

# Millennium Development Goals: Towards a post-2015 development agenda for South Africa<sup>\*</sup>

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## **Introduction**

2014 did not only commemorate 20 years of democracy, it also marked the year that the South African government had set for itself to meet, and surpass, most of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The MDGs were adopted in September 2000 through the Millennium Declaration at the 55th session of the United Nations General Assembly, convened as the 'Millennium Assembly'. South Africa had also set specific goals of its own in 2004 – some of which overlapped with the MDGs – that were to be achieved by 2014. These include: reducing poverty and unemployment by half; providing the skills required by the economy; and reducing cases of tuberculosis, diabetes, malnutrition and maternal deaths, turning the tide against HIV/AIDS, and reducing preventable causes of death. It is clear that due to policy paralysis, many goals will be missed.

Although South Africa sequenced policies and reforms relatively well from the 1990s to mid-2000s, binding policy constraints since then have restricted the country's ability to meet all MDGs on time. Arguably, the MDGs would have been achievable had it not been for these constraints, which resulted in failure to properly address the legacy of apartheid colonialism. The argument that South Africa's socioeconomic progress is limited by skewed global power relations does not account fully for the inability to achieve the MDGs. The alternative view that South Africa has not progressed enough regarding social and economic development because of state-capital relations also has only partial explanatory value – most, if not all, of the targets could have been achieved through effective public policies.

This article examines policy reforms over the past 20 years, and proposes what needs to be done to achieve the targets specified in the Millennium Declaration. It focuses on two areas: the extent to which South Africa has met or missed the MDGs; and policy proposals regarding issues that should be prioritised in order for speedy socio-economic development to take place in South

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Africa. Socio-economic development, for the purpose of this essay, is understood to mean an effect or outcome, through various mechanisms, which results in improvement in the lives of the people. Development, broadly, according to Claude Ake (1996: 125), 'is the process by which people create and recreate themselves and their life circumstances to realise higher levels of civilisation in accordance with their own choices and values – development is something that people must do for themselves'. There are other conceptions of development, such as those informed by the scholarship of Frantz Fanon, Molefi Kete Asante and Amartya Sen, but this article uses straightforward, if not simplistic, views of what development is.

## **Background**

Apartheid colonialism<sup>1</sup> employed various strategies and policies to sustain white control over the economy and to guarantee superior living conditions at the expense of South Africa's other population groups. One way of examining the severity of the ramifications of apartheid colonialism is to analyse the post-apartheid development dilemmas that constrain South Africa's socio-economic progress. The main ones are race relations, economic inequality and poverty. In discourses related to the latter two, the government frequently talks of the 'triple challenge' of unemployment, poverty and inequality. Linked to the three main development dilemmas is unemployment, because of a poorly performing economy, and weak human development, because of poor education and health.

With regard to race relations, the Development Indicators (MME 2012) show that public opinion improved between 2002 and 2004, and remained at the same level until about 2007. From 2007, the share of those who believed that race relations were improving declined significantly. In 2011, only 40 per cent believed that they were improving – more or less the same figure as a decade earlier in 2001. The 2013 South African Reconciliation Barometer, however, indicates that 44 per cent of those surveyed felt that race relations have improved since 1994 (IJR 2013). Arguably, even though much has been done to transform race, gender and class relations in South Africa, weighted outcomes reveal disappointing progress.

There is a general consensus in South Africa that inequality, particularly economic inequality, and poverty, specifically income poverty, have remained unacceptably high. Again, the

ramifications of apartheid colonialism become glaring when examining economic inequality and income poverty. As Isobel Frye and her co-researchers put it, ‘poverty and inequality in South Africa have a very clear racial bias as a result of the colonial and apartheid policies of racial discrimination and deliberate impoverishment’ (Frye et al 2011: 260). Also, HaroonBhorat and his co-researchers have argued that, ‘in the South African context, the strong inequality between the various racial groups has always been a significant driver of aggregate inequality and poverty’ (Bhorat et al 2010: 14) Although inequality is largely a function of an under-transformed labour market and a skewed structure of the economy in South Africa, the entrenched legacy of apartheid colonialism has ensured that economic inequality has increased and remains very high.<sup>2</sup>

The major thrust of South Africa’s challenges has to do with apartheid colonialism and its profound and lingering legacy. It is in this context that the government should have been more serious about meeting MDGs and addressing other pressing developmental challenges.<sup>3</sup> South Africa’s relatively peaceful transition confounded the expectations of many sceptics, who mooted the possibility of a racial war (CDE 2014). However, given the socio-economic challenges that South Africa continues to face, and what appears to be a deterioration in government affairs as well as the general weakening of social cohesion,<sup>4</sup> South Africa’s political stability is increasingly challenged. In his latest book, Lawrence Hamilton (2014: 128) argues that South Africa is a case of a ‘revolution [still] pending’.

## **Economic performance and the labour market**

The performance of an economy and the functioning of a labour market, as well as associated issues, have implications for socio-economic development. For instance, jobs are important in order to meet many developmental goals. Below is a brief reflection on areas that are, or were, critical for achieving MDG targets in the context of South Africa.

### *The economy*

Although South Africa’s gross domestic product (GDP) performance could be celebrated, it has underperformed in comparison to its developing nation peers. Looking at comparable countries such as Botswana, India, Nigeria and Malaysia, South Africa’s economic performance has been

mediocre, as shown in Table 1. All comparable economies grew at a much faster pace than that did South Africa over the period 2000–2010. Since the stabilisation of the economy in the mid-1990s to early 2000s, there has not been a clear and consistent economic policy for growing the economy faster and more sustainably. The 1996 Growth, Employment and Redistribution (GEAR) framework played its part in stabilising an economy that had effectively fallen apart. The 2005 Accelerated and Shared Growth Initiative for South Africa (ASGISA) could have assisted in further growing the economy and in ensuring the inclusivity of such growth, but it was short-lived. In 2010, another intervention was unveiled – the New Growth Path (NGP). The NGP was soon overtaken by the National Development Plan (NDP). Neither the NGP nor the NDP is a policy intervention that could address the structural challenges facing the South African economy and/or the reform of the labour market.

