

Featured SET policy:

## 2 – The National Development Plan (NDP) and the developmental state

In a series of articles, the NSTF is unpacking the National Development Plan (NDP). The focus is on understanding it from a science, engineering, technology (SET) perspective. The National Development Plan (NDP) is seen as a blueprint/guiding document for South Africa. The NDP aims to eliminate poverty and reduce inequality by 2030.

- See [1 – Understanding the context of the National Development Plan \(NDP\)](#)
- The complete document – ‘[National Development Plan – vision for 2030](#)’
- The executive summary ‘[National Development Plan 2030, Our future – make it work, executive summary](#)’.

### Factors for creating a successful developmental state

The National Development Plan (NDP) is positioned as a working document that will be enhanced and improved through public criticism and dialogue.

**Focusing on urgency:** It notes that reducing poverty and inequality isn’t happening quickly enough. It emphasises the target date of 2030.

**Promoting active citizenry and strong leadership:** To eliminate poverty and reduce inequality, “requires a new approach – one that moves from passive citizenry receiving services from the state to one that systematically includes the socially and economically excluded, where people are active champions of their own development, and where government works effectively to develop people’s capabilities”. The NDP also recognises that leadership is essential, across all sectors of society.

**Promoting collaboration:** Success also includes collaboration between private and public sectors and leadership from all sectors of society.

**Proposes a virtuous cycle:** Attack poverty and exclusion while nurturing economic growth, “creating a virtuous cycle of expanding opportunities, building capabilities, reducing poverty, involving communities in their own development, all leading to rising living standards”.

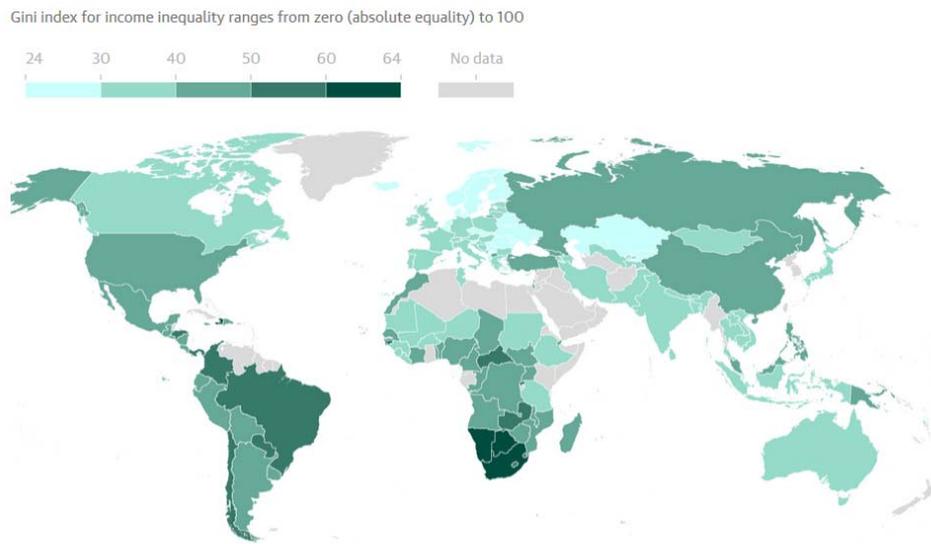
**Success is no one living under the poverty line:** Success is measured “by the degree to which the lives and opportunities of the poorest South Africans are transformed in a sustainable manner”. It is about reducing the number of people living below the poverty line to zero. At the same time, it recognises that poverty is multidimensional and not just about income.

**The National Planning Commission defined central challenges:** These came out of the Commission’s Diagnostic Report.

Too few people work	The quality of school education for black people is poor	The public health system cannot meet demand or sustain quality
Infrastructure is poorly located, inadequate and under-maintained	Spatial divides hobble inclusive development	The economy is unsustainably resource intensive
Corruption levels are high	South Africa remains a divided society	Public services are uneven and often of poor quality

**Employment and education are the highest priorities:** The Commission viewed the following 2 challenges as critical and interrelated: “too few people work and the quality of education available to the majority is poor”.

**2017 - South Africa is currently the most unequal country according to the World Banks GINI Index**  
The GINI coefficient is a measure of inequality of distribution.



Guardian graphic | Source: World Bank estimate. Map shows most recent Gini index estimates for 140 countries

*From 'Inequality index: where are the world's most unequal countries?', Guardian newspaper*

## The developmental framework

**Social reality still defined by apartheid and colonialism:** “[T]he country’s development path has not sufficiently broadened opportunities for black South Africans, especially women and youth... the socioeconomic conditions that characterised the system of apartheid and colonialism largely still define our social reality.” The development paradigm needs to promote developing capabilities, creating opportunities and citizen participation.

**The Commission defined development** as “the process of raising continuously the capabilities of all citizens, particularly those who were previously disadvantaged”. Improving national capabilities looks at:

- human capital (through education, health, skills and work experience)
- physical infrastructure (schools, clinics, ports and power lines)
- technologies
- management skills
- social institutions that provide for better lives

**Development has been unbalanced:** It notes that previously government focused on the easier actions (such as paying grants and providing water and electricity) and not on difficult things (such as improving education, promoting employment and building houses close to jobs). This is a distorted development effort and South Africa needs a more balanced approach.

**Focus on women and youth:** The NDP has cross-cutting themes around the impact of gender and improving life chances for youth. “The key determinant of success is whether a country can harness the advantage of having a large number of young people who are able and willing to work.”

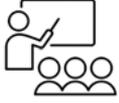
**Need to take into account external drivers of change:** At that point in time, the Commission noted examples such as fast-growing developing economies like China and India, globalisation, Africa’s development as a larger context for SA growth and development (including skills and trade), climate change, and technological change. The Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) failed, in part, because external drivers of change were not taken into account.

Technological change is seen as relating to science, as well as information and communication technology (ICT).

## Summary of NDP 2011 actions



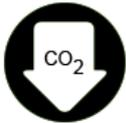
An economy that will create more jobs



Improving the quality of education, training and innovation



Reversing the spatial effects of apartheid



Transition to a low-carbon economy



Quality healthcare for all



Reforming the public service



Fighting corruption



Transforming society and uniting the country



An inclusive and integrated rural economy



Social protection



Building safer communities