

Featured SET policy:

The National Development Plan (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>NDP chapter: Overview This considers the context and background of the NDP. See 1 – Understanding the context of the National Development Plan (NDP). It also sets the stage for understanding what makes a developmental state. See 2 – The National Development Plan and the developmental state. There is also a summary of the plan and key targets and actions.</p>	
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<p>NDP chapter 10: Promoting health</p>	<p>Quality healthcare for all </p>
<p>NDP chapter 11: Social protection</p>	<p>Social protection </p>
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<p>NDP chapter 13: Building a capable state</p>	<p>Reforming the public service </p>



Part 1 of the NSTF series on the NDP – Understanding the context of the National Development Plan (NDP)

In a series of articles, starting with this newsletter, the NSTF will be unpacking the National Development Plan (NDP). The particular focus will be on understanding it from a science, engineering, technology (SET) perspective. Not only does the implementation of the NDP affect every person in South Africa but it has overriding implications on how SET programmes and funding will be managed.

What is the NDP?

Blueprint for SA: The NDP is seen as a guiding document for South Africa. It was released in 2011 and is positioned as a blueprint for tackling South Africa’s challenges. In 2012, Cabinet adopted the NDP as a long-term vision and plan for the country.

NDP aims: The NDP aims to eliminate poverty and reduce inequality by 2030. According to the [NDP executive summary](#): “South Africa can realise these goals by drawing on the energies of its people, growing an inclusive economy, building capabilities, enhancing the capacity of the state, and promoting leadership and partnerships throughout society.”

How did the NDP come about?

Background to NDP’s creation: The National Planning Commission (NPC) was appointed in May 2010 to draft a vision and national development plan. The NPC Diagnostic Report, released in June 2011, set out South Africa’s achievements and shortcomings since 1994. It identified a failure to implement policies and an absence of broad partnerships as the main reasons for slow progress. It set out 9 primary challenges.

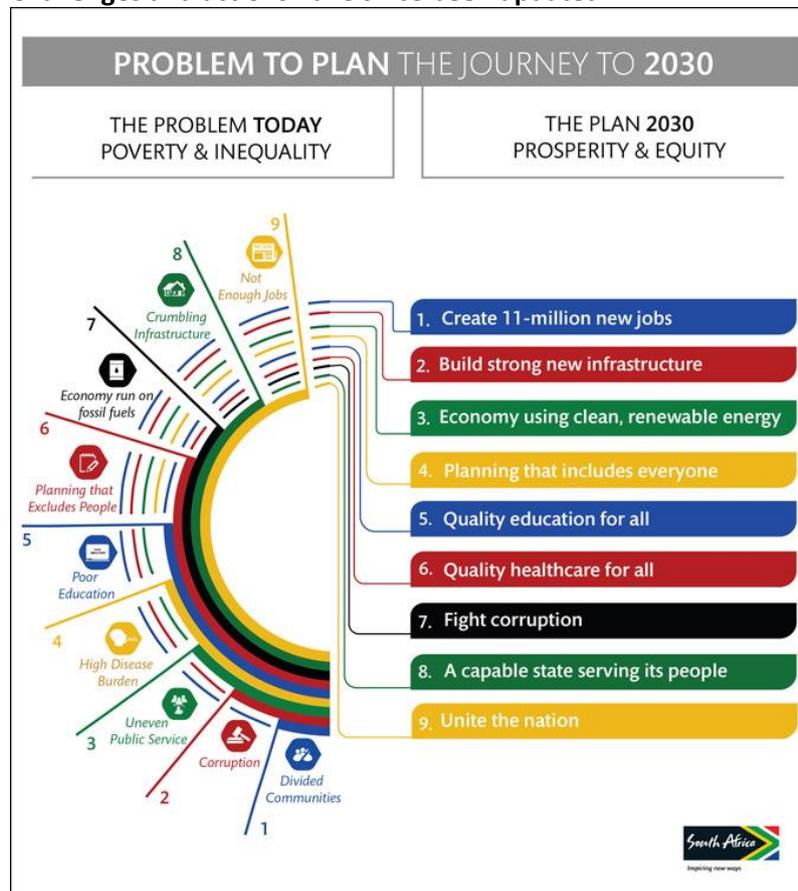
NPC Diagnostic Report challenges	Summary of NDP 2011 actions
Too few people work	An economy that will create more jobs
The quality of school education for black people is poor	Improving the quality of education, training and innovation
Infrastructure is poorly located, inadequate and under-maintained	
Spatial divides hobble inclusive development	Reversing the spatial effects of apartheid
The economy is unsustainably resource intensive	Transition to a low-carbon economy
The public health system cannot meet demand or sustain quality	Quality healthcare for all
Public services are uneven and often of poor quality	Reforming the public service
Corruption levels are high	Fighting corruption
South Africa remains a divided society	Transforming society and uniting the country
	An inclusive and integrated rural economy
	Social protection
	Building safer communities

The NDP positioned the following as key ingredients for success:

- The active efforts of all South Africans
- Growth, investment and employment
- Rising standards of education and a healthy population

- An effective and capable government
- Collaboration between the private and public sectors
- Leadership from all sectors of society

Challenges and actions have since been updated:



<https://www.brandsouthafrica.com/governance/ndp/the-national-development-plan-a-vision-for-2030>) The NSTF will be going into more detail in the specific sections as part of this series.

How is the NDP being implemented?

The first cycle of implementation processes: In a media briefing in 2013, Minister in The Presidency: National Planning Commission, Trevor Manuel, spoke about the implementation processes. Here are some of the points:

- Three phases have been identified.
 - Critical steps to be taken in 2013 to unlock implementation – including preparing the 2014-19 [Medium Term Strategic Framework](#) (MTSF) as the first five-year building block
 - 2014-2019 planning cycle
 - 2019-2024 and 2024-2029 planning cycles
- The NDP is a plan for the whole country.
- The Plan will shape budget allocation over the next 17 years.
- Planning and implementation should be informed by evidence-based monitoring and evaluation.

2014-2019 MTSF: It was made clear that activities and planning of government departments need to align to the NDP. The [2014-2019 MTSF](#) was developed to assist with implementation and includes key outputs and actions. The aim is to ensure policy coherence, alignment and coordination across government's plans, including the alignment of budgeting processes.

It identifies indicators and targets from the NDP and other plans, such as:

- [The New Growth Path](#) which sets the trajectory of economic development
- [National Infrastructure Plan](#) which guides the rollout of infrastructure to improve people's lives and enable economic growth
- [Industrial Policy Action Plan](#) which focuses on promoting investment and competitiveness in leading sectors and industries

It is structured around 14 priority outcomes: education, health, safety and security, economic growth and employment, skills development, infrastructure, rural development, human settlements, local government, environment, international relations, an effective public sector, social protection, nation-building and social cohesion.

The Department for Performance Monitoring and Evaluation (DPME) is responsible for monitoring progress. For more detailed information go to '[The National Development Plan unpacked](#)'.



Operation Phakisa: Operation Phakisa is one of the mechanisms for implementing the NDP. It's a fast-results delivery programme launched in July 2014. ('Phakisa' means 'hurry up' in Sesotho.) It involves setting clear plans and targets, monitoring of progress and making results public. It was originally developed and successfully implemented by the government of Malaysia.

According to the [Operation Phakisa website](#): "Operation Phakisa is a cross-sector programme where various stakeholders engage to implement initiatives and concrete actions to address constraints to delivery in a prioritised focused area for public accountability and transparency."

It also looks to improve cooperation between government, organised business, civil society and organised labour. This includes working on detailed problem analysis, priority setting, intervention planning, and delivery. Its projects include the [Ocean Economy Lab](#), [Health Lab](#) and [Education Lab](#).

Operation Phakisa is monitored by the DPME.



The Vision 2030 Summit: The [Vision 2030 Summit](#) was held on 21 June 2017, under the endorsement of the National Planning Commission. Its aims were:

- Raise awareness and position the NDP as a South African plan and not merely a government plan.
- Unpack the NDP into an easy-to-understand, practical document; outlining how government departments, provinces, municipalities, state-owned enterprises and agencies are aligning themselves to it.
- Promote and encourage public-private partnership investment opportunities in provincial and local government.
- Discover innovations, solutions, plans and initiatives that can help fast-track the realisation of goals set by the business and investor communities.
- Reinforce private and public sector support for and commitment to the NDP.
- Take stock of where we are, where we should be, and the way forward for the nation to achieve its NDP objectives.

