

**Featured SET policy:**

## Building safer communities (Chapter 12, NDP)

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 NDP is seen as a blueprint/guiding document for South Africa. The NDP aims to eliminate poverty and reduce inequality by 2030.

- The complete document – ‘[National Development Plan – vision for 2030](#)’
- The executive summary – ‘[National Development Plan 2030, Our future – make it work, executive summary](#)’.

<p><b>NDP chapter: Overview</b></p> <p>This considers the context and background of the NDP. See <a href="#">1 – Understanding the context of the National Development Plan (NDP)</a>. It also sets the stage for understanding what makes a developmental state. See <a href="#">2 – The National Development Plan and the developmental state</a>. There is also a summary of the plan and key targets and actions.</p>	
<p><b>NDP chapter 1: Key drivers of change</b></p> <p>The synopsis is called <a href="#">3 – Science and technology as drivers of development</a></p>	
<p><b>NDP chapter 2: Demographic trends</b></p> <p>The synopsis is called <a href="#">4 – Demographic trends PLUS the NDPs 5th anniversary</a></p>	
<p><b>NDP chapter 3: Economy and employment</b></p> <p>The synopsis is called <a href="#">5 – National system of innovation and R&amp;D critical for growing the economy</a></p>	
<p><b>NDP chapter 4: Economic infrastructure</b></p> <p>The synopsis is called <a href="#">6 – Developing a strong network of economic infrastructure – transport, energy, water resources, and ICT</a></p>	<p>An economy that will create more jobs </p>
<p><b>NDP chapter 5: Transition to a low carbon economy</b></p> <p>The synopsis is called <a href="#">7 – Transitioning SA to a low carbon economy that responds to climate change</a></p>	<p>Transition to a low-carbon economy </p>
<p><b>NDP chapter 6: Inclusive rural economy</b></p> <p>The synopsis is called <a href="#">Section 8 of the NSTF series – An inclusive rural economy</a></p>	<p>An inclusive and integrated rural economy </p>
<p><b>NDP chapter 7: Positioning South Africa in the world</b></p> <p>The synopsis is called <a href="#">Section 9 of the NSTF series – Positioning South Africa in the world (Chapter 7, NDP)</a></p>	
<p><b>NDP chapter 8: Transforming human settlements</b></p> <p>The synopsis is called <a href="#">Section 10 of the NSTF series – Transforming human settlements (Chapter 8, NDP)</a></p>	<p>Reversing the spatial effects of apartheid </p>
<p><b>NDP chapter 9: Improving education, innovation and training</b></p>	<p>Improving the quality of education, training and innovation </p>
<p><b>NDP chapter 10: Promoting health</b></p>	<p>Quality healthcare for all </p>
<p><b>NDP chapter 11: Social protection</b></p>	<p>Social protection </p>

NDP chapter 12: <b>Building safer communities</b>	Building safer communities 
NDP chapter 13: <b>Building a capable state</b>	Reforming the public service 
NDP chapter 14: <b>Promoting accountability and fighting corruption</b>	Fighting corruption 
NDP chapter 15: <b>Transforming society and uniting the country</b>	Transforming society and uniting the country 

## Chapter 12, National Development Plan – Building safer communities

**Personal safety is considered a human right. It's integrally linked to other developmental activities.** The National Development Plan (NDP) explains safety and security as “directly related to socioeconomic development and equality”. Safety and security are considered a baseline for essential activities, such as human development (including education), improving quality of life and health, increasing productivity, and strengthening social cohesion.

**Safety and security also link to infrastructure and access to sustainable livelihoods.** Consider what it means for women, especially in rural areas, having to walk long distances through unsafe areas to get to a toilet or to collect water. As noted in the NDP: “The success of the criminal justice system should be measured against its ability to protect the most vulnerable in society.”

**Vision 2030 is defined by the NDP as the following:** “In 2030, people living in South Africa feel safe at home, at school and at work, and they enjoy a community life free of fear. Women walk freely in the streets and children play safely outside. The police service is well-resourced and professional, staffed by highly skilled officers who value their work, serve the community, safeguard lives and property without discrimination, protect the peaceful against violence, and respect the rights to equality and justice.”

**This NDP chapter looks at safety on a variety of levels:**

- **High crime levels** – The NDP notes that although “there are links between South Africa’s high poverty rate and its high crime levels, most poor people do not resort to crime”. Rather, it points to organised syndicates. The NDP also notes that in South Africa “the youth are often the main victims and perpetrators of crime”.
- **Gender-based violence and the safety of vulnerable groups** – This first refers to crime against women and LGBTQ communities. (LQTBQ stands for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and questioning or queer.) The latter includes xenophobia and crimes against disabled people.
- **Safety of children** – This takes into account the vulnerability of child-headed households and children without proper parental care, as well as gangsterism at schools.
- **Human trafficking**
- **The changing nature of crime** – including cybercrime
- **Rural safety** – where farming communities and rural areas are far from the necessary resources
- **Environmental impact** – such as grime, graffiti, poor light, dark alleys, derelict buildings, and open waste create an ‘environment of opportunity’ for crime.

**Building safer communities is a holistic activity and involves many stakeholders.** Activities range from understanding the cause of crime (as well as when and where it prevails) and the embedding of ‘positive’ societal norms to strategies for combatting crime. Beyond the police and the courts, building safer communities involves civil society organisations, community policing forums, and criminologists. It includes addressing rehabilitation through correctional services. The NDP says it’s about mobilising “state and non-state capacities and resources at all levels, and citizen involvement and co-responsibility”.

**Long-term and sustainable safety needs an integrated approach.** The 2007 *Review of the South African Criminal Justice System* tackled this to some extent. Following are some of the points:

- A single vision and mission
- A realigned single coordinating and management structure for the system
- Improving the courts' performance
- Improving capacity
- An integrated technology database or system

**The NDP notes that the above can only work with “greater systemic and institutional coherence”.** The aim of an effective criminal justice system is to improve safety. Other government departments address socioeconomic conditions. Because of the need for multi-agency contributions, coordination is essential.

**According to the NDP, achieving Vision 2030 “requires a well-functioning criminal justice system, in which the police, the judiciary and correctional services work together”.** The NDP refers to the following actions:

- **Strengthen the criminal justice system.** This includes cooperation among all departments in the Justice, Crime Prevention and Security (JCPS) cluster.
- **Make the police service professional.** The police code of conduct and a code of professional police practice need to be linked to promotion and disciplinary regulations. It involves appointing highly-trained, competent personnel, and establishing a body for regulating standards.
- **Demilitarise the police.** The NDP recommends developing a police culture that focuses on a professional police service where the community is at the centre of policing. The police’s job “is to protect the rights of the individuals who live in the communities they serve, not to annihilate the enemy.”
- **Increasing rehabilitation of prisoners and reducing recidivism.** (Recidivism means relapsing into criminal activity.) Overcrowding in prisons is a problem. More prison rehabilitation programmes are needed – with improved quality and content. Furthermore, there are a high number of prisoners released with minimum social services and support for them. This needs to be addressed.
- **Increase community participation in safety.** At local level, communities should feel empowered to take part in making their environment safer. This would involve capacity building and training community representatives on community police forums. It also includes expanding the role of community policing forums.

The NDP stresses that law enforcement cannot provide a total response to improving safety.