**Table 1: GDP growth, South Africa and other countries, 2000–2010<sup>5</sup>**

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2005	2006	2007	2008	2010
South Africa	4.2	2.7	3.7	2.9	5.3	5.6	5.5	3.6	2.9
Botswana	5.9	3.5	9.0	6.3	6.1	4.5	4.8	2.9	7.2
India	4.0	5.2	3.8	8.4	9.3	9.3	9.8	4.9	9.7
Malaysia	8.9	0.5	5.4	5.8	5.3	5.8	6.5	4.7	7.2
Nigeria	5.3	4.4	3.8	10.4	6.5	6.0	6.4	6.0	7.0

*Source:* MME (2012)

The government, and sympathetic analysts, believe that South Africa’s weak economic performance is attributable primarily to the global economic recession. It would seem, however, that the South African economy started deteriorating before the global economic crisis. It also seems that the deterioration in the South African economy is domestically induced, largely because of the poor management of state resources and the economy in general over the past five years. Looking at GDP figures before the global economic crisis, Nigeria, Malaysia and India, as captured in Table 1, grew much faster than South Africa. It is not surprising that Nigeria recently overtook South Africa as the biggest economy on the African continent.

### *Employment and unemployment*

Another critical challenge facing the post-apartheid government is employment creation and its related malaise, poverty. Major efforts have been made by the state and its institutions to accelerate job creation amongst previously disadvantaged citizens. However, the employment

performance of the economy has not met the needs of society adequately. According to the Centre for Development Enterprise (CDE 2014: 18), South Africa has one of the world's highest recorded unemployment rates (using the expanded definition), standing at 35 per cent of the workforce and 60 per cent of young people aged 18–24 years. While it would be incorrect to assert that the country has experienced jobless growth many of the newly created jobs have been precarious and of poor quality, and others are under pressure or have disappeared as a result of the economic recession (Stats SA 2014).

South Africa faces further complexities related to an uneven labour market environment, the changing nature of work, lack of labour market measurement instruments, and servicing multi-class beneficiaries ranging from highly skilled, employed workers, through to low-skilled, unemployed jobseekers. The fragmented nature of South Africa's labour market, increasing informality, casualisation and externalisation of the labour market have undoubtedly worsened the job crisis and affected the economic status of the ordinary working class. According to Godfrey, Maree and Theron (2006), the need to rebuild a fractured and uneven labour market has provided great impetus to labour reforms, all of which pay special attention to workers and labour rights. These reforms focus on the provision of equal rights to all employees, the protection of organisational rights and the democratisation of the workplace through the establishment of a central system of collective bargaining and workplace forums, as well as sanctioning worker participation in all decision-making processes of the workplace. Even though extensive efforts have been made by the ANC-led government to transform the skewed and discriminatory character of the South African labour market, it remains, arguably, the major economic challenge facing post-apartheid South Africa (see Table 2).

**Table 2: Percentage of unemployed people in South Africa**

	<b>2008</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2013</b>
Western Cape	16.7	21.4	21.9	21.6	23.9	24.0
Eastern Cape	25.4	27.0	24.7	27.1	29.8	30.8
Northern Cape	21.3	24.5	24.3	26.7	28.4	29.0
Free State	22.6	25.1	27.1	29.4	33.2	33.1
KwaZulu-Natal	20.9	19.3	19.8	19.3	22.5	22.7
North West	25.5	26.9	24.2	24.6	23.3	27.1
Gauteng	20.5	25.4	26.7	25.1	23.7	25.0
Mpumalanga	22.6	26.3	28.7	27.7	29.4	29.4
Limpopo	28.8	26.9	16.9	20.2	19.6	18.1
RSA Average	21.8	24.2	24.0	23.9	24.9	25.6

Source: Statistics South Africa, Quarterly Labour Force Surveys, various issues

As Table 2 shows, the percentage of unemployed people in South Africa has increased in the past five years, and in some provinces these figures are cause for particular concern. For the country as a whole, unemployment increased from 21.8 per cent in 2008 to 25.6 per cent in 2013. In the Free State, the percentage of jobless labour market participants increased from 22.6 per cent to 33.1 per cent over the same period.

### *Education*

The 2013 South African report on the MDGs reminds us that:

*...in capturing the education challenge in South Africa, Nelson Mandela in 1998 said that unlike amongst Whites, in the case of Blacks, the conditions at home were totally different from those at school. Black children are raised by parents some of whom have not seen the inside of a school, transport to school is non-existent and the home is crowded leaving very little room for meaningful after school study and support. (RSA 2013)*

There is emerging consensus that the quality of education in South Africa is poor and the curricula are not well structured, given the legacy of the Bantu education system. The duality of

South Africa's education system appears to produce and reproduce gross class inequalities, especially between population groups. Van der Berg et al. (2011) indicate that this very duality produces a distinctive class of low-skilled Africans with limited options and an elite white class with expanded options. This perpetuates racial inequalities. Therefore, although South Africa is meeting education targets of the MDGs in terms of access, the quality of education remains of a poor standard.

Even in terms of access, there are still many learners who are unable to access schools. Table 3 shows that the number of those not attending school remains very high (at more than 5 million). The unification of the education system and standards also remain an issue. The two-tier education system is accentuated by an increasing share of those attending a private education institution.

**Table 3: Education in South Africa among persons aged 5–24 years, 2001–2011**

<b>Education</b>	<b>2001</b>		<b>2011</b>	
	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<i>School attendance</i>				
Yes	13 727 893	71.5	13 837 961	73.4
No	5 463 823	28.5	5 023 110	26.6
<i>Type of educational institution</i>				
Pre-school (Yes)	575 936	4.2	128 719	0.9
Pre-school (No)	12 584 818	91.7	12 862 961	92.9
FET college/College	191 234	1.4	359 228	2.6
University/Technikon	315 592	2.3	410 063	3.0
ABET	26 505	0.2	22 730	0.2
Other	33 809	0.2	57 883	0.4
<i>Public or private</i>				
Public	13 028 486	94.9	11 924 285	92.7
Private	699 407	5.1	934 480	7.3

Source: Census (2011)

With regard to higher education, many challenges persist. For instance, the 'Report of the Ministerial Committee on Transformation and Social Cohesion and the Elimination of Discrimination in Public Higher Education Institutions' presents a number of startling realities (see DoE 2008). While the report shows that institutions by and large have in place a

comprehensive range of policies dealing with the transformation of higher education, its findings confirm that racism, sexism, tribalism, homophobia and discrimination against disabled students persists in institutions of higher learning. The findings also reveal that institutional policies on transformation have generally failed.