Challenges to the NDP

COSATU says NDP not address real unemployment problems: The Human Sciences Resource Council's (HSRC) newsletter ([HSRC Review October/November 2014](#)) published an article 'Navigating the government's development path'. The authors note that the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) has said that "the NDP did not address the real problems around unemployment because it was silent on industrialisation. It said that for the government to generate decent jobs, it had to revamp the manufacturing sector, which would generate the right mix of decent jobs in the economy and complement the services sector. Instead of industrialisation, the NDP puts more emphasis on small- and medium-scale enterprises in the services sector as the main drivers of future economic growth, perpetuating the tradition of unskilled low-wage labour in the country."

HSRC research says problems in implementation, delivery and human capacity: In terms of challenges to the NDP's successful implementation, the authors say that SA has the capacity to formulate policy but the challenge is being able to translate these into "implementable programmes and projects along the different tiers of government – provinces, municipalities and local government – culminating in achieving the set goals and objectives within the designated timeframes". This includes questioning the quality and capacity of people at the three levels of government to align the NDP with their plans. There are three key areas that are problematic: "the ability to implement policy, enforce legislation and deliver services".

SACP and NUMSA's concerns: The M&G article '[Radebe sticks to his NDP guns](#)' (2 July 2017) notes that the South African Communist Party (SACP) has "criticised the NDP as a social pact that imposes no legal obligation on government or on business and labour to implement it". Implementation of the NDP was discussed at the ANC's policy conference running from 30 June to 4 July 2017. Minister in the Presidency: planning, monitoring and evaluation, Jeff Radebe, is recommending a legal framework to ensure the NDP is implemented. The article also notes that the metalworkers' union Numsa "described the plan as a liberal version of the government's former Growth, Employment and Redistribution strategy".

Part 2 of the NSTF series on the NDP – The National Development Plan (NDP) and the developmental state

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.

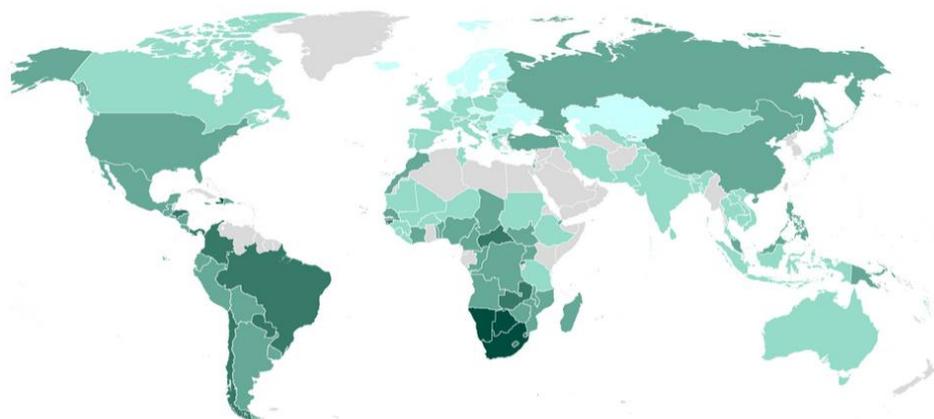
The National Planning Commission defined central challenges: These came out of the Commission’s Diagnostic Report.

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.

Gini index for income inequality ranges from zero (absolute equality) to 100



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

Science and technology as drivers of development (Chapter 1, NDP)

Chapter 1 – Key drivers of change

The world is an interconnected global system. Increased interconnectedness has allowed threats to spread more rapidly (such as the 1998 financial crisis). But it has also brought globalisation with its benefits and opportunities. It's not always clear how the global system will respond to a specific scenario or risk.

Some of the factors that impact the global system:

- Technology increases the world's interconnectedness, impacting growth, trade, cross border investment etc.
- There is economic integration and increased global trade yet many emerging economies are trapped in a cycle of poverty.
- There is diminished distance through, for example, air transport.
- There is increased urbanisation.
- There is increased inequality with globalisation (an increasing gap between the rich and the poor)

Countries and the world as complex systems

The interconnected global system presents complex systemic challenges. The NDP notes that "neither governments nor the relevant international institutions are set up to monitor or assess the risk of systemic contagion, or to deal with systemic failure".

The global impact of the financial crisis of 2008 showed governments' failure to regulate and prevent systemic collapse. This is one example of a complex system whose workings are not fully understood. The DP provides other existing complex system challenges, such as climate change, population pressures, urbanisation, and rising consumption and waste. There are also potential systemic crises, such as cyber attacks on financial markets, electricity supplies, transport etc.

Economic globalisation has outpaced political globalisation. The NDP notes that, in most countries, the public sector is locked into an outdated national model that isn't able to tackle global challenges. Treaties and conventions take too long to negotiate, are often not ratified, and when they are, are rarely enforced. Big governmental conferences are long on declarations and short on implementation. Both governments and companies will need to adapt continuously as they address the risks and opportunities of the evolving global environment.

Reviewing economic policies

The NDP calls for efficient market policies that embrace principles of social justice, empowerment, and a balance between rights and responsibilities. At the same time, taking country-specific factors and global context into account.

Emerging markets have been increasing their contributions to global growth (while developed markets decrease their contribution). This is driven by better education and economic management, and greater openness to international trade. There are also demographic shifts (such as declining birth rates) and urbanisation (urban migration).

The expected global economic rebalancing depends on emerging market countries maintaining 2011 growth trends. This is not a given and will depend largely on policy. It also means wider and deeper investment in education and skills training.

Opportunities in Africa

- Minerals underpin the economic strength of many African countries. However, most African countries have not used their commodity wealth to reduce poverty.
- Africa has the world's youngest population but there is a need for education, skills, and programmes around job creation and entrepreneurship.
- Urbanisation reduces the number of people involved in small-scale agriculture and facilitates economic diversification. Employment and urbanisation significantly increase consumer spending. This has particular implications for consumer-facing industries, agriculture, resources and infrastructure.
- With the explosion of cellphone use and the related demand for the internet, there is a need for better connectivity and a need to harness technological opportunity.
- Africa has massive infrastructure deficit. At the same time, poor infrastructure and tough market conditions have forced innovative business models eg Mpesa (type of mobile money).
- Access to electricity is limited and electricity is a prerequisite for development. Renewable energy sources as increasingly important, with Sub-Saharan Africa well positioned to develop solar and hydro energy and to produce bio-fuels.
- Africa has great agricultural potential – more than one quarter of the world's arable land is in Africa. But poor regulation can have a negative impact, as does the lack of enabling conditions (eg transport and other infrastructure, stable business and economic conditions, trained business and scientific talent). Then, of course, there is the impact of climate change.
- Africa must do more to hold onto skilled workers. Future growth largely depends on how educated and skilled Africans view personal opportunities, and how domestic and foreign investors view return on investment. This is strongly influenced by government policies – more transparent regulatory and legal systems, greater openness in trade, higher investment in infrastructure etc.

Environmental challenges and drivers

The NDP is clear on the effect of climate change and the link between environmental threats and poverty. Human activity is warming the planet faster than the slow natural cycles of warming and cooling. Carbon and other greenhouse gas emissions have contributed significantly to this. The NDP sees the threat to the environment and the challenge of poverty alleviation as closely intertwined.

A low carbon future is positioned as the only realistic option. This presents potential for innovation around energy systems. The political challenge is to develop policies and regulatory initiatives for improved resource management, for substantial clean technology industries, and to assist with the transition.

The chief ecological challenge is climate change but other challenges are closely linked. These include water scarcity, pollution, food production and safety, and depleted fishing stocks. We exist in an integrated ecosystem where the interaction between components is not well understood.

