiting the maximum levels of participatory, accountable, transparent and representative engagement with communities.

Finally, the South African Constitution provides for independent statutory bodies which support democracy and people's rights. The Human Rights Commission, the Public Protector, the Auditor General, the Independent Electoral Commission and the Commission on Gender Equality are examples of these Chapter nine institutions supporting constitutional democracy in South Africa.

3.3 Gender equality

One of the most significant changes in the South African political sphere is in the role of women in government and politics. The proportion of women in the legislatures and executives has increased over the years. After the 1994 elections, 33 per cent of MPs were women; numbers are similarly high in the provincial and local spheres. Thirteen out of 30 ministers are women; as are eight out of 21 deputy ministers, and four of the nine premiers (South African Presidency 2008).

3.4 Public participation

Mandatory public consultation and participation are legislated in laws concerning Local Economic Development (LED), in terms of formulating integrated development plans (IDPs). Imbizos, which are public meetings between politicians or state officials and citizens, take place regularly (most often before elections), and constitute executive interaction with communities on issues of service delivery and development. Ward Committees at local

government level also facilitate public participation, as do Thusong Service Centres and Community Development Workers (CDWs).

Thusong Service Centres, which provide a range of services and information in areas with little or no previous access, have increased towards the target of one per municipality. The 37 Multi-purpose Community Centres (MPCC)s established by 2003 had become 125 operational Thusong Service Centres by March 2008. By then, 3 305 CDWs had been trained and deployed in 2 000 wards, to help communities access services and development opportunities. Ward Committees had been established in 96 per cent of wards (South African Presidency 2008).

4. SOUTH AFRICA'S SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES (1994-2008)

Within the context of a new political framework, a number of socio-economic development strategies have been implemented over the past 14 years. The three most important documents framing post-apartheid, socio-economic policy, as well as governance for a new democratic South Africa, are the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) (ANC 1994), the Growth, Employment and Redistribution policy (GEAR) (ANC 1996), and the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa.

The post-1994 socio-economic development debate was between two strategies: immediate and equitable redistribution of existing resources, or to increase growth and then distribute a bigger pie. These strategies were 'encoded' into two successive macro socio-economic policy framework documents (the RDP and GEAR); the latter was introduced in 1996 and in a further policy development, the notion of the 'developmental state' was introduced in 2005. In the section that follows these broad policy strategies are described, together with their development targets and goals, and the progress towards achieving the objectives set out in each successive policy framework.

4.1 The Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP)

The primary socio-economic development blueprint of the first democratic government in South Africa was the RDP. The RDP decisively relates growth to development, arguing against commonly held notions that growth and development are mutually exclusive - that growth is a priority that precedes development, and that development is a marginal effort of redistribution to poverty nodes:

If growth is defined as an increase in output, then it is of course a basic goal. However, where that growth occurs, how sustainable it is, how it is distributed, the degree to which it contributes to building long-term productive capacity and human resource development, and what impact it has on the environment, are the crucial questions when considering

reconstruction and development. The RDP integrates growth, development, reconstruction and redistribution into a unified Programme. The key to this link is an infrastructural programme that will provide access to modern and effective services like electricity, water, telecommunications, transport, health, education and training for all our people. This programme will both meet basic needs and open up previously suppressed economic and human potential in urban and rural areas (ANC 1994: 6).

The post-1994 ANC government aimed to address and redress the inherited gross inequalities of apartheid, socially, economically and spatially. Not only was inequality expressed through race - which largely coincided with class - but also through the geographic configuration of the country, as a result of the system of homelands: 'independent' territorial and administrative units. With the advent of democracy, these units disappeared, but bequeathed enormous rural/urban disparities, in every social and economic sphere, such as levels of health and education provision, basic services, employment opportunities, infrastructural development, and so on.

In order to evaluate the impact of democracy on development, it is necessary to attempt to bench-mark levels of development at the advent of democracy. This will be done here with reference to the RDP.

The RDP attempted to provide socio-economic statistical indicators in 1994. In many cases, these were mere estimates, because of the poor standards of statistical evidence available at the time. (There are a myriad reasons for this, most of which cannot be discussed here).

However, with available data, the RDP provided the following data. Current statistics are cited at the end of each section.

- **Housing**

The urban housing backlog in 1990 was conservatively estimated at 1.3 million units. Hostels and rural areas increased this figure to approximately 3 million units. An estimated 200 000 new households are required each year. Little research was available on rural housing and former homelands.

Approximately 50 000 houses were built in 1992. The RDP argues that over 300 000 units could be built each year by the end of the RDP's 5-year programme. A minimum of 1 million low-cost houses should be constructed over five years. These were specifically intended for low-income households and include rural areas.

The RDP also comments on the *quality* of housing provision. It insists that:

As a minimum, all housing must provide protection from weather, a durable structure, and reasonable living space and privacy. A house must include sanitary facilities, storm-water drainage, a household energy supply...and convenient access to clean water. (ANC 1994: 23).

Although millions of South Africans have acquired housing today, the broader context of unemployment and poverty creates problems. For instance, many who have houses immediately rent them out, and move back into 'zozos' or backyard shacks or informal settlements, in order to generate an income.

- **Water and sanitation**

It was estimated that in 1994, more than 12 million people did not have access to clean drinking water and 21 million did not have adequate sanitation (toilets and refuse removal). Less than half the rural population had a safe and accessible water supply, and only one person in seven had access to adequate sanitation (ANC 1994: 28-31).

Recognising that water and sanitation are related to health, the RDP's short-term aim was to provide each person with adequate health facilities, and part of achieving this was to establish a national water and sanitation programme, aiming to provide households with a clean, safe water supply of 20-30 litres per capita per day within 200 metres, an adequate and safe sanitation facility per site, and a refuse removal system for all urban households.

In the medium term, the RDP aimed to provide an on-site supply of 50-60 lpd. Water supply to nearly 100 per cent of rural households was to be achieved over the medium term, and adequate sanitation to at least 75 per cent of rural households.

Long term, the goal was to provide every South African with accessible water and sanitation.

Today, more than 10 million people have benefited; they have access to safe water. However, 16 million others have yet to receive basic sanitation (South African Presidency 2000).

- **Energy and electrification**

Women and children (with the advent of child-headed households as a result of HIV/AIDS), are most negatively affected by the absence of electricity. The vast majority of households and entrepreneurs depended on inferior and expensive fuels, such as wood, coal, (which, although cheap, results in severe health problems), candles and paraffin, which are a huge fire hazard.