## **Millennium Development Goals**

As indicated above, the MDGs focus on poverty reduction, access to education, gender parity, healthcare access, sustainable development and international partnerships. In Africa, broadly, the major reasons for missed MDG targets relate to poor governance, corruption and poor economic policy choices, and infringement of human rights (Sachs 2005). Another reason for the high rate of failure to meet MDGs, as identified by Aharonovitz (2011), is the failure to tap into existing knowledge on the development continuum. As argued by Gumede (2011), sound social policies should form the foundation of Africa's developmental progress, including socio-economic development in South Africa. It is worth noting, also, that the ongoing global economic crisis has dealt a huge blow to the achievement of MDGs in Africa and the developing world generally. The African Development Bank, for instance, has shown that prior to the onset of the food and fuel crises and the global recession, African countries were making steady progress towards attainment of the MDGs (AfDB 2013).

In recent years, the MDGs have significantly influenced policies and development strategies of the countries involved, particularly in Africa. Appendix I presents the goals, targets and indicators for monitoring progress with regard to MDGs. As the 2013 South African MDG report (RSA 2013) outlines, the government integrated the MDGs into the Medium-Term Strategic Framework, the NDP and other policy planning and implementation instruments. Each MDG is discussed below.

### *Goal 1: Eradicating extreme poverty and hunger*

The challenge of poverty in South Africa is multidimensional, as it is in most parts of the developing world. In the main, though, poverty in South Africa is structural – it is the structure of the economy that perpetuates poverty through its capital intensity, mineral-energy-complex character, and high-skill demand in the labour market.



Leading scholars of South African poverty dynamics point out that income poverty has been declining in the country. Van der Berg (2007) andBhorat et al. (2010) concur that poverty rates declined during 1995–2005. Bhorat and his research team conclude that:

*...as measured by the headcount rate at a poverty line of R322 a month in 2000 prices, poverty declined by five percentage points, from 53 percent in 1995 to 48 percent in 2005. At the lower poverty line of R174 a month (also in 2000 prices) a similar decline in poverty is evident as the incidence of poverty declined by eight percentage points from about 31 to 23 percent.*  
(Bhorat et al. 2010: 3)

Gumede (2014a), however, demonstrates that poverty remains very high in South Africa –at least 40 per cent of South Africans still live below the poverty line. It might also be that income poverty is increasing in South Africa due to the deteriorating domestic economy, increase in unemployment rate and poor state of the global economy.

Stats SA’s (2014b) recently published *Poverty Trends in South Africa* confirms Gumede’s (2014a) estimates. Table 4, indeed, shows that despite a decline in poverty rates, many people are still living in poverty in South Africa. The table shows that 23 million people in South Africa were living below the poverty line in 2011.

**Table 4: Poverty headcounts in 2006, 2009 and 2011**

	<b>2006</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>2011</b>
Percentage of the population that is poor	57.2	56.8	45.5
Number of poor persons (millions)	27.1	27.8	23.0
Percentage of the population living in extreme poverty	26.6	32.4	20.2
Number of extremely poor persons (millions)	12.6	15.8	10.2

*Source:* Stats SA (2014b)

According to Stats SA (2010), South Africa’s economic growth over the years has been capital-intensive, to the effect that very few jobs have been added to the labour market. There is also a

widely held view that a mismatch exists between the kinds of job opportunities available in the economy and the skills of most jobseekers. Thwala (2011), for an example, argues that the South African economy has not been creating sufficient jobs for the unskilled and semi-skilled labourers who are concentrated mostly in the townships and rural areas.

Thus, in the context of continued weaknesses in South Africa's education and training system, there has been limited success in efforts to absorb a significant portion of the unemployed population. The brunt of the unemployment problem in South Africa is borne by young people below the age of 30 years – more than 50 per cent of youth (18–24 years old) in South Africa are neither employed nor in school (National Treasury 2011). In addition, approximately 3.5 million (33.5 per cent) of the 10.4 million youth aged 15–24 years were not in education, employment or training in the first quarter of 2013 (RSA 2013).

Gumede (2014a) demonstrates that it is mainly black people who are in poverty in South Africa. In addition, Gumede (2014a: 288) notes that:

*...with regard to provinces, there is a marginal increase in those below the poverty line in the Western Cape and the HDI[Human Development Index] in the Western Cape declines slightly. Another province that stands out is KwaZulu-Natal where there is a significant decline in those below the poverty line and a relatively significant increase in the HDI from 0.49 in 2008 to 0.54 in 2010.*

### *Goal 2: Achieve universal primary education*

South Africa has achieved its target of universal primary education. Bloch (2006) argues that despite the challenges facing the education system, there have been major achievements in redressing the apartheid education system. Kraak (2008) notes, furthermore, that these achievements can be seen in the increased access, headcount enrolment, financial investment by the government and the private sector in education, the institutional rationalisation processes and regulation.

In the 2011 *General Household Survey* (GHS), Stats SA found that 98.8 per cent of children aged 7–15 were attending school. This is a participation rate rarely seen in developing countries (DBE 2013). The GHS also recorded that in 2011 about 590 000 children between the ages of 7 and 18 years were not attending school, 4 out of 5 children were between the ages of 16 and 18 years, and 1 in 5 was disabled (DBE 2013).

The precise reasons for pre-tertiary dropouts vary and are the subject of intense debate. Some government documents, such as the *Report on Dropout and Learner Retention Strategy to Portfolio Committee on Education*, argue that dropping out, ‘is not a single event but is usually the result of a combination of inter-related factors that lead up to a child eventually dropping out of school’ (DBE 2011). Gumede (2013) argues that the challenge facing education in South Africa has to do, fundamentally, with policy. As Gumede (2013: 77) puts it, ‘although the policy reforms undertaken since 1994 have accomplished most of their intended objectives, they have not gone far enough’.

It is worth recognising that the introduction of the no-fee schools policy in 2007 appears to have contributed to the increase in enrolment rates. These no-fee schools exempt children from poor communities from having to pay school fees. In 2011, more than 81 per cent of public schools were no-fee schools, and more learners were enrolling in these schools. It is important that the government’s extensive investment in pre-primary education is also noted. In 2012, the enrolment rate for Grade R was double that of 2005. The number of 5-year-old children attending school increased from 39.3 per cent in 2003 to 63.2 per cent in 2008 and to 84.8 per cent in 2011. In addition, the GHS found that there was a considerable increase in the percentage of under-4 year olds who were attending an education institution, from about 7 per cent in 2002 to 35 per cent in 2011 (Department of Basic Education, 2012).