Science and technology as drivers of development

“Developments in science and technology are fundamentally altering the way people live, connect, communicate, and transact, with profound effects on economic development. Science and technology are key to development, because technological and scientific revolutions underpin economic advances, improvements in health systems, education and infrastructure.” (NDP)

Science and technology are seen as key to improving the lives of poor people in developing countries. According to the NDP, these are the differentiators for developing economies to emerge

as economic powerhouses (when insights are applied creatively). Technology is defined as ranging from telecommunications to biotechnology and nanotechnology. Science innovations that are mentioned include: proton cancer therapy, genetic engineering, nuclear batteries, and photovoltaics that make electricity from sunlight.

Technology is seen as a way to increase productivity and to unlock access to affordable health and education. ICT and internet access provide access to many things, such as knowledge and markets. It changes relationships between citizens and those in authority. At the same time, ICT and internet access depend on electricity and other power sources – no power, no access.

There is a need to manage the challenges around technological revolutions. For example, there is a risk of worsening inequality through early and extensive technology access by the rich.

To promote technological advances, developing countries need to invest in quality education for the youth, continuous skills training for workers and managers, and ensuring that knowledge is shared as widely as possible across society. There is a need to build knowledge capabilities and pathways (stocks and flows). “Knowledge is the systemically integrated information that allows a citizen, a worker, a manager, or a finance minister to act purposefully and intelligently in a complex and demanding world.” (NDP)

To encourage research and development (R&D), there is a need for investment, incentives, and resource allocation of resources. Successful countries have grown their ability to innovate and learn by doing through investing public funding to help finance R&D in critical areas. Examples include the integrated value chains, just-in-time manufacturing, and total quality management in Japan, and the space programme, defence, and aerospace in the USA.

Demographic trends (Chapter 2, NDP) PLUS the NDP’s 5th anniversary

Chapter 2 – Demographic trends

The National Development Plan (NDP) makes it clear that to achieve its objectives (reducing poverty and inequality), it’s necessary to understand South Africa’s population – past, present and future. Understanding demographic trends helps to meet needs and to expand capabilities. The information is used for a number of activities, such as informing policy interventions, programmes, and government spending on providing services and infrastructure.

The NDP considers various sets of demographic information, such as:

- Population age makeup
- Fertility rates and population growth
- The impact of disease eg HIV/AIDS
- Mortality (death) – from injury, infectious diseases (eg TB), lifestyle diseases (eg diabetes) etc
- Migration (population movement)

All of these impact on the rate of economic development, both positively and negatively.

The NDP says that policies should be viewed through a ‘youth lens’ ie it’s about the rise of a largely youthful work-age population.

South Africa was supposed to have arrived at “the ‘sweet spot’ of demographic transition”. This is where there is a proportionately high number of working-age people and proportionally low

number of young and old. “This means that the dependency ratio – the percentage of those over 64 and under 15 relative to the working-age population” is at a level where there are enough working people to support those who don’t work. The NDP does note further that unemployment and HIV/AIDS has produced many more dependents than the norm.

The country’s blueprint posits that a well-managed working-age population can build a stronger economy, eliminate poverty and reduce inequality. “The challenge is putting this working-age population to work.” In 2017, this challenge has not been overcome. See [SA unemployment rate rises to 14-year high](#).

“A ‘youth’ bulge has the potential to destabilise countries, especially where there is rampant unemployment.” The NDP notes that if the unemployment trend is unresolved, it “poses the single greatest risk to social stability... this could translate into social disorder, widespread political unrest and increased crime”.

NDP says we need economic policies that work positively with the demographics. “The degree to which the demographic dividend can be banked, and the risks avoided, depends on the policy choices and how effectively they are implemented.”

The following areas are commonly identified as unlocking the demographic dividend potential:

- Better health, including food security
- Better healthcare
- Better education
- Meet demands for higher skill levels
- Easy labour market entry
- Labour mobility

Specific emphasis is given to providing sound education and skills training.

Current feedback on the NDP (September 2017)

The 12 September 2017 was the 5th anniversary of the NDP. This created further attention on South Africa’s guiding plan. Following are some of the reports around this event:

- [Despite NDP ambitions, South Africa weighed down by corruption, State capture](#) (15 September 2017 – polity.org.za): “It has been five years since the adoption of the National Development Plan (NDP), with a second commission having been appointed to drive its implementation, aimed at guiding South Africa’s economic and developmental future. However, the two goals most core to the NDP’s ambitions – reducing inequality and eradicating poverty – have worsened since 2012.”
- [NDP priorities must be aligned to budget](#) (13 September 2017 – sanews.gov.za): “The President said government was taking other concrete steps to implement the NDP. ‘Through the implementation of Operation Phakisa, our Big Fast Results programme, we have developed very specific interventions in the oceans economy, health, education, mining and agriculture sectors.’”
- [NDP: Let’s make it work](#) (13 September 2017 – sanews.gov.za): “The Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation (DPME) has initiated the National Youth Development Ambassador Programme to mobilise young South Africans to be active role players in economic growth.”
- [The Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation \(DPME\) to Launch NDP School Competition](#) (22 September 2017 – African Newspaper): “The essay competition will be targeted at grade 12 learners with the essay topic; Define your ideal SA of 2030.”

- [SA: Jeff Radebe: Address by Minister in the Presidency for PME, on the occasion of the NDP Annual Lecture; Z.K. Matthews Hall, Unisa, Pretoria](#) (15th September 2017 – polity.org.za): This goes into detail about what is being done currently, as well as progress to date.
- [National Development Plan: Five years on, are celebrations really in order?](#) (13 Sep 2017 – Daily Maverick): “Certain targets of the NDP currently seem hopelessly remote. By 2030, for instance, unemployment is supposed to be reduced to 6%. That would amount to an incredible turnaround in the 12 years available to achieve this, against the backdrop of sluggish economic growth. Was the NDP always wildly unrealistic – or has government simply failed to implement it in a meaningful way?”

National system of innovation and R&D critical for growing the economy (Chapter 3, NDP)

Chapter 3 – Economy and employment

“Rising employment, productivity and incomes are the surest long-term solution to reducing inequality.” This includes actively broadening opportunity for people. The NDP says that this will be achieved by expanding the economy to absorb labour, expanding employment and entrepreneurial opportunities, and growing a more inclusive economy. The goal is to treble the size of the economy by 2030. At the same time, South Africa needs to be an integral part of regional growth ie SADC and across the continent.

Growing the economy involves interconnected systems

The aim is to reduce the unemployment rate to 6% by 2030. South Africa also needs to create about 11 million more jobs. Chapter 3 looks at how to accelerate economic growth and make the economy more labour absorbing. It is noted that the actions are largely consistent with the New Growth Path – “conditions for faster growth and employment through government investment, microeconomic reforms that lower the costs of business (and for households), competitive and equitable wage structures and the effective unblocking of constraints to investment”.

But this is a system where nodes impact on each other. It isn’t only about creating jobs. To raise employment, South Africa needs better educational outcomes, a healthier population, lowered cost of living for the poor, better located and maintained infrastructure, a sound social safety net, a capable state, and much lower levels of corruption. Wherever there are challenges and constraints, these need to be addressed.

More research needed on SMMEs

The projection is that 90% of jobs “will be created in small and expanding firms”. According to the research behind the NDP, “Net new employment is not typically created on a significant scale in existing businesses.” There is a need to build research capacity “to address the paucity of data currently available on small, medium and micro enterprises and scale up public communication on available opportunities”. Skills gaps need to be addressed, including improving the system of identifying critical skills.

More development needed in rural areas

The aim is for economic participation in rural areas to grow to 40% due to “reformed land tenure, support to farmers, expanded social services, higher agricultural output, mining social investment and tourism”.

R&D needs to be aligned to competitive advantage and growth strategy

National systems of innovation and continuous learning need to permeate society and business.

As is a substantial research and development (R&D) sector, with support into commercialisation. South Africa needs to both fund R&D and guide the type of research and development that the private and public sectors conduct. Research priorities should align with South Africa's competitive advantage and growth strategy. "A well-functioning research capacity is critical to sustaining growth and improving productivity."

"South Africa's competitiveness will rely on national systems of innovation permeating the culture of business and society. Innovation and learning must become part of our culture. This will require interventions from the schooling system, through to shop-floor behaviour to R&D spending and commercialisation. Public policy should focus on R&D in existing areas of competitive advantage, where global markets are set to grow."