In 1996, 36 per cent of South African households had access to electricity - three million households were not electrified. Nineteen thousand black schools (86 per cent) and approximately 4 000 clinics were without electricity.

The RDP aimed to provide access to electricity for 2.5 million households by 2000 (ANC 1994: 31-33). More than 3.5 million households (approximately 25 per cent) now have electricity (Shisana 2008).

- **Health care**

Improvements in housing, water and sanitation, the provision of energy and electrification, in and of themselves, have a positive impact on health.

In 1994, there were probably, by international standards, sufficient numbers of nurses, doctors and hospital beds, and South Africa was spending R550 per capita per annum on health care. This was nearly 10 times World Bank estimates for costs to provide basic public health services and essential clinical care for all (ANC 1994 : 42). However, millions of South Africans were deprived of such services and care, owing to a host of factors, largely inherited from apartheid, such as a fragmented, inefficient and ineffective health care system, gross mismanagement of resources, and poor and inequitable distribution. The rural areas were particularly negatively affected.

Besides proposing a multitude of organisations and institutions for health care delivery, the RDP stresses a Primary Health Care approach (PHC). This emphasises community participation and empowerment, inter-sectoral collaboration and cost-effective care, as well as integration of preventative, curative and rehabilitative services.

Health care for children under the age of six years, and those who are homeless, must be provided free at government clinics and health centres.

Maternal and child health are also stressed, and the provision of, and access to, quality antenatal, delivery and postnatal services is paramount. This includes improved transport facilities and in-service training programmes for midwives and traditional birth attendants.

Targets include 90 per cent of pregnant women receiving antenatal care and 75 per cent of deliveries being supervised and carried out under hygienic conditions within two years. By 1999, 90 per cent of deliveries should be supervised. These services must be free at government facilities by the third year of the RDP (1997). (ANC, 1994: 42-46).

Malnutrition, mortality and morbidity, poverty-related and childhood diseases, and sexual health and HIV/AIDS, must all be addressed.

According to Shisana, any benefits were immediately wiped out by the HIV/AIDS pandemic. Department of Health statistics suggest that 7.6 per cent of pregnant women tested positive in 1994. In 2006, this number had increased to 29.1 per cent (Shisana 2008).

In 2007, the Department of Health launched the National Strategic Plan for HIV and AIDS for 2007-2011. Financial resources allocated to this programme increased from R264 million in 2001/02 to R2,1 billion in 2007/08.

A 2006 antenatal survey reflects a decrease in the prevalence of HIV amongst pregnant women who use public health facilities, from 30.2 per cent in 2005 to 29.1 per cent in 2006. The report indicates that the decline is mainly among people under the age of 20 years, followed by those between 20 and 24.

Currently 80 per cent of primary healthcare facilities provide services for prevention of mother-to-child transmission of HIV. Department of Health (2007) <http://www.doh.gov.za/docs/sp/2007/sp0802.lhtml>

- **Social welfare**

The RDP calls for the provision of a 'social safety net' to provide social assistance in cash or in kind, for those most at risk. Such assistance could include work opportunities in public works programmes, the provision of food, clothing and health care, cash in the form of disability grants, foster care grants, maintenance grants or veteran grants.

Social welfare must concentrate on the reconstruction of families and communities, by prioritising the needs of families without income, women and children who are survivors of violence, young offenders, and those affected by substance abuse.

The rights of children must be protected.

A number of grants were established, such as the Child Support Grant, Old Age Pension, Disability Grant, Care Dependency grant, War Veterans Grant, foster child grant, grants in aid and social relief of distress.

More than 10.5 million poor people are now beneficiaries of social grants (Shisana 2008:186). This is a temporary solution as more sustainable solutions, such as employment and economic growth are developed.

- **Education**

The RDP devotes an entire chapter to education, entitled Developing Our Human Resources. The chapter lists the following problems prevalent in 1994, to be overcome:

- (i) the redress of gross inequalities concerning lack of access or unequal access to education and training at all levels
- (ii) racial and ethnic disparities
- (iii) those who, in particular, have little or no access to education and training, such as adults, (especially women), out-of-school youth, and children of pre-school age.

Besides institutional and legislative provisions, this section of the RDP calls for early childhood educare, Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET), special education, further education and training, and higher education.

In terms of schooling, it proposes 10 years of government-funded, compulsory school education. Class sizes should not exceed 40 students by 2000. In addition, existing schools and educational facilities ought to be used to full capacity, and new schools built to meet demand.

Girls and women ought not to be denied education and training.

The *quality* and *content* of education ought to be addressed. The racist, sexist, authoritarian and out-dated teaching practices ought to be transformed, and curricula developed to address neglected areas such as mathematics and technology, and colonial and apartheid history revised. (ANC 1994: 58-68).

4.2 The Growth, Employment and Redistribution Policy (GEAR)

The Growth, Employment and Redistribution Policy, which was introduced in 1996, was, for many critics, a betrayal of the precepts of the RDP, introduced in 1994. Its critics, for example the Congress of South African Trade Unions, perceived a shift in emphasis from development to growth, from radical transformation to a conservative, neo-liberal agenda. In other words, some believed that the government would halt equitable redistribution of existing resources, and shift its focus to increasing economic growth, with uncertain or negative consequences for redistribution.

The introduction of GEAR suggests that the government realised that while the social objectives of the RDP were noble, faster economic growth was required to provide resources to meet social investment needs. In addition, more certainty was needed on the major macro-economic variables, such as inflation, interest rates and tax rates, which determine long-run investment decisions.

The assumptions informing the macro-economic elements of GEAR were:

- The current account deficit was a binding constraint on sustained economic growth.
- The low level of domestic savings was an obstacle to increasing the level of investment.
- The government's deficit and tax policies contributed to the low level of savings (Naidoo 2006).

To address the latter two problems, GEAR sought to reduce the level of taxation on the economy, reduce the budget deficit, and increase the share of public spending on infrastructure. The government succeeded with the first and third objective. The tax-to-

GDP ratio increased by approximately 3 per cent of GDP between 1994-2001 (Naidoo 2006). The share of general government spending on infrastructure declined from approximately 4 per cent of GDP to about 2 per cent (ibid). However, mainly due to a higher tax-to-GDP ratio, the deficit was reduced significantly over that period. Reduced interest costs provided additional expenditure resources (ibid).