Despite the country’s increasing enrolment rate in primary education and its achievement of the MDG 2 targets before the due date of 2015, the education system remains highly unequal and of poor quality, especially in underprivileged schools (Modisaotsile 2012). Gumede (2013: 77)

highlights the point of quality of education, too, stating that ‘attention should be paid to improving not only access to education, but also the quality of education’.

*Goal 3: Promote gender equality and empower women*

In recent years, there has been a growing debate on women’s empowerment and the broader promotion of gender equality. Women had largely been excluded from participation in the mainstream of the economy. As a result, the government has adopted a number of policies, institutional reforms and strategies to enforce gender mainstreaming in the government and the private sector.

The 2013 South African MDG report appeals to policy-makers in the following words:

*...South Africa should take forward – with due haste – the processes that are already in motion related to amendment of legislation and effective implementation to enable improved alignment with the Equal Remuneration Convention 100 of 1951, which provides for equal pay for work of equal value and which South Africa has ratified. (RSA 2013)*

Recently, there has been the Women Empowerment and Gender Equality Bill of 2012, which is aimed at establishing a legislative framework for the empowerment of women and to assert an obligation to adopt and implement gender mainstreaming (DWCPD 2012). This Bill advocates for the realisation of women’s economic potential in all parts of life, as well as the attainment of a minimum of 50 per cent women representation and participation of women in decision-making structures.

According to data from the Inter-Parliamentary Union, South Africa had women occupying 169 parliamentary seats out of a total of 400 (42 per cent); women also occupied 17 out of 53 National Council of Provinces seats (Duckworth & Cracknell 2013). This put South Africa in third place after Rwanda and Seychelles, which had 56 per cent and 44 per cent parliamentary representation by women respectively. Furthermore, the 2013 Grant Thornton International

Business Report found that internationally only 24 per cent of senior positions were occupied by women, while the corresponding figure for South Africa was 28 per cent (Grant Thornton 2013). Although the data suggest progress, gender-based violence in South Africa undermines the strides that have been made in empowering women. In the 2013 State of the Nation Address, President Jacob Zuma noted that in 2012, the Family Violence, Child Protection and Sexual Offences Units secured over 363 life sentences, with a conviction rate of 73 per cent for crimes against women above 18 years and 70 per cent for crimes against children under 18 years of age (GCIS 2013).

#### *Goal 4: Reduce Child Mortality*

Child mortality in South Africa can be attributed to a number of factors. Amongst these are malnutrition, mother-to-child transmission of HIV, poor immunisation coverage and insufficient access to free health care facilities. In the 1990s, mortality rates in sub-Saharan Africa were very high due to the high rate of HIV/AIDS. However, in 2007, child mortality rates in South Africa started to decline as a number of HIV prevention and treatment programmes were implemented. Owing to this decline in HIV infections and other factors, United Nations (UN) estimates show that under-5 mortality dropped between the years 2000 and 2011 from 74 to 47 per 1000 live births. This decline was attributed to better service delivery to communities, including treatment and medication to reduce mother-to-child transmission. In 2012, a significant decrease of HIV mother-to-child transmission was recorded. Only 2.7 per cent of HIV-positive women transmitted the virus to their babies. However, the number of child deaths in South Africa remains high, and most of these deaths are said to be preventable (PRSA 2013).

There are considerable differences in the child mortality estimates for males and females in South Africa. The UN figures show that child mortality for males is higher than that of females. For instance, under-5 mortality is 50 per 1000 live births for males and 44 for females. The same can be said in the case of infant mortality, with 51 male deaths and 35 female deaths for every 1000 live births. In South Africa, about 40 per cent of all child deaths occur within the first 28 days of birth. Thus, a significant reduction in under-5 mortality rates will only be possible if deaths during the neonatal period (infant less than a month old) are reduced (PRSA 2013). While Table 5 shows that there has been a decline in child mortality rates since 2002, it is unlikely that

South Africa will reach the MDG of reducing child mortality by two-thirds between 1990 and 2015, due to systemic institutional weaknesses within the health sector and the long time horizon needed to monitor and ensure that the government and society are able to achieve such a goal.

**Table 5: Fertility and mortality levels, 2002–2013**

Year	Crude birth rate	Total Fertility rate (TFR)	Life expectancy at birth			Infant mortality rate (IMR)	Under-5 mortality	Crude death rate	Rate of natural increase (%)
			Male	Female	Total				
2002	24.5	2.71	50.0	55.2	52.7	63.5	92.9	13.9	1.05
2003	24.2	2.68	49.5	54.4	52.1	62.6	91.9	14.6	0.96
2004	23.6	2.61	49.3	53.9	51.7	60.1	89.3	15.0	0.86
2005	23.1	2.56	49.4	53.6	51.6	58.0	85.4	15.2	0.79
2006	22.8	2.53	50.2	54.6	52.5	55.6	80.9	14.6	0.82
2007	22.6	2.53	51.7	56.1	54.0	53.6	76.7	13.5	0.91
2008	22.5	2.52	53.3	57.6	55.5	50.8	72.3	12.6	0.99
2009	22.3	2.51	54.6	58.8	56.8	49.1	68.5	11.8	1.05
2010	22.2	2.50	55.5	59.5	57.6	47.1	65.2	11.5	1.07
2011	21.6	2.44	56.1	60.0	58.1	45.1	62.1	11.3	1.03
2012	21.0	2.39	56.8	60.5	58.7	43.5	59.5	11.0	1.00
2013	20.5	2.34	57.7	61.4	59.6	41.7	56.6	10.6	0.99

Source: Stats SA (2013b)

#### *Goal 5: Improve maternal health*

Maternal mortality and morbidity in South Africa remains very high, and it is argued that about 40 per cent of all maternal deaths are avoidable (DoH 2012a). The South African National Strategic Plan for a Campaign on Accelerated Reduction of Maternal and Child Mortality in Africa (CARMMA) states that these deaths are related to community, administrative and clinical factors (DoH 2012a). The ‘Saving Mothers Report’ identified five major causes of maternal deaths: non-pregnancy-related infections, mainly AIDS (50 per cent), obstetric haemorrhage (14 per cent), complications of hypertension (14 per cent), pregnancy-related infections (5 per cent) and complications of pre-existing medical conditions such as diabetes (9 per cent) (DoH 2012a).