The NDP outlines the first phase as from 2012 to 2017. The commitment includes "intensify R&D spending, emphasising opportunities linked to existing industries".

The second phase is 2018-2023. It notes that this is when SA should be diversifying its economy base and laying the basis for more intensive improvements in productivity. "Innovation across state, business and social sectors should start to become pervasive. Centres of learning should be aligned to industrial clusters with potential for domestic and global linkages. Innovation should also focus on public service improvements and on goods and services aimed at low-income sectors."

As the country approaches 2030, "the emphasis should be on consolidating the gains of the second phase, with greater emphasis on innovation, improved productivity, more intensive pursuit of a knowledge economy and better exploitation of comparative and competitive advantages in an integrated continent".

Developing a strong network of economic infrastructure – transport, energy, water resources, and ICT (Chapter 4, NDP)

Chapter 4 – Economic infrastructure

The NDP notes that to "achieve sustainable and inclusive growth by 2030, South Africa needs to invest in a strong network of economic infrastructure". This covers transport, energy, water resources, and information and communication technology (ICT). There needs to be large investments on urgent priorities, with greater use of public-private funding. (The latter should bring more rigorous assessment, accountability, and reporting.)

Energy sector

The NDP sees, by 2030, an integrated energy sector with adequate investment in infrastructure. This needs to provide expanded, quality energy services at competitive rates or with subsidies for needy households. It's about having the security that economic activity, transport, and welfare are not disrupted. It also means that more than 90% of the population has access to electricity. The integrated energy sector should support economic growth through job creation and export.

In terms of energy mix and integrated energy planning, "coal will contribute proportionately less to primary-energy needs, while gas and renewable energy resources – especially wind, solar and

imported hydroelectricity – will play a much larger role”. The NDP describes a more diverse energy market that holds investor opportunities for providing innovative and sustainable energy solutions within credible regulatory frameworks.

There is a continuous focus on environmental sustainability “through efforts to reduce pollution and mitigate the effects of climate change”. This means balancing supply security, affordability, economic growth, and climate change mitigation.

South Africa to develop integrated programmes to tackle energy poverty by building on research on household energy use. Solutions may exist in nuclear power but the NDP says this “needs a thorough investigation on the implications of nuclear energy, including its costs, financing options, institutional arrangements, safety, environmental costs and benefits, localisation and employment opportunities, and uranium enrichment and fuel fabrication possibilities”.

Water resources and services

By 2030, the aim is to have effective and evolving water management and services. This must reflect an understanding of available water resources and effective water planning, cutting across economic sectors and spheres of government. It encompasses a reliable water supply to meet needs, including efficient agricultural water use. Natural water sources are to be protected.

South Africans will have affordable, reliable access to sufficient safe water and hygienic sanitation. The NDP says that service provision will vary depending on the needs of the local area and community.

Transport

Investments in the transport sector should bridge geographic distances affordably, reliably and safely so that South Africans can access previously-inaccessible economic opportunities, social spaces, and services. The transport sector also needs to support economic development by allowing for the transport of goods while minimising environmental harm. Transport needs to be seen as a system that improves efficiency and accessibility and, at the same time, reducing environmental, social, and economic costs.

ICT infrastructure

ICT, by 2030, will underpin the development of an information society and knowledge economy that is more inclusive and prosperous. ICT is a critical enabler of economic activity in an increasingly networked world. For a country to be globally competitive, it must have an effective ICT system. ICT infrastructure needs to be accessible to all, meeting the needs of citizens, business, and the public sector at a reasonable cost and quality.

There will be an ICT ecosystem of digital networks, services, applications, content, and devices.

This will:

- Connect public administration and the active citizen
- Promote economic growth, development and competitiveness
- Drive the creation of decent work
- Underpin nation building and strengthen social cohesion
- Support local, national and regional integration

This is based on human capacity development in digital skills (e-skills). These skills are needed to use the technology effectively and drive demand for services.

Transitioning SA to a low carbon economy that responds to climate change (Chapter 5, NDP)

Chapter 5 – Transition to a low carbon economy

This chapter starts with South Africa’s commitment to “reduce its emissions below a baseline of 34 percent by 2020 and 42 percent by 2025”. The NDP sees 2030 as a time when “South Africa has reduced its dependency on carbon, natural resources and energy”. We need to recognise that humans’ wellbeing relies on the wellbeing of the planet. However, this must be balanced with increasing employment and reducing inequality.

The NDP Commission undertook extensive stakeholder consultations to inform this chapter – because of a need for consensus on challenges and trade-offs. Some consensus had been reached while other points require ongoing discussion.

Government approach and policies

The “primary approach to adapting to climate change is to strengthen the nation’s resilience”. Resilience includes socioeconomic objectives such as decreasing poverty and inequality, increasing education levels, improving health care, creating employment, promoting skills development, and having a strong economy with high energy, water, food and natural resource security and strong innovation.

Government adaptation policies include:

- Significant investment in new adaptive technologies and techniques in water, biodiversity, fisheries, forestry, and agriculture sectors
- Early warning systems for adverse weather, pest and disease occurrence
- Disaster relief preparedness
- Investment in natural ecosystems

The NDP sees South Africa’s carbon emissions as peaking around 2025 and then stabilising. This must be done without hindering the socioeconomic objectives. The regulatory environment will support stabilisation through, for example:

- Expanded renewable energy programme
- Advanced liquid and bio-fuels sector
- Promotion of green building and construction practices
- R&D resources being allocated to low-carbon technologies (not only for mitigation but for global opportunities)

Moving from the historical focus on minerals and energy

Transition is challenging because historically policies have focused on minerals and energy. South Africa has “abundant coal, minimal hydroelectricity and little production of natural gas”. We also have some of the world’s richest mineral deposits – with mining and processing needing substantial energy. Beyond this, there is also a shortage of skills and capacity. There is a “fundamental structural challenge in moving towards a lower carbon economy”. The main “challenge is de-linking economic activity from environmental degradation and carbon-intensive energy, while remaining competitive” and keeping to the socioeconomic objectives.

The NDP notes that “more detailed analysis is needed to determine the optimal mix of mitigation actions”. The poor and vulnerable must be protected from transitional costs, while considering the

economic implications overall. Financing is seen to come from realigning existing budgets, domestic sources (eg carbon pricing), and international aid.

Planning needs to follow rigorous and transparent processes with meaningful stakeholder engagement and evidence-based decision making. While the responsibility for the transition is collective with full participation of all stakeholders, the state should facilitate and guide the process acting “in the interests of the nation”. The government must build capacity, improve governance, and restructure institutions. Institutional coordination is essential, in particular, aligning and coordinating government departments and their policies.

Local, regional and global planning

Transition and planning is local, regional and global. South Africa must commit to a domestically-established mitigation target – taking into account the country’s specific needs and development process. Cooperative regional development planning is also necessary as is global solidarity and international assistance. Monitoring and reporting should be done against national, regional and international goals.

Proposing a carbon tax

A carbon budget approach is proposed. “A carbon budget sets the amount of carbon that can be emitted in a given amount of time.” This would entail regular monitoring and reviewing of carbon budget targets, with flexibility in certain energy- and carbon-intensive sectors. The suggestion is to “apportion carbon space to the sectors and initiatives that add the greatest value”.

The “international best practice has... established that adequately pricing GHG [greenhouse gas] emissions is one of the most effective ways to encourage polluters to change their behaviour.” The NDP supports a carbon tax approach. However, specific planning needs to be addressed around the uncompetitive and monopolistic electricity generation sector to see real effects. Further focus should be on sectors where the price may be insufficient to change behaviour.

“The transition to a low-carbon, resilient economy and society requires **careful phasing of strategic planning, evidence gathering, and investment.**”

See the NSTF Discussion Forum on [‘Evidence for Climate Change’ \(17 November 2017\)](#) relating to this topic.

Inclusive rural economy (Chapter 6, NDP)

The National Development Plan (NDP) says that since 1994, “the main challenge for rural development has been the need to combat marginalisation of the poor”. Marginalisation is caused, in part, by reduced access to resources – land, water, education, skills, infrastructure, and government services. There has been improvement since 1994, mainly due to social grants and greater rights. There has also been land redistribution and restitution. However, rural areas have greater poverty and inequality (than urban areas). Many households are trapped in a vicious cycle of poverty.