The positive achievement of GEAR was macro-economic stability. The economy grew consistently for 10 years without major boom-bust cycles. Government reduced its borrowings, its interest burden declined, inflation and interest rates decreased, and the current account deficit moderated and was easily financed. South Africa's external debt is low, private-sector foreign exchange reserves are significant and government's short-term debt, manageable. Export diversification is proceeding steadily (ibid).

However, GEAR's main objective - an increase in employment - failed to materialise. There is no consensus on the reasons for this. Possible explanations range from the impact of the Asian crisis to failures in the education system; from 'Afro-pessimism' to an 'investment strike' by big business. In other words, investors may have been deterred by negative global sentiment about Africa in general, which undermines their propensity to invest.

According to Naidoo, analysts explain macro-economic growth and micro-economic blockages which prevented the economy from growing faster and creating employment as follows:

- the functioning of the skills system, including workplace skills initiatives
- the spatial development patterns inherited from apartheid planning, resulting in inefficient urban planning and high transportation costs
- poor passenger and freight transportation systems
- poorly regulated monopoly markets in key areas such as telecommunications and energy, and little competition in many private goods markets
- high levels of poverty, which prevent people from seeking employment or engaging in entrepreneurial activity
- perceived inequities in the tax system that discourage new investments
- low levels of efficiency in the public sector, including poorly run state enterprises and weak municipal government
- high levels of crime, which reduce the quality of life of the poor and vulnerable and deter investment (Naidoo 2006: 115).

In 2004, there was another shift in macro-economic policy, signalling a retreat from the aggressive neo-liberal GEAR phase from the mid to late 1990s. In his State of the Nation

address in May 2004, President Mbeki articulated policies that included an increase in government spending, deceleration of privatisation, extending the social security net, and the expansion of the Public Works Programme (Hart 2006). This address signified a movement towards the idea of South Africa as a developmental state.

4.3 Towards a developmental state

From 2005, the notion of a 'developmental state' increasingly arose in policy discourse. It was not altogether clear how this was defined, or whether and how government intended pursuing this project.

Policy documents from the ANC's 2007 conference documents explicitly address the nature of a developmental state, and list its attributes. (ANC in Turok 2008:13).

The developmental state is charged with a number of functions, including:

- enhancing services to society through improved public infrastructure, efficient systems and requisite skilled personnel
- recognising the crucial role of the state in providing public goods such as health, education, housing, public transport, education and social security
- implementing a comprehensive social security system, including initiatives such as free basic services for the poor, passenger transport subsidy, social grants, expansion of the asset base of the poor through housing, small business and land reform programmes, private retirement savings, unemployment and accident insurance, and medical aids
- reduction of cases of TB, diabetes, malnutrition, maternal deaths and malaria, violent crime and road accidents
- reversal and eradication of the HIV and AIDS pandemic
- implementation of a comprehensive human development strategy, including improving the education system, intensifying education in mathematics and natural sciences, promoting social sciences, and expanding the nation's artisanship base
- improving throughput in research at universities and effective adult basic education
- specific programmes of redress such as land restitution
- consolidation of partnerships across society to strengthen social cohesion and ensure the values of a caring society

contribution to the improvement of civil society organisations, including sports, women's and youth bodies, the media and the family (ibid).

4.4 The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)

The notion of South Africa as a developmental state showed the increasing recognition of the need to find a balance between growth in the economy on the one hand and social welfare and development needs on the other. In accordance with the broader developmental goals set in successive socio-economic framework policy documents and leading to the crystallisation of the notion of the developmental state, South Africa committed itself to the MDGs. These goals included achieving the following developmental targets by 2015:

- halving extreme poverty
- providing universal primary education
- promoting gender equality
- reducing child mortality
- improving maternal health
- halting the spread of HIV and AIDS, malaria and other diseases
- ensuring environmental sustainability
- developing a global partnership for development.

By committing to the MDGs, new targets on service delivery and social development were set in 2006 by President Mbeki (Levin 2008). These are:

- The bucket system would be eradicated in formally established areas by the end of 2007.
- 2.07 million households would be provided with portable water by December 2008.
- A total of 3.7 million households would be provided with sanitation by 2010.
- 3.4 million households would be electrified by 2012.

2.3 million households would have adequate shelter by 2014. (Levin 2008, 54-55).

4.5 Economic growth and poverty alleviation

In order to meet the MDG challenge of halving poverty and unemployment by 2014, the starting point of the Medium Term Strategic Framework (MTSF) (2004)¹, was that an average annual growth rate of 4.5 per cent per annum was required from 2004 to 2009, and 6 per cent from 2010 to 2014. To overcome the constraints to accelerated growth, government launched the Accelerated and Shared Growth Initiative for South Africa (AsgiSA) in 2006.

AsgiSA sets out a range of interventions, including infrastructure investment, sector strategies, education and skills development, eliminating the second economy, strengthening macro-economic policies and governance, and institutional interventions.

The growth rate needed to achieve these social objectives is around 5 per cent between 2004-2014. A two-phase target has been set: during 2005-2009, an average annual growth rate of 4 per cent of GDP or higher is required; from 2010-14, a growth rate of at least 6 per cent is required (South African Presidency 2008).

Increased employment and government's social grants programme should be translated into reduced poverty, but not overall reduced inequality.

Table 2: Trends in economic growth in South Africa

Percent average annual growth in:	1994-2003	2004-2007
GDP	3	5
GDP per capita	1	4

Source: South African Presidency: *Towards a fifteen-year review 2008*

4.5.1 The Human Development Index and Gini co-efficient

As opposed to quantifying infrastructural units or households or people, the Human Development Index (HDI), and Gini co-efficient provide more inclusive and universal measurements of poverty and human development.

¹ The Medium Term Strategic Framework (MTSF) identifies development challenges in the first five years of the second decade of democracy and was meant to serve as a framework to guide government planning and budgeting across the three spheres of government for the period 2004 -2009. The Presidency, <http://www.thepresidency.gov.za/main.asp?include=docs/mtsf.html>

The HDI “*is a complex measure comprising three dimensions: life expectancy; adult literacy and enrolment at primary, secondary and tertiary levels, and GDP per capita*” (Shisana 2008: 188). South Africa is a middle-income country, with an HDI resembling a low-income economy.

GDP relative to Purchasing Power Parity (PPP)² provides an insight into the disparate levels of wealth and inequality in an economy by aggregating purchasing power compared to HDI.