The MDG ratio for maternal mortality is 38/100 000 live births (DoH 2012a). In an attempt to reduce maternal mortality, South Africa announced the CARMMA on May 2012. This campaign is part of a continent-wide, African Union Commission-initiated campaign, with the theme

‘Africa Cares: No Woman Should Die While Giving Life’. The campaign’s objectives include building on successful past efforts and ‘best practices’ to reduce maternal mortality. This campaign aims to improve government efforts to reduce maternal mortality (DoH 2012a).

*Goal 6: Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases*

In South Africa, the HIV epidemic is said to have stabilised since 2009 at a national antenatal prevalence of about 30 per cent (loveLife 2014). South Africa ranks third in the world for TB infections. HIV and TB infection rates vary across age, race, gender, socio-economic status and geographical location. Even though some sexually transmitted infections (STIs) have decreased in most provinces over the past ten years, the incidence of herpes simplex, which is a co-factor in the acquisition of HIV, remains high in most populations (RSA 2012a). The government and development partners have adopted a range of policies and strategies that are aimed at reducing the infection rates of HIV/AIDS, TB and other diseases.

Educational programmes have been implemented to teach people about such diseases, and the media have been used as part of these strategies. The goals and objectives of the recent National Strategic Plan on HIV, STIs and TB 2012–2016 are highly informed by findings from various past reports, including the ‘Know Your Epidemic Report’, which dealt with the situation of TB and other diseases in South Africa (see RSA 2012b). In these studies, the populations that are most likely to be affected by these diseases were identified as follows: young women between the ages of 15 and 24 years; people living close to national roads and in informal settlements; young people not attending school and girls who drop out of school before matriculating; people from low socio-economic groups; uncircumcised men; people with disabilities and mental disorders; sex workers and their clients; people who abuse alcohol and illegal substances; men who have sex with men and transgender individuals.

It is estimated that 80 per cent of the South African population is infected with the TB bacillus; however, not everyone who is infected will progress to the active TB disease (RSA 2012).

TB/HIV co-infection is common in South Africa. Out of these, the 54 per cent who were eligible for anti-retroviral therapy (ARV) therapy started their treatment in 2010/11. Furthermore, 99 per cent of TB/HIV co-infected patients were started on Cotrimoxazole Prophylactic Treatment

(CPT) during 2010/11. This treatment is said to prevent morbidity and mortality caused by bacterial infections in patients with weak immune systems (RSA 2012b). HIV infections seem to be increasing in the country, regardless of the HIV awareness programmes and the provision of anti-retrovirals (ARVs) to HIV-positive patients.

Table 6 shows that the infection rates remain high. For instance, the HIV-positive population increased from 4 million in 2002 to 5.26 million in the first half of 2013.

**Table 6: HIV prevalence estimates and the number of people living with HIV (2002–2013)**

Year	Prevalence (%)			Total population (%)	HIV population (millions)
	Women 15–49	Adults 15–49	Youth 15–24		
2002	15.9	15.1	13.6	8.7	4.00
2003	16.0	15.1	12.8	8.9	4.10
2004	16.1	15.1	12.0	8.9	4.18
2005	16.2	15.1	11.4	9.0	4.25
2006	16.4	15.2	10.9	9.1	4.34
2007	16.5	15.3	10.5	9.2	4.46
2008	16.7	15.4	10.1	9.3	4.59
2009	16.9	15.5	9.7	9.5	4.74
2010	17.1	15.6	9.3	9.6	4.88
2011	17.2	15.7	9.0	9.8	5.01
2012	17.3	15.8	8.7	9.9	5.13
2013	17.4	15.9	8.5	10.0	5.26

*Source:* Stats SA (2013)

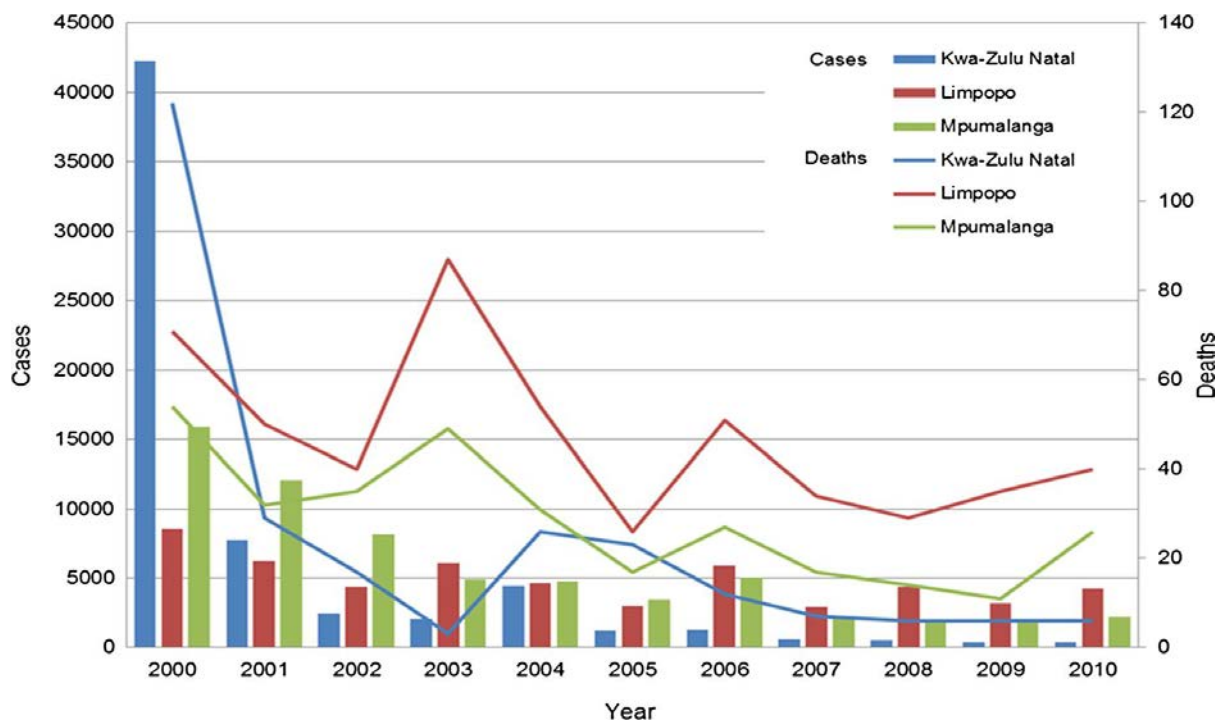
With regard to malaria and other diseases, the indications are that South Africa is doing relatively well. Between 2000 and 2011, the number of malaria cases in South Africa dropped by 85 per cent from 64622 to 9866, and the number of malaria deaths also dropped, by 81 per cent, from 458 to 89. These achievements were the result of prevention and treatment policies that were adopted by the government to ensure that insecticides and anti-malaria treatment were made available, in order to reduce the spread of malaria and to treat malaria infections (DoH 2012b).