The aim is that by 2030, rural communities will have greater opportunities to participate in the economic, social and political spheres. This includes access to high-quality basic services allowing for health, nourishment, and an increase in skills. The NDP sees rural economies supported by

agriculture and, where possible, mining, tourism, agro-processing, and fisheries. It sees better integration of the rural areas through successful land reform, job creation, and poverty alleviation.

The chapter focuses on developing rural economic opportunities. A differentiated rural development strategy is proposed. (See below.)

Agricultural development underpinned by successful land reform, creating employment (with the associated programmes and government support), and environmental safeguards. The NDP sees the creation of 1 million jobs in this sector. Suggested measures include:

- Irrigated agriculture and dry-land production to be expanded
- Converting under-used land for commercial production
- Supporting agricultural sectors and regions with the highest growth potential
- Developing strategies for new entrants to access product value chains, as well as access to domestic and foreign markets
- Security of tenure for black farmers – this also promotes investment
- Financial support for land reform beneficiaries
- Expanding commercial agriculture, driven by higher levels of productivity and foreign and domestic market demand. The NDP saw the greatest potential for expansion in small-scale labour-intensive agriculture (such as macadamias, pecan nuts, rooibos tea, olives, figs, cherries, and berries).
- Need for government spending, especially on infrastructure and general farmer support services for small-scale farmers
- Improving the efficiency of irrigation
- Preferential procurement mechanisms for new entrants
- Improving and extending skills development training, including entrepreneurship training
- **Of particular importance to the SET community – increase and refocus investment in R&D for the agricultural sector**

“Growth in agricultural production in South Africa has always been fuelled by technology, and the returns on investment in agricultural research and development have always been high, partly because South Africa has specialised in adapting technology from all over the world for its circumstances. This should again become the focus of agricultural research of all scales of farming in research councils, universities and the private sector. The consequences of industrialised agriculture and the country’s unique ecosystems also demand that serious attention is paid to advances in ecological approaches to sustainable agriculture. This includes greater attention to alternative energy, soil quality, minimum tillage, and other forms of conservation farming.”

Quality basic services, particularly education, healthcare, and public transport. These need to exist first and then people can focus on looking for economic opportunities. Other basics include food security (the ability to access food not food availability) and ensuring rights (such as those of farm workers). Suggested measures include:

- Job creation and agricultural productivity is needed to address food security at household and individual level in rural areas
- Lessening the impact of retail food price increases on the poor
- Access to social grants
- Access to nutritional services for the most vulnerable, such as the elderly and chronically ill
- Effective nutrition education to assist with overcoming adult obesity – which leads to chronic diseases like diabetes
- Food fortification

Where there is economic potential, industries such as tourism, agro-processing, and fisheries should be developed. There should also be development of small business (SMMEs). Suggested measures include:

- Creating strategies to include small, new and black farmers in the agro-processing value chains.
- Agro-processing strategies to give poor producers greater collective market power (such as developing partnerships with larger commercial players)
- Because fishing resources are optimally harvested or over-exploited, conducting more research to find value.

Chapter 6 of the NDP includes a section on making land reform work. This is particularly relevant with the current land expropriation debate. The NDP sees land reform as necessary to “unlock the potential for a dynamic, growing and employment-creating agricultural sector”. It proposes principles and a model for this.

Positioning South Africa in the world (Chapter 7, NDP)

As stated in the National Development Plan (NDP), “the world has become increasingly interconnected”. This ranges from trade in goods and services to the spreading of information. The interconnectedness is so prevalent that it has been included in national policies, procedures, and structures. It has also meant further standardisation of banking, financial, and legal activities.

The interconnected world means that countries are increasingly interdependent. There are many advantages, such as the growth of emerging economies. However, it also means that countries are more exposed to financial, economic and social crises on a global scale.

There are opportunities for South Africa to maximise regional and international influence, such as through the BRICS group. (BRICS stands for Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa.) The NDP notes that the regional and international positioning should be South Africa-centric. This means growing the economy, reducing poverty, and improving the quality of life of all South Africans. Overall, “South Africa’s international relations are guided by the promotion of wellbeing, development and upliftment of its people, protecting the planet for future generations and ensuring the prosperity of the country, region and Africa.”

Various kinds of global and regional trade agreements are discussed. These are time specific to 2011 and a fair amount has changed since then. Examples of change include the USA isolationist position and Brexit. Regardless, there is still a need for developing trade agreements, especially more intra-African trade. Typically trade agreements aim to:

- Promote market integration
- Develop regional infrastructure
- Strengthen stability, predictability and transparency in regional governance

The NDP notes that there has been a drive towards a united Africa and this still needs to be investigated. There is also a drive towards regional integration.

Africa is seen to be “richly endowed with natural resources” that are unevenly distributed. Some places have underused land and water while others cannot “sustain growing populations and suffer degradation as a result”. The NDP calls for infrastructure development, among other things.

The NDP emphasises addressing economic water scarcity ie where “human, institutional and financial capital limit access to water to meet human needs”. This is, again, time relevant. Over a decade later, the state of water supply is affected by far more than economics. The impact of climate change is a stand-out example, particularly the drought in the Western Cape. However, the 2011 NDP did forecast an increase in environmental refugees.

Of interest to the SET community is the section on ‘Knowledge-sharing’ and the context. “Regional integration and the provision of public goods across national boundaries can be improved significantly by sharing knowledge and information. This is true in areas such as health, climate, natural resource management, research and development, and innovation”. Economic integration is important when considering both technology diffusion and commercialising innovations. A favourable economic climate facilitates the achievement of these goals, which are essential for Africa’s progress.

Transforming human settlements (Chapter 8, NDP)

The NDP’s opening statement in this chapter says it all: “Where we live and work matters.”

Consider the consequences of the distance between work and where you live. Does where you live have adequate services? Does it allow you access to benefits and to participate in the economy?

The spatial segregation of apartheid left a legacy. Although deeply entrenched, South Africa’s settlement patterns need to be reshaped. The NDP proposes a strategy for more humane and environmentally sustainable living and working environments. The NDP notes: “The physical and social environment in which we are born and grow up is one of the most important determinants of every person’s wellbeing and life chances.” It’s about access to opportunities – including schools, social networks, and public services.

The vision for 2030 – on the way to 2050 – is clear about what it doesn’t want:

- No poverty traps in rural areas and urban townships
- No workers isolated on the periphery of cities
- No inner cities controlled by slumlords and crime
- No sterile suburbs with high walls and electric fences
- No households spending 30% or more of their time, energy, and income on daily commuting
- No decaying infrastructure with power blackouts
- No undrinkable water
- No potholes and blocked sewers
- No violent protests
- No gridlocked roads and unreliable public transport
- No new public housing in barren urban landscapes
- No new private investment creating exclusive enclaves for the rich
- No fearful immigrant communities living in confined spaces
- No rural communities dying as production collapses

Included in the above vision are: public spaces where different social groups mix; recycled waste creating renewable energy; people, especially the youth, actively involved in local decision making; and resilient planning systems.

The 5 main challenges are seen as:

- Dysfunctional settlement patterns

- Challenges facing towns and cities
- Uncertain prospects of rural areas
- Challenges of providing housing and basic services and reactivating communities
- Weak spatial planning and governance capabilities

Other concerns are environmental impact, urbanisation, and the growing youth population. There is a focus on ‘green’ infrastructure and sustainable energy, as well as being aware of growing populations creating stress on infrastructure. The NDP notes that many of the challenges are due to “insufficient institutional capacity and lack of strong instruments for implementation”.

“[I]nterconnected interventions are needed to tackle these issues”. These include economic solutions, institutional reforms, changes to land management systems, and infrastructure investment. The chapter looks at the geographic and development aspects of these policies.

There is no one-size-fits-all approach to different areas. South Africa needs an integrated approach to rural and urban areas but also needs to understand that there are distinct challenges and potential with different areas. Land reform and redistribution discussions also need to pay attention to spatial location – successful agricultural production needs suitable land linked to markets and agro-processing chains.