South Africa’s GDP per capita has been rising for the first time in decades. GDP at PPP per capita was US\$11 192 in 2004, almost 40 per cent higher than Brazil’s, but Brazil’s HDI was about 25 per cent higher than South Africa’s. South Africa’s GDP (PPP) per capita was more than three times that of India, but our HDI was only marginally higher (South African Presidency 2008).

In 2006, South Africa was ranked 121st in HDI out of 177 countries. This was below countries with similar levels of development, such as Brazil (69th) and Thailand (74th), and well below many low-income economies, such as Indonesia, Sri Lanka and Guyana (ibid).

Although South Africa seems to have done well in terms of the development of physical infrastructure between 1994 and 2004, when it comes to human development, it has regressed from an HDI score of 0.74 to 0.67 (UNDP 2007). Life expectancy has declined to 47 years. The literacy rate for persons 15 years and older is high at 82.4 per cent, but the combined gross enrolment ratio is at 76.6 per cent (Shisana 2008). A major contributor to South Africa’s poor HDI performance is the very high incidence of HIV/AIDS. More than 5.4 million people with HIV/AIDS live in South Africa (Shisana 2008). Mortality due to AIDS is very high, mainly because antiretroviral (ARV) treatment was not initiated early enough (ibid).

The Gini co-efficient measures wealth disparity and inequality. In respect of the Gini measure, zero means perfect equality and 1 signifies perfect inequality. When South Africa’s developmental progress is measured this way, it becomes clear that the ‘two nations’ of the dual economy - rich and poor - have moved further apart. In 1995, the Gini coefficient was 0.56. By 2001, it had risen to 0.73 (Bhorat and Kanbur, 2006, cited in Shisana, 2008). Thus, poverty may have been mitigated through social grants, but inequality is increasing, by the rich becoming richer.

Also cited by Shisana (2008), the 2006 UN Development Report places South Africa’s Gini coefficient at .578, worse than that of India (.325) and Thailand (.420). Some

² PPP is defined by the United Nations Development Programme as: “A rate of exchange that accounts for price differences across countries, allowing international comparisons of real output and incomes.”

commentators, such as COSATU, blame GEAR for the further separation in wealth and poverty. The *Towards a fifteen-year review* (2008: 18) states that “[n]ational income inequality as measured by the Gini coefficient increased from 0.64 to 0.69 between 1995 and 2005, and continued to do so from 2006 to 2007.”

While the Gini scores highlight the growing gap between the poor and the emerging middle class and the elites in South Africa, an analysis of poverty levels as measured by income, shows that the poor have improved their economic position. Figures reflected in *Towards a fifteen-year review* (2008) suggest that there was a reduction in both absolute income poverty (the income of poor people) and relative income poverty (the poverty gap, ie the gap between the average income of poor people and the poverty line). Asian poverty increased, although the numbers were small; Africans and Coloureds experienced a significant and appreciable decline in mean poverty gap levels. For Africans, relative poverty levels declined by six to seven percentage points for both poverty lines (South African Presidency 2008: 18).

However, disaggregating the poverty statistics shows that Black/Africans and women account for a disproportionate share of poverty: the former constitutes 77 per cent of the population in 1995, and 79 per cent in 2005, accounted for 93 per cent of those living on less than R322 per month (South African Presidency 2008).

Lacking a baseline poverty indicator, the authors of the *Review* used two lines: a lower poverty line of R174 per person per month, and an upper line of R322 per person per month, in 2000 prices.

The primary driver of the decline in poverty is the government’s social security assistance programme:

From 2,5 million beneficiaries in 1999 to just over 12 million in 2007, the social grant system is the largest form of government support for the poor. Most by far is for of the Child Support Grants (CSG), which reached 7,8 million beneficiaries in 2007 compared to 34 000 in 1999. The rapid expansion of the social security system lies at the heart of the growth in expenditure levels of the poor. By 2005, social grants contributed up to 90% of the income of individuals in the first two deciles and more than 50% in the fifth decile.

Various studies have confirmed that this support is well targeted and contributes considerably to poverty reduction. Of social grants, 62% of the total went to the poorest 40% of households and 82% to the poorest 60%. (South African Presidency 2008: 19).

Growing income resulting from employment growth enhanced the impact of the social security programme.

Importantly, the *Review* argues that growth does not trickle down: that existing inequalities reduce the redistributive (or developmental) effects of economic growth,

distorting their effects to those who are already better off. This applies to income from economic activity, social security and social services. Those who are relatively less disadvantaged are more able to take advantage of economic growth, than those who need it most:

...growth and poverty reduction do not necessarily reduce inequality distribution of the benefits of growth is affected by existing disparities in wealth and social capital and in particular by access to the labour market. Inequality reduces the impact of growth on poverty reduction and in turn acts as a constraint on growth. It has the potential to foster social tension (South African Presidency 2008: 103).

Persistent inequality is largely the result of the reproduction of existing inequalities in ownership, income, resources, skills and other determinants of people's ability and capacity to exploit opportunities. Affirmative action, employment equity, Broad-Based Economic Empowerment and minimum wage determinations have had a significant impact. But lasting improvement requires improved human capacity and greater state intervention in redistribution.

4.6 Access to services

This section reviews South Africans' access to a range of services, including basic services such as water, sanitation and electricity. Access to social services is also investigated, including education and health care.

Access to basic services has improved enormously, as indicated in Table 3.

Table 3: Access to basic services

Percentage households	1996	2001	2007
Using electricity for:			
Lighting	58	70	80
Cooking	47	51	67
Heating	45	49	59
Water			
Equivalent to or above RDP standard (200m to communal tap)	62	74	88
Tap in dwelling or on site		61	70
Sanitation			
Equivalent to or above RDP standard	52	59	73
Flush toilet		52	60

Source: The Presidency, 2008

Although the December 2007 target for complete eradication of the bucket system in established settlements was not reached, notable progress was made: between 1994 and

2007; households using the system in all areas decreased from 609 675 to 113 085, and in established settlements to 14 812 by June 2008 (South African Presidency 2008).

4.6.1 *Education*

The South African education system is beset with enormous difficulties, including:

-
- the quality of teaching
- lack of equipment and physical resources
- late or non-delivery of text-books, and teachers' strikes
- vandalism in schools, truancy
- teenage pregnancy
- security issues, including violence between pupils and pupils and staff, sexual harassment, rape, drugs, and a host of other social issues.