According to Maharaj et al. (2012), malaria in South Africa is concentrated mainly in the low-altitude border regions of KwaZulu-Natal, Limpopo and Mpumalanga. It is estimated that about



10 per cent of South Africa’s population resides in these high malaria risk zones. Infection rates in these regions have been decreasing steadily. Figure 1 illustrates how the number of malaria cases and malaria deaths in the three provinces declined between 2000 and 2010. However, the figure also indicates that malaria deaths increased between 2009 and 2010 in Limpopo and Mpumalanga, in particular, while remaining low in KwaZulu-Natal. The cases of malaria in Limpopo and Mpumalanga have remained higher than those of KwaZulu-Natal from 2004 onwards, while the cases in KwaZulu-Natal were far higher than those of Limpopo and Mpumalanga in 2000.

**Figure 1: Malaria cases and deaths in three provinces, 2000–2010**



Source: Maharaj et al.(2012)

*Goal 7: Ensure environmental sustainability*

South Africa has adopted a number of strategic policy interventions to address the challenge of environmental sustainability. In its 2012–2017 Strategic Plan, the Department of Environmental Affairs sets out to ‘support local government in the areas of air quality management, waste management, coastal planning and open space planning’ (DoEA 2012). It also aims to create linkages between climate change, the green economy and sustainable development.

In October 2011, South Africa's 'National Climate Change Response' White Paper was approved by the Cabinet. The White Paper outlined the government's vision for 'an effective climate change response and the long-term, just transition to a climate-resilient and lower-carbon economy and society' (DoEA 2011). This response has two main objectives. Firstly, it aims to control some of the unavoidable climate change impacts; this will be achieved through interventions that build and sustain South Africa's social, economic and environmental resilience and emergency response capacity. Secondly, it aims to support the global effort to stabilise greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere, at a level that avoids dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system, within a timeframe that enables economic, social and environmental development to proceed in a sustainable manner.

Furthermore, in December 2011, South Africa hosted the 17th Conference of the Parties (COP17) to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change in Durban, the success of which was a result of the enormous contribution and commitment of multiple stakeholders from all sectors and all spheres of government. It is reported that the outcomes of the conference were amongst the most significant and precedent-setting since the adoption of the Kyoto Protocol in 1997. Over the last five years, the South African government has taken an educational approach in engaging with climate change politics, through actively courting private sector entities like Sasol to be part of the new thinking around environmental suitability. This has seen the creation of Sasol's Environmental Sustainability Project, which educates and encourages young minds to engage in technological thinking about preserving the environment (SAIIA 2014). In addition to this, the government has put financial tools in place and developed new ideas about encouraging green business development. However, the government acknowledges that South Africa, in its different guises, will take time to acclimatise to this growing consciousness around the environment, but has shown itself open to trying new plans and initiatives to preserve the environment.<sup>6</sup>

#### *Goal 8: Develop global partnerships for development*

South Africa continues to strengthen its relations with the region through increased two-way trade, meeting with high-level dignitaries, and the finalisation of new instruments of co-operation in the fields of science and technology, through technology transfer, investment and overseas

development assistance in capacity-building. In 2012, South Africa's trade with the whole of Africa reached USD30 billion (Tjonneland 2013).

The country has played a leading role in developing the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) and its various sectorial strategies, mobilising African and international support for NEPAD, and supporting the structures and processes of NEPAD. South Africa has prepared the NEPAD Implementation Strategy of South Africa, which focuses on the mobilisation and alignment of resources and institutions nationally, regionally, continentally and internationally in support of the NEPAD vision, mission and objectives. As a blueprint for Africa's socio-economic development, NEPAD represents the objectives of the African Union (AU) at a practical level to intensify the struggle against poverty and underdevelopment. NEPAD remains the main frame of reference for intra-African relations and Africa's partnerships with international partners such as the European Union and the G8 (DIRC 2011).

Furthermore, as part of South Africa's efforts to develop global partnerships, the South African Development Partnership Agency was formed with the aim of enhancing effective and coherent development co-operation to deal with issues of poverty, underdevelopment and the marginalisation of Africa and the South (PMG 2011). Moreover, South Africa has been participating in the G20 Development Working Group as co-chair. The main G20 objective is to address challenges that are facing developing countries, particularly low-income countries (Nelson 2013). South Africa has also increased its South-South co-operation, notably through the BRICS bloc of emerging economies, and through engagement with the UN and other multilateral forums.

South Africa has been a major contributor to Africa, allowing the AU and the Southern African Development Community to operate. South Africa contributed R312 million to the AU (15 per cent of its budget) in 2011 and R328 million in 2012. South Africa also contributes 0.385 per cent of the UN's budget. This amounted to R81 million in 2011 and R79 million in 2012, making South Africa a major contributor to the UN in comparison with other African countries (Makinana&Mataboge 2013).