Rural areas are important – other areas depend on rural goods and services such as food, water, minerals, energy, biodiversity, natural and cultural experiences, labour, and land. There needs to be security and services in rural areas. Differentiated interventions are needed for the different types of rural settlements. Appropriate infrastructure is important for unlocking developmental potential.

Active citizenry is needed for solutions. The NDP says it’s a daily challenge for South Africans – especially in poor and peri-urban communities – to have access to adequate housing (including renting options), reliable electricity, safe water supplies, accessible public transport, and hygienic and dignified sanitation facilities. While the underlying causes need to be addressed, there needs to be active citizenship and community involvement to find alternative solutions.

There is a need for a guiding national spatial framework. National, provincial and local government need to work together. Spatial planning is dispersed across different ministries, resulting in parallel and sometimes conflicting legislation. The way forward is better coordination, including defining powers and responsibilities. The framework will focus on coordinating and connecting. It will include stakeholders for a shared perspective. The framework and ongoing spatial management needs to be supported by an integrated system of national spatial data.

Transforming spatial arrangements and spatial governance is large and complex – and needs a long-term view. Planning needs to happen at an international, regional, country, and local level. Beyond the points mentioned previously, the following also needs to be considered:

- Impact on the poor and vulnerable
- Integrating transportation systems and land use
- Managing economic and demographic shifts
- Areas of national importance such as resource-critical regions
- Supporting the upgrade of informal settlements
- Supporting the transition to environmental sustainability
- Specific strategies for the developmental role of small towns in rural economies and for supporting agricultural development

Improving education, innovation and training (Chapter 9, NDP)

The National Development Plan (NDP) positions education, training and innovation as central to the overall NDP goals. These areas contribute to productivity which enhances economic growth. While not a solution to all problems, education, training and innovation are needed to solve challenges, to develop competitively, and to eliminate poverty and reduce inequality.

Higher education (HE) is the major driver of the knowledge system which then links to economic development. Universities are key to developing a nation. They set norms and standards that underpin a nation's knowledge capital (from curricula and languages to ethics and philosophy). They:

- Provide high-level skills
- Are dominant producers of new knowledge, critiquing information and finding new local and global applications for existing knowledge
- Provide opportunities for social mobility

However, there are other sites of knowledge production and application. These include science councils, research institutes, and in the private sector. A broad and enabling framework needs to include these sites and acknowledge "the importance of science and technology". Science, technology and innovation are seen as foundational in the NDP.

Compared to the population, South Africa's National System of Innovation (NSI) is small. This was noted by the NDP when looking to international standards. South Africa also has a lower spend on R&D and hasn't increased its public sector research personnel, PhD graduates, and research outputs enough. All the sites of knowledge production (including science councils, SOEs and private industry) need to work together. The NSI needs to be coherent and coordinated with broad common objectives aligned to national priorities. This includes instilling a culture of entrepreneurship.

Education also doesn't stand alone. The education system relies on other Government departments and policies, such as providing housing, basic services, and social security.

The NDP actions are based on five themes.

Lay a solid foundation for a long and healthy life and higher educational and scientific achievement. The aim is for all children to access and benefit from a high-quality education, particularly the most vulnerable such as children living in poverty and those with disabilities.

- Early Childhood Development (ECD) is critical to ensure children reach their full potential. It's about health, proper nourishment, physical fitness, being cared for, a stable home environment, and a stimulating environment.
- In schools, a South Africa-specific curriculum should emphasise literacy, maths and science, as well as African languages. High-quality teachers are central to education, especially in maths and science.
- The further education and training (FET) and skills development environment should be an expanded system. It should include targeted work-based training, as well as community and youth development programmes. Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs) need to play a more effective role in producing skills that meet the immediate needs of employers. Public colleges enrol about a third of learners when it should be two thirds. The FET and skills sector needs to offer clear and meaningful opportunities for:
 - Post-matric youth
 - Older people who want to develop their skills
 - Adults who left school early or had no access

- Youth who only completed grade 9
- HE, specifically universities, need to show their unique contributions. HEs should be efficient. This should be characterised by more throughput and participation, as well as higher innovation and publication output. By 2030, 75% of academic staff should have PhDs. Women and black people should make up more than 50% of research and training staff. Programmes and initiatives should address national priorities, including African languages and indigenous knowledge systems. There needs to be a coherent national plan for HE, promoting innovation and the development of knowledge. HE should respond to scarce skills with closer links between economic and education planning.
- The school, college and HE systems need to be better articulated. There needs to be a better connection between the different parts of the education system, and better mobility for learners and staff.

Build a properly qualified, professional, competent and committed teaching, academic, research and public service core. The aim is to improve the quality of teaching and school management.

- There needs to be political consensus and stakeholder alignment to a common goal. Teachers on the ground need to be part of the decision making.
- A professional civil service has clear paths for educators (management and academic) and methods for attracting and retaining good teachers (from pay structure to supporting professional bodies). Expertise, qualifications and competence are the criteria for appointing and promoting teachers and principals. Professionalism is maintained through continuous training, quality monitoring, and clear standards.
- Government needs to manage the education sector better. This will provide policy stability, a better working environment, and ongoing support (especially for underperforming schools). Clarifying districts' roles will lead to improving their capacity to support schools.
- School governing bodies need additional support, as well as compulsory courses. Their governance mandate involves extensive responsibility for finances and setting internal school policies, among other things.

Build a strong and coherent set of institutions for delivering quality education, science and technology innovation, training, and skills development.

- This theme focuses on improved planning. The NDP references labour market research and understanding South Africa's long-term human capacity and skills needs. It specifically points to needing an increase in science and technology graduates.
- There needs to be a better institutional environment and better funding, with a focus on supporting large skills development programmes and ensuring necessary infrastructure is built. The expanded, strengthened and diversified institutional landscape involves more links between post-school education and workplaces, formal and non-formal qualifications, and an expanded FET colleges and adult education.
- The approach to quality assurance needs to change. Quality assurance needs to be stronger and more streamlined. The same is applied to the qualification system.

Expand the production of highly skilled professionals and enhance the innovative capacity of the nation.

- The NDP proposes developing a common policy on the critical role of science and technology and HE in shaping society, the future of the nation and the growth path.
- South Africa needs a larger base of skilled human resources in science, technology and innovation. Science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM) are key. We need competent STEM teachers and longer STEM degrees (making the first year more accessible). The recommendation is to relax immigration requirements for highly-skilled science and maths human resources.

Create an educational and national science system that serves the needs of society.

The NDP proposes quantifiable targets across ECD, schooling, FET, and HE. Of note to the SET and innovation community are the following schooling targets:

- About 80% of schools and learners to achieve 50% and above in literacy, maths and science in grades 3, 6 and 9.
- Increasing the number of students eligible to study maths and science at university to 450 000 per year

The HE and science and technology targets also show an ambitious direction for STEM:

- Increasing university science and maths entrants to 450 000
- Increasing graduation rates to more than 25% by 2030 – this involves a significant increase of STEM graduates
- Producing more than 100 doctoral graduates per million per year by 2030 – most of these should be in STEM

Chapter 10, National Development Plan – Promoting health

According to the National Development Plan (NDP), South Africa should promote a healthy lifestyle incorporating a healthy diet and physical activity. It advocates a culture of wellness that is part of home, work, communities, and schools. This would include elements such as compulsory physical education in schools, and communities with facilities for exercise and sports. Health and wellness are seen as “critical to preventing and managing lifestyle diseases” like heart disease, high blood cholesterol, and diabetes.

The message is: “Health is not just a medical issue”. There are many other factors that impact on health. These range from daily conditions, the environment, housing and sanitation to security and levels of poverty.

According to the NDP, South Africa’s health system is based on the principles of primary healthcare and the district health system. Primary healthcare refers to universal access, equity, participation and an integrated approach. It includes focusing on prevention first with a patient-focused approach. The district health system is supposed to be decentralised, area-based and people-centred.

However, this is not what is happening in reality. South Africa has imbalance and fragmentation between the public and private sectors – from spending to distribution of services. The NDP notes: “The inability to get primary healthcare and the district health system to function effectively has contributed significantly to the failure of the health system.” There are further issues:

- A lack of accountability with weak institutional links between different levels of services
- Provinces controlling hospital budgets and key functions (like supply chain management). This has not worked, with health issues competing with other priorities for funding. Consequently, different provinces allocate health spending in different ways.
- Health infrastructure is in a desperate state, with lengthy backlogs to sort it out.