The Review concedes that the principal challenge in education is to improve its quality. The poor quality of education and weaknesses in the implementation of Outcomes-Based Education are some of the factors contributing to the high failure rates, especially at the Matric level where the pass rate has declined every year since 2004, when it was at a high of 70 per cent. In 2008, only 62.7 per cent of matriculants had passed their Matric (Serraroa, 2008).

Access to education has steadily improved, especially at primary level, and has increased at secondary level. In 2007, 60 per cent of five-year olds, 88 per cent of six-year olds and 98 per cent of seven to 15-year-olds were enrolled (South African Presidency 2008).

The achievement gap between advantaged and disadvantaged schools also needs to be addressed.

The proportion of provincial budget expenditure on education has decreased, with the exception of the Free State and Northern Cape. In North West, the education budget as a proportion of the budget went from 48 per cent in 2002/3 to approximately 40 per cent in 2008/09 (South African Presidency 2008).

4.6.2 *Health*

There are multiple issues affecting the levels of health of South Africans, besides public health expenditure and the number of clinics, hospitals and staff.

All other social service issues impact on health: levels of education, literacy, welfare, housing, water and sanitation, and electricity.

There are also transport issues, such as hospitals and clinics not being in close proximity to communities, especially in rural areas; lack of ambulance services; and poor or non-existent roads. Additional problems include epidemics, such as cholera outbreaks during the rainy season in areas where inadequate sewerage and drain-water systems prevail, and the management of hospitals and clinics.

Some improvements have been made to health care provision in South Africa. The South African Presidency (2008) shows that the National Government, under the National Clinic Upgrading and Building Programme, built 1 600 clinics and healthcare centres between 1994 and 2000. The Review also shows increases in access to and utilisation of primary health care from 67 021 961 to 101 644 080 (1997-2007) and 1.5 to 2.2 visits per person per year between 2000 and 2006 respectively. (South African Presidency 2008). A further positive health indicator is that severe malnutrition among children under five years has declined, from 88 971 cases in 2001, to 28 165 in 2007.

Despite greater investment in the healthcare infrastructure in South Africa, other indicators suggest that there are many ongoing health challenges facing the country. Key indicators that provide a snapshot of the state of a nation's health are: life expectancy at birth, maternal mortality, and infant mortality. South Africa, as an economically advancing, middle-income country, would be expected to be showing gains in some of these basic health indicators. Evidence suggests that instead of meeting the health targets set out in the MDGs (for example, to reduce the maternal mortality rate by three-quarters by 2015), the statistics show signs of a reversal (Beresford 2008). In 2001 Statistics South Africa reported that the average life expectancy for men and women was 57.2 per cent but in 2007 this had fallen to just 50 years (ibid).

With respect to the maternal mortality ratio (as measured by the number of women who die of maternal causes per 100 000 live births) in 2000, this was 230 per 100 000 births and by 2007 the ratio had increased to 400 (ibid).

Between 1997 and 2004, adult mortality rates between the ages of 25 and 45 increased markedly. Decreasing life expectancy in South Africa may be attributable in large measure to deaths caused by HIV/AIDS. In 2005 South Africa had an HIV prevalence rate of 18.8 per cent in the 15-49-year-old age group. Although this figure has improved slightly since 2000³, South Africa remains in the top of half of HIV infections for this age group in SADC.

Where treatment for HIV/AIDS is concerned, South Africa currently has the largest number of people in the world enrolled for antiretroviral therapy.

³ In 2000, this figure was 19.1 per cent of people in the 15-49-year-old age group (UNDP 2000).

5. PUBLIC PERCEPTIONS OF GOVERNMENT PERFORMANCE

Having discussed the political changes and socio-economic policy frameworks and socio-economic development that has occurred since 1994, the discussion now turns to ways in which South African citizens perceive these developments.

Table 4 highlights public perceptions over a 10-year period, coinciding with national elections, for select key performance indicators. These five-year averages reflected in bi-annual surveys by Markinor indicate that citizens rate the performance of state-programmes from highest to lowest, as follows:

- Social-sector programmes
- Governance issues
- The criminal justice system
- Government's impact on the economy.

The rankings reflect that perceptions improve during government's current mandate period.

Table 4: Public ratings of government performance

Average percent for preceding five years	1999	2004	2008
Creating jobs	28	21	31
Reducing crime rate	35	35	42
Controlling the cost of living		32	49
Correct appointment to lead govt. departments and agencies	51	44	50
Controlling inflation	38	40	52
Maintaining transparency and accountability	55	48	53
Fighting corruption in government	46	45	54
Narrowing the income gap	53	53	56
Managing the economy	49	47	62

Source: Markinor Performance Barometer cited in South African Presidency (2008)

In almost all categories, citizens' perceptions of the performance of government improved over the 10-year period, except in relation to the legitimacy of the state: making the correct appointments, and maintaining transparency and accountability. This is a critical finding, as trust in state officials and institutions contributes largely to the legitimacy of government and state, social cohesion, and a citizenry which fulfils its obligations towards government and other citizens.

The following table reflects areas of government activity that have consistently attracted higher ratings. The social grants programme shows strong increases from already high levels.

Table 5: Public perceptions of government performance

Average % for preceding five years	1999	2004	2008
Addressing HIV and AIDS	61	60	63
Building houses	49	59	63
Bringing police closer to the community	60	61	64
Promoting access to land		62	67
Improving basic health services	68	64	67
Ending political violence	57	64	68
Addressing educational needs of all South Africans	63	64	71
Delivering basic services, eg water and electricity		75	73
Promoting equality between men and women	72	75	78
Distributing welfare grants to those who are entitled	69	72	82

Source: South African Presidency (2008)

The positive economic outlook of the post-2004 period would have made a contribution to positive trends in public opinion. However, the trends from 1995-2008 suggest a cumulative effect of the direct impact that the programmes have on the lives of the majority, whose welfare most directly depends on the state.

Other surveys explore the importance that the public attributes to challenges faced by government and the nation:

Table 6: The public agenda - most important issues government should address

%	Poverty	Crime	Housing	Health	AIDS	Education	Jobs
1994	9	6	46	2		34	67
1999	9	65	32	18	3		79
2003				10		15	
2004	24	30	27		30		77
2006	27	23	27	10	25	12	63

Source: South African Presidency (2008)

The percentages in Table 6 illustrate a persistent concern about employment and housing. Prior preoccupations with education and crime have been superseded by increasing concerns about poverty. More broadly, besides the concern with crime, the public agenda is strongly preoccupied with issues relating to dimensions of poverty: income, human capital, and the lack of ownership of assets, such as houses.