## **Concluding remarks**

South Africa is missing many of the MDGs. As argued above, the fundamental challenge that constrains South Africa's ability to achieve all MDGs relates to policy. In the main, the argument I have advanced is that South Africa has or pursues inappropriate policies in the context of redressing apartheid colonialism. The various political economy and development interventions since 1994 have been general rather than specific to tackling the ramifications of apartheid colonialism. The successive post-apartheid administrations appear to have been concerned primarily with growing the economy and pursuing a broad socio-economic development agenda, instead of policies that directly affect those who endured the brunt of apartheid colonialism. It is, therefore, not surprising that it is in the area of economic hardship where the ramifications of apartheid colonialism are glaring, and that black people are most affected by poverty and other social ills. Arguably, the first 20 years of democracy have gone largely into state building instead of nation building.<sup>7</sup>

Policies are considered inappropriate or weak if they do not take account of particular contexts. The global environment, the domestic context and other contexts have changed since 1994, but policy changes or shifts (i.e. reforms) and their sequencing have not been alive to new realities, especially since the mid-2000s. South Africa, arguably, has not confronted apartheid colonialism directly. It is perhaps understandable that in the first ten years or so of political independence it was difficult to confront complex but very important issues such as the land and agrarian question (see Gumede 2014b). It is also understandable, perhaps, that restructuring the economy is difficult. However, Sampie Terreblanche, Hein Marias, Lawrence Hamilton, John Saul and Patrick Bond, among others, suggest that the overall development experience of post-apartheid South Africa has to be understood within the context of 'elite transition'. In simple terms, the transition from apartheid colonialism to democracy involved compromises among the elite, and the compromises reached could be constraining development.

In a nutshell, economic policy has to address the challenges of unemployment and poverty, as well as reducing inequality. Social policy has to be robust. Labour market policies should be ameliorated, as argued in Gumede (2014a). More importantly, social and economic policies have to work together for socio-economic development. To achieve this, South Africa needs a 'new'

consensus on the ideal framework or approach to its socio-economic development<sup>8</sup> – the National Planning Commission’s vision is a step in the right direction for ensuring that various stakeholders agree on South Africa’s socio-economic development model.

Needless to say, over and above policy and or policy reforms, implementation should be improved. In the short to medium term, the government should do more to protect the most vulnerable, the ‘the poorest of the poor’. Generally, more should be done to ensure the protection of children, the elderly and people with disabilities. In spite of South Africa’s comprehensive social assistance programme, more can still be done to provide food, shelter and livelihood opportunities. In essence, South Africa needs an anti-poverty strategy or programme that squarely targets the ‘poor’. In addition, the government should pay more attention to improving access to jobs, especially for youth and women through partnerships with organised labour and the private sector, including small and medium enterprises.

In conclusion, South Africa is doing relatively well in some MDGs, notably MDGs 2, 3 and 8. Although there are improvements, major challenges remain with MDG 1, the health related MDGs (4, 5 and 6) and MDG 7. As the MDGs are interrelated and performance in one affects the chances of achieving others, it would be important for the government to take a more emphatic lead in setting the agenda for working with social partners in seeking to realise national priorities, over and above getting policy right. Lastly, the post-2015 development agenda for South Africa should prioritise socio-economic challenges that relate to income inequality, job creation, poverty reduction and social cohesion.

## Appendix I: Millennium Development Goals –targets and indicators

Goals and targets (from the Millennium Declaration)	Indicators for monitoring progress
<b><i>Goal 1: Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger</i></b>	
Target 1.A: Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people whose income is less than one dollar a day Target 1.B: Achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all, including women and young people Target 1.C: Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people who suffer from hunger	1.1 Proportion of population below US\$1 (PPP) per day 1.2 Poverty gap ratio 1.3 Share of poorest quintile in national consumption 1.4 Growth rate of GDP per person employed 1.5 Employment-to-population ratio 1.6 Proportion of employed people living below US\$1 (PPP) per day 1.7 Proportion of own-account and contributing family workers in total employment 1.8 Prevalence of underweight children under five years of age 1.9 Proportion of population below minimum level of dietary energy consumption
<b><i>Goal 2: Achieve universal primary education</i></b>	
Target 2.A: Ensure that, by 2015, children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling	2.1 Net enrolment ratio in primary education 2.2 Proportion of pupils starting grade 1 who reach last grade of primary school 2.3 Literacy rate of 15–24 year-olds, women and men
<b><i>Goal 3: Promote gender equality and empower women</i></b>	
Target 3.A: Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education, preferably by 2005, and in all levels of education no later than 2015	3.1 Ratios of girls to boys in primary, secondary and tertiary education 3.2 Share of women in wage employment in the non-agricultural sector 3.3 Proportion of seats held by women in national parliament
<b><i>Goal 4: Reduce child mortality</i></b>	
Target 4.A: Reduce by two-thirds, between 1990 and 2015, the under-five mortality rate	4.1 Under-five mortality rate 4.2 Infant mortality rate 4.3 Proportion of 1 year-old children immunised against measles
<b><i>Goal 5: Improve maternal health</i></b>	
Target 5.A: Reduce by three quarters, between 1990 and 2015, the maternal mortality ratio Target 5.B: Achieve, by 2015, universal access to reproductive health	5.1 Maternal mortality ratio 5.2 Proportion of births attended by skilled health personnel 5.3 Contraceptive prevalence rate 5.4 Adolescent birth rate 5.5 Antenatal care coverage (at least one visit and at least four visits) 5.6 Unmet need for family planning

<p>Target 6.A: Have halted by 2015 and begun to reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS</p> <p>Target 6.B: Achieve, by 2010, universal access to treatment for HIV/AIDS for all those who need it</p> <p>Target 6.C: Have halted by 2015 and begun to reverse the incidence of malaria and other major diseases</p>	<p>6.1 HIV prevalence among population aged 15–24 years</p> <p>6.2 Condom use at last high-risk sex</p> <p>6.3 Proportion of population aged 15–24 years with comprehensive correct knowledge of HIV/AIDS</p> <p>6.4 Ratio of school attendance of orphans to school attendance of non-orphans aged 10–14 years</p> <p>6.5 Proportion of population with advanced HIV infection with access to antiretroviral drugs</p> <p>6.6 Incidence and death rates associated with malaria</p> <p>6.7 Proportion of children under 5 sleeping under insecticide-treated bednets</p> <p>6.8 Proportion of children under 5 with fever who are treated with appropriate anti-malarial drugs</p> <p>6.9 Incidence, prevalence and death rates associated with tuberculosis</p> <p>6.10 Proportion of tuberculosis cases detected and cured under directly observed treatment short course</p>
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**Goal 7: Ensure environmental sustainability**