The aim is to have a health system that:

- Raises the life expectancy of South Africans to at least 70 years. It would include dealing proactively with HIV and reducing injury, accidents, violence, and substance abuse.
- Significantly reducing the burden of disease. Beyond HIV, South Africa needs to improve TB prevention and cure, and reduce the prevalence of non-communicable chronic diseases (eg cardiovascular diseases, diabetes, cancer, and chronic respiratory diseases)
- Reducing maternal, infant and child mortality

People must behave responsibly ie they have agency. The NDP emphasises raising awareness, public education and other measures but it notes that the final choice is in the hands of the people.

The health system needs to be reformed and strengthened. The NDP looks at, among other things:

- Integrating the different parts of the health system but separating policymaking from oversight and operations. There would be active engagement with communities, as well as communication and coordination mechanisms across all spheres.
- Decentralising authority and administration, with organisational structures supporting primary healthcare.
- Creating better governance and management frameworks, from national to local levels, with the emphasis on accountability to users and communities.
- Good management and implementation, with practices measured against benchmarks and evidence-based decision making.
- There should be overall quality control. (The NDP proposes the Office of Health Standards Compliance, responsible for ensuring that standards are met in every sphere and at every level.)
- Making more use of ICT. Imagine integrated national, district, facility and community health information systems. These would link to electronic patient records and other databases (such as those in government).

Competent human capacity is key – at all levels including leaders. Managers, doctors, nurses and community health workers need to be appropriately trained and managed, produced in adequate numbers, and deployed where they are most needed. The latter needs to take into account distribution between urban and rural areas.

The NDP advocates for properly-resourced primary healthcare teams providing care to families and communities. Beyond doctors, specialists, physicians and nurses, each household should have access to primary healthcare outreach teams. These comprise a professional nurse, a staff nurse and community health workers. (Community health workers can contribute to comprehensive health care, undertaking a range of activities and forming the base of the health pyramid.)

The idea is to have larger community-based roles for family doctors and specialists. The NDP proposes family physicians (in the district specialist support team) taking primary responsibility for developing a district-specific strategy and an implementation plan for clinical governance. They would take overall responsibility for monitoring and evaluation of the district's clinical service quality. Along the same lines, specialists would focus on improving the quality of care (in their field) in district hospitals and surrounding health centres and clinics.

The aim is to have universal healthcare coverage. This means everyone has access to an equal standard of care, regardless of their income. The NDP proposes a national health insurance (NHI). The NDP notes: "The success of NHI in South Africa will depend on the functioning of the public health system."

For South Africa’s health system to be effective, there needs to be collaboration across sectors and government departments, and across all levels. Private health providers, traditional healers and other sectors play a big role. As the NDP notes: “Health is everyone's responsibility.”

Chapter 11, National Development Plan – Social protection

‘Social protection’ can be understood as a set of interventions aimed at reducing social and economic risk and vulnerability. Within in the National Development Plan (NDP), social protection is seen in the context of the overarching NDP goals: to eradicate poverty and reduce inequality.

There is also a constitutional right of access to social security and social assistance. (Social security is a government system that provides monetary assistance/benefits to people with little or no income. It also applies to covering retirement, unemployment, and compensation for injury and diseases.) The NDP positions ‘social protection’ as more inclusive than social security.

While there are many aspects to social protection, this chapter focuses on measures for:

- Those unemployed due to their vulnerable status ie children, people with disabilities, and the aged. The NDP notes that there should also be a focus on women.
- Those who are vulnerable to the labour market due to the nature of their jobs, low income levels, or unemployment.

The NDP explains that the “root cause of income inequality is the socioeconomic distortion introduced by apartheid”. This impacted on education and skills and, consequently, labour market participation – keeping the majority trapped in poverty. Other issues included a severe lack of service provision (clean water and sanitation, healthcare, electricity, and safe transport). This legacy takes extensive time and resources to reform.

The NDP focuses on defining minimum social protection or a ‘social floor’. This means providing an acceptable standard of living – below which no-one should fall – over the entire lifecycle. It includes minimum income needed, essential basic services, and the right to access social protection. It’s about measures to lift recipients out of poverty, meet the most basic needs, and provide relief during crisis situations.

South Africa, as a developing country, needs to define a social protection approach that fits its context. An element of this is protecting the vulnerable and those at risk while ensuring economic inclusion. Employment is the best form of social protection. Social protection provides a safety net, but it also needs to encourage economic participation. This includes incentivising individuals to respond to risks and crises.

Social protection is a public and private matter – with government, the private sector, and individuals playing an active role. The responsibility lies with the state (such as grants) and individuals (through regulated voluntary insurance and other forms of savings for potential risks). It includes social partners (for, as an example, delivering social services). Social partners extend to non-governmental entities, business, organised labour and community organisations.

According to the NDP, “Post 1994, South Africa adopted a comprehensive social protection system and established minimum standards linked to a social wage”. (Social wage refers to providing amenities from public funds.) Key elements of the system include:

- Social assistance cash grants for children, the aged, and persons with disabilities

- Access to free basic services
- Free education in 60% of schools in poor communities
- A school nutrition and transport programme
- Free healthcare for pregnant women and children under six
- Statutory social insurance arrangements, ie unemployment insurance fund (UIF), compensation for injury and disease (COIDA) and the road accident fund (RAF)
- Voluntary social security arrangements for those formally employed, ie pensions and provident funds

There are various challenges with the social protection system. These are identified in the NDP and proposals are recommended. The system is fragmented and plagued by administrative bottlenecks and implementation inefficiencies. Following are some of the outlined focus areas:

- **Improving efficiency** in the delivery of services and addressing skills deficits
- **Aligning policies, legislation and institutions** that impact on social protection. This includes better accountability.
- Providing a **coordinated and enabling environment**
- **Addressing exclusions**
- **Reducing the administrative bottlenecks** and challenges that prevent people accessing benefits
- **Potentially increasing social grant amounts** – due to high unemployment rates, the grants often support the entire household
- **Improving access to basic services** – this is still a challenge
- **Social security is largely contribution based and biased towards formal sector workers.** Other issues include: government employees not contributing to UIF; the lack of a saving culture, and private retirement funds focusing on upper- and middle-income earners.
- **Improving labour market policies.** Various labour market activation schemes exist (such as public works programmes and training and skills development programmes). However, their scope needs to be greatly expanded and improved. Other areas to consider are incentives for older workers to stay in employment, and incentives around job creation.
- **Household food security and nutrition is critical.** A good starting point is maternal health and ending foetal malnutrition. The latter causes low birth weight which has long-term impacts, including impaired cognitive ability.
- **Developmental social welfare includes introducing strategies to reduce and prevent social pathologies.** (Examples of social pathologies are the burden of disease, extremely high levels of violence, and extensive poverty.) Social welfare services include homes for the elderly, mental health clinics, child guidance services, and services related to addictions. The NDP says that “There is a lack of coordination and integration of systems, weak and limited effectiveness of funding, and significant capacity deficits”.
- **Pay attention to the sustainability of social protection.** The foundation of future social protection means improving the state of children today.
- **Increasing access for the informal sector to social insurance programmes.** The national UIF assists those who lose their jobs, but also those who stop receiving a salary for a period of time. (This can be due to maternity leave or illness, for example.) The vast majority of the unemployed fall outside this system. There are various proposals to use the fund more comprehensively, such as creating an unemployment assistance fund for all. The informal sector also don’t have access to the COIDA fund.

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. (LGBTQ 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.

Chapter 13, National Development Plan – Building a capable and developmental state

Political rhetoric often uses the term: ‘capable and developmental state’. What does this mean, particularly for the National Development Plan (NDP)?

‘Developmental’ refers to the state playing a transformative role when addressing poverty and inequality. “This requires well-run and effectively coordinated state institutions with skilled public servants who are committed to the public good and capable of delivering consistently high-quality services, while prioritising the nation’s developmental objectives.”