5.1 Public perceptions of government's legitimacy

Some of the Tables shown reflect perceptions of the legitimacy of aspects of the criminal justice system. Recent allegations, such as that of corruption and the use of state institutions and the judiciary to protect and defend public figures, and actions against them, such as suspension, in departments such as in intelligence, police, correctional services and the judiciary, have negatively impacted on public perception, suggesting that party politics impact on the independence of state functionaries and institutions.

Perceptions of the legitimacy and authority of the state is also negatively affected by high crime rates. The inability of a state to fulfill its obligation of securing the rights of safety and security for all its citizens is bound to have a negative impact.

Multiple recent surveys presented in South African Presidency (2008) have indicated a negative trend of trust in public institutions. However, this also parallels the end of a five-year government term, and such cyclical trends have been noted before. Round Three of the Afrobarometer Survey of 2005 highlights levels of trust that South African citizens have in public institutions (see Table 7). Trust in many of the institutions was at moderate levels, around 50 per cent, suggesting that a substantial proportion of South Africa's electorate (between one third and a half) were either only partially trustful or not at all trustful of these institutions. Those institutions falling into this category were: 'the premier of your

province'; the National Assembly; the army; 'your provincial Government' and the ruling party.

Institutions that were most trusted by South Africans in the mid-2000s were: the Government Broadcasting Service (71 per cent), the president of South Africa (69 per cent) and the Courts of Law (69 per cent). Least trusted institutions were opposition political parties (62 per cent), elected local government councils (51 per cent), Non-Governmental Organisations (36 per cent) and the Police (50 per cent). For this period, trust in the president and the ruling party would have been high because Thabo Mbeki had just been elected to serve his second term as president of the country, and the ANC had won the these elections with an increased majority in the National Assembly. High trust in the public broadcasting service over this period presaged turbulence within the SABC over the appointment of its new Board by former President Thabo Mbeki in 2008, after he had lost the ANC elections for presidency of the party.

Table 7: Trust in public institutions

How much do you trust each of the following institutions....?				
Percent trust for institution	Not at all	A little bit	A lot	A great deal
the President	10	18	22	47
Government Broadcasting Service	6	16	36	35
the Ruling Party	13	21	27	34
the National Directorate of Public Prosecutions	12	15	28	34
the Courts of Law	9	18	38	31
Independent Broadcasting Services	6	17	34	31
the Independent Electoral Commission	12	20	26	30
Your Premier	11	23	31	27
the National Assembly	12	22	30	24
the Army	20	23	27	23
the Police	23	27	29	19
Independent Newspapers	9	25	34	19
Your Provincial Government	14	27	34	18
Non-governmental Organisations	14	22	27	16
Your Elected Local Government Council	24	27	29	14
Opposition Political Parties	34	28	20	9

Source: Afrobarometer Survey Round 3 (2005)

Low levels of trust of some of the local service delivery institutions as shown in Table 7 may be as a result of perceptions that local officials are corrupt. For example the 2005 Afrobarometer Survey highlights that more than two thirds of citizens in South Africa perceived officials in the following departments to be either partially or mostly corrupt: local government councillors, national government officials, local government officials, and

the police. Weaknesses in communication between citizens and local government, and poor service delivery - as well as low levels of trust in local officials - have resulted in the de-legitimation of the local sphere, and the questioning of state authority, expressed through public protest against it and its representatives, for example, in Khutsong.

In addition to some of the findings of the national surveys highlighted earlier, the CPS conducted 11 qualitative interviews: eight in Limpopo Province, and three in Alexandra township in Gauteng. The purpose of the interviews was to hear from ordinary citizens about the impact of democracy on their own lives and in their own communities. Respondents included representatives of NGOs, CBOs, CDOs, and Ward Committee members at local level. Some impressionistic findings, based on the 11 interviews, are now presented.

Two districts in Limpopo were visited in order to conduct interviews and to obtain a range of insights into the experiences of ordinary citizens. The districts chosen were Sekhukhune (largely rural) and Capricorn (the largely urban, economic heartland of Limpopo). In Gauteng, Alexandra and Diepsloot were visited by researchers. Alexandra is one of Gauteng's oldest, most densely settled townships, which has historically been disadvantaged, suffering from a lack of infrastructure, access to basic services, poverty, unemployment, and a high crime rate.

Respondents raised a number of points dealing with a range of issues including:

- Community Development Workers
- Ward Committees
- public participation
- education and health care
- the provision of social services
- unemployment and poverty.

Their responses are summarised in the following section of the report.

5.2 Perceptions of local democracy and public participation

In Limpopo, in terms of citizen engagement at the level of local governance, some ward committee members acknowledged the importance of public participation in decisions affecting their communities. Communities are informed of meetings through notices on shop windows, announcements during funerals, and at schools. However, ward committee members list a number of challenges in the relationship between committee members and the municipalities. These challenges by respondents hamper progress in terms citizen participation. They are:

- poor attendance at local meetings
- lack of basic services such as water: people still walk long distances to fetch water from rivers
- many in the community do not know what an IDP (Integrated Development Plan) is
- relocation of local councillors from villages to suburbs - councillors do not live in the areas they are supposed to be representing
- lack of implementation: the ward committee has submitted many reports on various issues and community needs to the municipality, but these are not acted upon
- breakdown of relationships between some Ward Committee members and councillors
- lack of knowledge about indigent policy:⁴ many people know little about this policy.

In terms of accountability to the community, the municipality accounts to the community through formal meetings, newsletters, and annual reports. However, there is a sense that there is little political accountability in spite of access to Departmental Annual Reports, the Provincial Legislature, and Ward Councillors. Thus, in spite of a degree of satisfaction with service delivery, respondents felt that they are not adequately involved in decision-making, and there is a perception that policies are finalised without consulting the community.

Taking this view further, in terms of community input in development planning and budgets, two representatives from a training institute in Polokwane, said that the public perception is that, because budgets are pre-determined, communities are unable to shape the activities in the IDPs (interview with Tlavhama Training Institute, Polokwane, 2008).. There are also perceptions that community inputs into the process are not considered. Interviews with respondents from the Hlatlolanang Nutrition Health and Nutrition Centre (Sekhukhune District), suggested that public participation serves the function of legitimising policies and practice of local government, without real community representation. Respondents also suggested that the ineffectiveness of ward committees and officials such as Ward Councillors contributed to the perception that institutional structures created at local government level to promote participatory governance were merely there to 'rubber stamp' policies and programmes already decided on at another level in the state bureaucracy.