<p>Target 7.A: Integrate the principles of sustainable development into country policies and programmes and reverse the loss of environmental resources</p> <p>Target 7.B: Reduce biodiversity loss, achieving, by 2010, a significant reduction in the rate of loss</p> <p>Target 7.C: Halve, by 2015, the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation</p> <p>Target 7.D: By 2020, to have achieved a significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers</p>	<p>7.1 Proportion of land area covered by forest</p> <p>7.2 CO<sup>2</sup> emissions, total, per capita and per US\$1 GDP (PPP)</p> <p>7.3 Consumption of ozone-depleting substances</p> <p>7.4 Proportion of fish stocks within safe biological limits</p> <p>7.5 Proportion of total water resources used</p> <p>7.6 Proportion of terrestrial and marine areas protected</p> <p>7.7 Proportion of species threatened with extinction</p> <p>7.8 Proportion of population using an improved drinking water source</p> <p>7.9 Proportion of population using an improved sanitation facility</p> <p>7.10 Proportion of urban population living in slums</p>
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<p>Target 8.A: Develop further an open, rule-based, predictable, non-discriminatory trading and financial system (Includes a commitment to good governance, development and poverty reduction – both nationally and internationally)</p> <p>Target 8.B: Address the special needs of the least developed countries (Includes: tariff- and quota-free access for the least developed countries' exports; enhanced programme of debt relief for heavily indebted poor countries (HIPC) and cancellation of official bilateral debt; and more generous ODA for countries committed to poverty reduction)</p> <p>Target 8.C: Address the special needs of landlocked developing countries and small island developing states (through the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States and the outcome of the 22nd special session of the General Assembly)</p> <p>Target 8.D: Deal comprehensively with the debt problems of developing countries through national and international measures in order to make debt sustainable in the long term</p> <p>Target 8.E: In co-operation with pharmaceutical companies, provide access to affordable essential drugs in developing countries</p> <p>Target 8.F: In co-operation with the private sector, make available the benefits of new technologies, especially information and communications</p>	<p><i>Some of the indicators listed below are monitored separately for the least developed countries (LDCs), Africa, landlocked developing countries and small island developing states.</i></p> <p><u>Official development assistance (ODA)</u></p> <p>8.1 Net ODA, total and to the least developed countries, as percentage of OECD/DAC donors' gross national income</p> <p>8.2 Proportion of total bilateral, sector-allocable ODA of OECD/DAC donors to basic social services (basic education, primary health care, nutrition, safe water and sanitation)</p> <p>8.3 Proportion of bilateral official development assistance of OECD/DAC donors that is untied</p> <p>8.4 ODA received in landlocked developing countries as a proportion of their gross national incomes</p> <p>8.5 ODA received in small island developing states as a proportion of their gross national incomes</p> <p><u>Market access</u></p> <p>8.6 Proportion of total developed country imports (by value and excluding arms) from developing countries and least developed countries, admitted free of duty</p> <p>8.7 Average tariffs imposed by developed countries on agricultural products and textiles and clothing from developing countries</p> <p>8.8 Agricultural support estimate for OECD countries as a percentage of their gross domestic product</p> <p>8.9 Proportion of ODA provided to help build trade capacity</p> <p><u>Debt sustainability</u></p> <p>8.10 Total number of countries that have reached their HIPC decision points and number that have reached their HIPC completion points (cumulative)</p> <p>8.11 Debt relief committed under HIPC and MDRI initiatives</p> <p>8.12 Debt service as a percentage of exports of goods and services</p> <p>8.13 Proportion of population with access to affordable essential drugs on a sustainable basis</p> <p>8.14 Fixed telephone lines per 100 inhabitants</p> <p>8.15 Mobile cellular subscriptions per 100 inhabitants</p> <p>8.16 Internet users per 100 inhabitants</p>
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Source: Various UN MDGs reports



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## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Apartheid colonialism is a political characterisation that captures the many centuries of a discriminatory system of colonialism and decades of systemic social and economic exclusion of the majority in South Africa; both colonialism and apartheid were formal systems of racial domination and white supremacy.

<sup>2</sup> It should also be noted that, contrary to what has come to be regarded as a 'fact', income inequality in South Africa remains a predominantly racial, rather than a class-related, phenomenon. Income inequality of the African population group appears to have been relatively steady between the years 2005–2011 (having increased from 0.49 in 1995 to 0.56 in 2005), a sort of a correction or effect of economic empowerment and affirmative action initiatives. It is within the white population group that a relatively significant increase in income inequality has occurred.

<sup>3</sup> It is worth noting that the 2013 South African Reconciliation Barometer shows that 36.7 per cent of those surveyed feel that the gap between the rich and poor has worsened (compared to 30.30 per cent of those who feel that the gap has improved). We should bear in mind Richard Wilkinson and Kate Pickett's (2010) argument that the perception of inequality matters more than what the numbers might suggest.

<sup>4</sup> The HSRC (2004) regards social cohesion and/or nation-building as being about unity, coherence, functionality and pride in a nation.

<sup>5</sup> The choice of the years is deliberate, so as to avoid the impact of the recent global economic recession, after 2010, on the data and analysis. Note that the data for Nigeria come from the World Bank.

<sup>6</sup> Minister of Environmental Affairs Edna Molewa recently said that 'three years ago renewable energy projects were small and lacking investment, today there is rapid uptake of large-scale renewable energy technologies through the Renewable Energy Independent Power Producer Procurement Programme (REIPPPP)... So far under the REIPPPP programme, 3 933 MW have already been procured' ([http://www.durban.gov.za/Resource\\_Centre/new2/Pages/South-Africa-taking-bold-steps-to-fight-climate-change.aspx](http://www.durban.gov.za/Resource_Centre/new2/Pages/South-Africa-taking-bold-steps-to-fight-climate-change.aspx)).

<sup>7</sup> Nation building, not statebuilding, can be viewed as the strengthening of unity, coherence, functionality and pride in a nation state. I have argued that, for post-apartheid South Africa, it will be more meaningful and relevant to see a nation as a community that shares a lot in common, respects its repulsive political history, through systematic restitutionary, reconciliatory and restructuring measures, and equitable sharing of resources.

<sup>8</sup> The Mapungubwe Institute for Strategic Reflection has called for a social pact (MISTRA 2014). Hein Marias, Gillian Hart and Adam Habib, in their recent books, argue for a new political settlement.