South Africa needs to be “a capable and developmental state: capable in that it has the capacity to formulate and implement policies that serve the national interest; developmental in that those policies focus on overcoming the root causes of poverty and inequality and building the state’s capacity to fulfil this role”.

The NDP notes that one of the main challenges to building a capable and developmental state is unevenness in capacity. This leads to uneven performance in local, provincial and national government. Weaknesses in capacity and performance are most serious in historically disadvantaged areas. Yet, this is where state intervention is most needed to improve people's quality of life.

Focusing on 'capable', the NDP notes there are fundamental priorities.

- Public service needs skills and professionalism – this includes offering stimulating career paths, ensuring a pipeline of potential talent is being developed, and training.
- Senior level reporting and recruitment shouldn't involve political interference.

To overcome South Africa's social and economic divides, the NDP makes clear that collaboration and coordination are essential. This applies across all spheres of government: local, provincial and national. Individual initiatives, a tendency to jump from one quick fix or trend to the next, and frequent changes have created instability in organisational structures and strained capacity.

The NDP makes the following recommendations to bring about a capable and developmental state:

- **Stabilise the political-administrative interface.** Build a professional public service that serves government but is sufficiently autonomous to be insulated from political interference. This involves a clearer separation between political principals and administrative heads.
- **Strengthen the role of the Public Service Commission (PSC).** Beyond upholding the principles of public administration, it should play a direct role in the recruitment of the most senior posts to ensure professionalism over political favour.
- **Create an administrative head of the public service** with responsibility for managing the career progression of department heads, including convening panels for recruitment, performance assessments, and disciplinary procedures.
- **Use a hybrid approach for top appointments that brings together administrative and political priorities.** The suggestion is that the administrative 'side' creates a shortlist of suitable candidates for senior posts, then the political 'side' selects a candidate.
- **Use a purely administrative approach for lower-level appointments.** Currently, the Public Service Act gives some HR functions with political principals.
- **Make the public service and local government administration careers of choice.** It's about building a skilled and professional public service, emphasising experience and expertise for senior levels, and developing skills and expertise at junior levels. A professional public service is one where people are recruited and promoted for merit and potential, rather than political connections. The NDP recommends: a formal graduate recruitment scheme, clear career paths, adequate experience as a prerequisite for senior posts, and continuing skills development.
- **Develop technical and specialist professional skills.** There is a shortage of professional skills in government, particularly at the local level. Municipalities require engineers to build, maintain, and operate infrastructure. Even when these functions are contracted out, municipalities need to have the technical expertise to manage contractors. Recommendations include: the state developing technical skills (eg apprenticeships, bursaries, graduate training schemes), mentoring, and clear career paths.

- **Strengthen delegation, accountability, and oversight.** Make it easier for citizens to hold public servants and politicians accountable, particularly for service delivery quality. Streamlined processes are needed, that maintain checks and balances and clarify accountability while making it easier to take decisions. Civil society can also play a role in scrutinising government data, while government encourages this by ensuring data is available in suitable formats (Open Data).
- **Improve interdepartmental coordination.** The challenge of improving coordination runs throughout all sections of government. Often, departments have competing objectives or duplicate roles, there are gaps where no department takes responsibility, or areas where departments could be more effective if they worked together. The NDP recommends prioritisation and hierarchy as part of the coordination framework.
- **Take a proactive approach to improving relations between national, provincial and local government.** South Africa’s approach is to decentralise responsibility for implementation while maintaining national oversight and using centralised funding mechanisms to achieve redistribution. Recommendations include making roles clear – for municipalities, provinces, and national government.
- **Strengthen local government.** Develop an enabling framework for local government (eg could include operational guidelines for routine tasks) with active support and oversight from national and provincial government. This includes role clarity, and prioritising citizen participation.
- **Clarify the governance of SOEs.** The aim is for efficient, financially sound, and well-governed SOEs that address the country’s developmental objectives in areas where no one else (government or private sector) is doing so. Recommendations include: clear mandates, clear and straightforward governance structures, and dealing with capacity constraints.

Chapter 14, National Development Plan – Fighting corruption

According to the National Development Plan (NDP), the vision for 2030 is zero tolerance for corruption. “In 2030, South Africa will be a society in which citizens do not offer bribes and have the confidence and knowledge to hold public and private officials to account, and in which leaders have integrity and high ethical standards. Anti-corruption agencies should have the resources, independence from political influence, and powers to investigate corruption, and their investigations should be acted upon.”

This chapter makes it clear that for South Africa to develop and to be an effective state, we need good governance and accountability. According to UNESCO, ‘governance’ refers to structures and processes designed to “ensure accountability, transparency, responsiveness, rule of law, stability, equity and inclusiveness, empowerment, and broad-based participation”. Accountability is about providing an account on how responsibilities are carried out and how resources are used.

The NDP notes that good governance and accountability are achieved “through a system of institutional checks and balances”. This includes Parliament, oversight institutions, and the judiciary. Governance and accountability work with a high standard of ethics and building integrity. Openness and transparency are also seen as critical.

Corruption is defined by the NDP as “the misuse of an official position for personal gain”. In 2011, when the NDP was published, it was already noted that South Africa had high levels of corruption.

The NDP sees overcoming corruption and the lack of accountability using a comprehensive approach. It includes “political will, sound institutions, a solid legal foundation and an active citizenry that holds public officials accountable”.

South Africa has fairly extensive legislation and a number of institutions to promote accountability and governance. The legislation includes the Bill of Rights, Promotion of Access to Information Act, Promotion of Access to Justice Act (2000), Prevention and Combating of Corrupt Activities Act (2004), Public Finance Management Act (1999) and Municipal Finance Management Act (2003).

The NDP singled out four areas to focus on:

Building a resilient anti-corruption system for the South African context

- **An anti-corruption system needs to be free from political interference.** According to the NDP, the “institutional independence of anti-corruption agencies is contentious, since they are all accountable to the Executive”.
- **Designated entities need to have the capability and resources,** including increased funding and specialised teams. Designated anti-corruption agencies include: South African Police Service, Special Investigations Unit, Assets Forfeiture Unit, and the Public Service Commission. The Public Protector and the Auditor-General also investigate corruption. The NDP recommends sharing and coordination, as well as distinct and separate functions to reduce duplication.
- **Leaders need to take action.** This means political will and support for anti-corruption agencies.
- **Public servants should be more accountable.** The NDP recommends making public servants legally accountable as individuals for their actions, particularly with public resources. Mechanisms to promote ethical conduct need to be implemented and enforced within government departments. Further actions include ensuring corrupt officials can’t work in public service again.
- **Citizens and the private sector should not engage in corrupt practices** – even in the smallest way. The NDP recommends increased public awareness campaigns, as well as reporting mechanisms. Beyond what has already been set up by business, suggested ideas include establishing a structure to report private sector non-compliance and to include corruption cases in annual reports.
- **Support for individuals and the media:** Individuals should be able to speak out against corruption. The media should be freely able to expose corruption.
- **State information should be openly available to citizens.** There should be an enforcement mechanism and a specialist adjudicatory body such as an information regulator. The NDP also recommends freely available ‘open data’. According to the NDP: “Open data is information that is made actively available without a request from an individual.”
- **Judicial governance and the rule of law need to be strengthened.** This includes ensuring the independence and accountability of the judiciary.

Strengthen the protection of whistle-blowers to create a culture of exposing wrongdoing.

- **The Protected Disclosures Act (2000) needs to be reviewed** and then government departments need to develop policies to implement the act. The act doesn’t provide enough protection, including inadequate security and confidentiality for whistle-blowers.
- **The NDP notes there is “no public body** tasked with providing advice and promoting public awareness, and no public body dedicated to monitoring whistleblowing”.

Improve oversight over procurement procedures for increased accountability, particularly with large and long-term tenders

Beyond designing cost-effective procurement systems that enable effective government, there should be a tiered system to review tenders depending on their value. This would include differentiated safeguards and procedures.

Empower the tender compliance monitoring office to investigate corruption and the value for money of tenders.

The Office of the Accountant General in the National Treasury “is responsible for promoting and enforcing the effective management of revenue and expenditure in departments”, as well as monitoring the proper implementation of public sector financial management acts. This includes setting and monitoring procurement practices. The NDP proposes including value for money as part of this.