⁴ The indigent policy is the municipal provision of free basic water and electricity services: 6 000 litres of water per month and electricity worth 50kwh per month.

Rural/urban perceptions on service delivery and local government performance in Limpopo seem to differ, as communities in rural Sekhukhune appeared to be more satisfied with local government than urbanites living in Capricorn, where citizens felt that Ward Councillors are ineffective. Also, in Sekhukhune there is a local newspaper, the *Sekhukhune Voice*, which focuses on communication about local development projects and programmes.

In Alexandra, Gauteng, and Limpopo, public participation in local government decision making was also hampered by a problem of lack of attendance at meetings to discuss community needs and development issues. In some cases public policy hearings take place far from where many people live, and they are unable to attend because of a lack of resources.

Participation is passive, as community members are not asked for their input, but are told what is intended, or what has happened. As one respondent notes:

“Decisions are made on our behalf. We attend these meetings only to see decisions being announced to us, rather than asked to make inputs before decisions are taken... in most cases, only people with political backgrounds are listened to. Ordinary people’s inputs are ignored” (Interview Director, Thusong Community Centre, Alexandra, 2008).

As concerns local government functionaries - such as the CDWs and Ward Committee members - respondents noted a lack of co-operation between the CDWs and the local Ward Councillors, both of whom seem to misunderstand their various roles and functions. This lack of understanding can be linked to a problem noted from the interviews, which is the lack of formal introduction of CDWs to the municipalities by their provincial employers. Other problems noted by respondents in the CDW/ Council relationships are:

- CDWs are currently attempting to resolve these problems at regional level, but it is a national problem which has been communicated to the Department of Provincial and Local Government.
- CDWs cannot become members of Ward Committees but can participate in their activities. However, Ward Councillors tend to exclude them as a result of animosity, lack of co-operation, suspicion and turf battles.

There are many Community Based Organisations (CBOs) in Alexandra, but they struggle to receive assistance from government. There is also a perception that the government does not appreciate the work they do. Although there are many CBOs and NGOs in Alexandra, their participation is constrained due to lack of funding. According to one respondent:

“New, rich, black entrepreneurs are now not willing to provide funding assistance to NGOs; some of them were NGO workers and activists working for NGOs prior to the new democratic dispensation.” (ibid).

Finally, in terms of local democracy and public participation there are challenges which need to be addressed. As noted from the interviews, there is still a sense of a lack of ownership in terms of local government policies due to constraints on effective participation, such as lack of resources to attend meetings, lack of awareness on the importance of participation, feelings of suspicion, and perceptions of being seen as rubber stamps to decisions already made somewhere else.

5.3 Perceptions on education

In Limpopo, although there are high levels of illiteracy in rural areas, there is a sense that the quality of education has improved in the province, especially in pre-schools and crèches. However, the implementation of OBE has been difficult because teachers do not understand it (interview with Hlatlolanang Health and Nutrition Centre, Sekhuhune District 2008). Whereas some respondents claimed that parents are satisfied with the 'no-fee' policy, others said the policy is not working, as school governing bodies do not want to subsidise the school fees of children whose parents cannot afford to pay their fees.⁵ In addition, the no-fee policy was also viewed as problematic by some because this means that there is no money to pay for schools trips and to pay for other school infrastructure such as security systems (Interview with Hlatlolanang Health and Nutrition Centre, Sekhukune District, 2008). Some schools require infrastructural improvement, and some children still receive education under trees in the absence of school classrooms, but the perception among some respondents was that there are enough teachers (interview from the Nkuzi Development Association, Polokwane, 2008) though others felt that staffing at schools is "still chaotic" (interview with the Tlavhama Training Institute, Polokwane, 2008). Respondents also reported that some schools are better resourced than others and some even have computers. For some residents, access to school is problematic, especially in rural areas - for example, in Sigonde, where young people are forced to walk approximately 30 km to school.

Tertiary education (including Further Education and Training, colleges, universities and technikons) are reportedly present in the province. However it was reported that an estimated 75 per cent of the youth do not receive tertiary education, due to its unaffordability. Respondents were of the view that more than half (50-60 per cent) of young people in Limpopo are not educated and are unemployed.

High drop-out rates in rural areas are a problem. Few children complete schooling up to Grade 12, and fewer still enter higher education institutions. Some respondents were of the view that one factor that contributes to the high drop-out rate is poverty, as most children

⁵ The no-fee policy was introduced in 2006, and exempts certain schools from charging school fees, based on poverty levels of the area they serve. By 2007, 5 001 874 learners from 13 856 schools were beneficiaries of the policy. Currently, 40 per cent of the country's learners benefit from the policy.

leave school to care for unemployed family members. Lack of recreational facilities also encourage the abuse of alcohol, especially among school drop-outs.

5.4 Perceptions on employment/unemployment and poverty

In Limpopo high levels of unemployment were also reported, and unemployment among graduates and the youth remains a problem. Unemployed young people drink at shebeens and harass older people for money. A respondent commented that older people refer to young people as “tollgates” because young people frequently ask them for money (interview with the Nkuzi Development Association, Polokwane, 2008). A respondent from Polokwane claimed that unemployment in this area is especially a problem for people over 40 years of age, because they were deprived of an education under apartheid and only received an education later in life, but because of their age they are unable to find employment despite having qualifications or tertiary training because many companies that are recruiting have age restrictions in their hiring policies (interview with the Tlavhama Training Institute, Polokwane, 2008).

5.5 Perceptions on health care

In Limpopo, HIV/AIDS is the largest single cause of death in the province, accounting for 24 per cent of all deaths during 2000 (Bradshaw et al 2000). Despite the high prevalence of HIV/AIDS, a respondent reported that there are only five ARV treatment sites in the province (interview with Community Development Worker, Sekhukhune District, 2008). Although clinics are available and provide ARV treatment, distances to clinics and transportation remains a problem. Moreover, clinics close early due to staff shortages and high crime levels, which make it dangerous for staff to work late (interview with Office of the Public Protector, Polokwane, 2008). However, some respondents were of the view that the provision of health facilities has improved, and access to clinics and hospitals is easier. (This perception is relative, as some hospitals are 18 kms-60 kms away from households).

In Alexandra it was also reported that HIV/AIDS was having a negative impact on households. Increasing numbers of parents are dying, leaving elderly people/grandparents to look after their grandchildren. Thus, most of the elderly do not make use of the community old-age home in Alex, as they are forced to care for orphans (interview with CDW, Alexandra, 2008).

5.6 Perceptions on social services and welfare

Findings from Limpopo show that there is a pervasive perception that grants are misused. For example, the youth and parents receiving child support grants reportedly use the money to gamble and drink (interview with the Nkuzi Development Association, Polokwane, 2008). Respondents suggested that more monitoring by SASSA (South African Social Security Agency) officials takes place, and that potential beneficiaries are educated on how to use, and not abuse, money from grants.

For some families, especially in rural areas, approximately 90 per cent of households depend on grants as their only source of income. These are mainly child support, disability, and old age grants (interview with Operation Hunger, Nutrition and Poverty Centre, 2008).

Most people know how to access grants because information is provided by the Department of Home Affairs and the Department of Social Development. However, there are people who are not aware of the indigent policy and how to qualify for grants (interview with Office of the Public Protector, Polokwane, 2008). Moreover, food parcels are irregularly distributed to the indigent and the process is subject to corrupt influences.

5.7 Perceptions of benefits of democracy

Despite these social problems, many respondents believe that democracy has benefited development in a variety of ways. These perceived benefits are discussed below.

In Limpopo the provision of RDP houses is seen as alleviating the problem of access to shelter and infrastructure. The 'no-fee' school policy allows learners greater access to education. Clinics have been built in some areas. In terms of infrastructure, improved access to electricity and improvement of roads and transportation has facilitated greater access to health and education facilities, transport to work, and mobility in general. Land claims have been beneficial, and people have land and equipment for cultivation, although some have jobs other than farming.

In Alexandra, benefits to democracy are viewed in terms of greater access to information about a wide range of services being provided by government. More development is seen to be taking place in Alexandra since the dawn of democracy. There are some improvements noted in service delivery, pension payouts, education and infrastructure and housing delivery. Recently, the government gave R1.3 billion to Alexandra for regeneration and renewal. There is greater political freedom: people can say whatever they want to say without fear of imprisonment.

5.8 Perceptions on development deficits

This section highlights areas of concern expressed by respondents in relation to development challenges that persist in South Africa, more than a decade after democracy.

In Alexandra, despite the improvements noted earlier in terms of democratic benefits, many concerns were raised by respondents. Concerns were that although good policies are being formulated, the implementation and monitoring of these policies is poor. Lack of coordination between government departments, and corruption, are also perceived as a problem. In terms of housing, concerns were expressed about a number of issues: delays in housing development projects and construction, perceived irregularities in the distribution of RDP houses with some people having multiple RDP houses at the expense of others. The availability of land was another concern for some respondents. A major obstacle to land

ownership was seen to be the failure to release more privately owned and state land to those people that had been removed from their land under apartheid.

In terms of the economy and good governance, one respondent said that opportunism and corruption will destroy democracy (CDW, Alexandra, 2008). It was also claimed that economic liberation had not occurred, and that the gap between rich and poor was widening (ibid). Other perceptions included fears about the high cost of living in South Africa, possibly resulting in South Africa moving in the direction of Zimbabwe, and South Africa becoming a country of welfare recipients, dependent on food parcels and vouchers, resulting in a lack of human development.

There seemed to be a level of distrust of foreigners. This perception is all the more important if put within the context of the xenophobic attacks in May 2008 which erupted in South Africa, and Alexandra in particular (*The Star* 2008, Special Report, Flames of hate). Some of the comments by respondents on this issue follow.

“We are giving our country to foreigners. We are importing skills from Cuba - doctors and maths teachers. Foreigners are taking over”.

“Foreigners are also receiving social grants in South Africa”.

“Alexandra is overpopulated and the foreigners are adding to this problem. Many of these foreigners come here pregnant and add to the overcrowding. They are not liked by the community because they bring trouble such as participating in crime. (Respondents interviewed, Alexandra, 2008)

6. CONCLUSION

The impact of democratisation on development in South Africa is mixed.

It is clear from this discussion that when assessed against the benchmark data presented in the RDP document, South Africa has made significant and substantive strides in the provision of services such as in housing and health services, education, water and electricity, and the distribution of welfare grants.

However, there are three major issues which are not adequately addressed, and which undermine developmental programmes, namely HIV/AIDS, crime, and high levels of unemployment.

Although public perceptions suggest that government has progressed in addressing HIV and AIDS, it was hampered by President Mbeki's 'AIDS denialism' - the slow progress in the rollout of ARVs, and poor leadership by the Minister of Health under President Mbeki.

Crime levels remain unacceptably high, and undermine development.

Rates of unemployment are contested among analysts, and differences are based on whether the self-employed and those working in the informal sector are considered. However, as discussed earlier, while the Gini co-efficient scores highlight the growing gap between the poor and emerging middle class and elites, an analysis of poverty levels as measured by income show that the poor have improved their economic position.

Perceptions of democracy are undermined by allegations and actions against public figures in intelligence, police, correctional services and the judiciary. The recent removal of Thabo Mbeki as president and the implications made by Judge Nicholson that party politics impact on the independence of these people and institutions, further compromises the legitimacy of public institutions.

The interviews conducted with citizens raise concerns not addressed by public surveys and the Presidency's Review, such as lack of participation in decision-making at local level, ineffective functioning of local-level decision-making bodies, such as ward committees, perceptions of the misuse of social grants, and perceptions that the presence of foreigners limits citizens' benefiting from development programmes.

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- Project Co-ordinator and intern: Operation Hunger Nutrition and Poverty Centre
- Tlavhama Training Institute, Polokwane
- Nkuzi Development Association, Land Reform Project, Polokwane
- Office of the Public Protector, Polokwane
- Programme Manager and Facilitator: Hlatlolanang Nutrition Health and Nutrition Centre (Sekhukhune District)
- Ward Committee Members (Sekhukhune District)
- Community Development Worker (CDW), Ward 105
- Alexandra, CDE Ward 91, Alexandra
- CDW, Ward 109 Alexandra
- Ward Committee Member, Ward 105 Director,
- Thusong Community Centre, Alexandra.