

Education in South Africa: Achievements since 1994

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Acronyms

ABET	Adult Basic Education and Training
AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
C2005	Curriculum 2005
CEM	Council of Education Ministers
CHE	Council on Higher Education
COLTS	Culture of Learning, Teaching and Service
DoE	Department of Education
EDSU	Education Departments Support Unit

EMD	Education Management Development
EMGD	Education Management and Governance Development
EMIS	Education Management Information Systems
FET	Further Education and Training
FETC	Further Education and Training Certificate
GEAR	Growth, Employment and Redistribution
GETC	General Education and Training Certificate
HE	Higher Education
HEDCOM	Heads of Education Departments Committee
HRD	Human Resource Development
IPET	Implementation Plan for Education and Training
LSM	Learning Support Materials
MTEF	Medium Term Expenditure Framework
NEPA	National Education Policy Act
NEPI	National Education Policy Investigation
NGO	Non-governmental Organisation
NPDE	National Professional Diploma in Education
NQF	National Qualifications Framework
PRF	Policy Reserve Fund
SACE	South African Council of Educators
SAQA	South African Qualifications Authority
SASA	South African Schools Act
SCE	Senior Certificate Examination
SRN	School Register of Needs

The last decade of the 20th century in South Africa, as we noted in the Implementation Programme for Tirisano 2001/2, will always be associated with the country's first national democratic elections. In April 1994, centuries of struggle against colonial and apartheid rule culminated in a peaceful transition to democracy. Fear was replaced by hope, repression by democratic freedom, exclusion and division by the possibilities of inclusiveness and unity. A massive national project to take down the scaffolding of apartheid and replace it with a system that promised well being, respect, and expression for all South Africans began. The project challenged us to rethink every aspect of our nation, from concepts of democracy, justice and prosperity, to the Constitution and its expression in policies, law and management. It challenged us nationally and personally to reconstruct our basic understanding of what it means to be South African.

The profound changes taking place globally during this same period framed our national project. As a nation, we took a conscious decision to understand the emerging form and function of globalisation, and locate our country as a competitive economy within this context. At a time when many observers were proclaiming the end of the nation state, we embarked upon a project that strongly asserts the responsibility of the government, in partnership with civil society, to develop a framework and environment for the emergence of a new national character. At a time of 'global homogenisation' we committed ourselves to reclaiming our history and culture as the solid foundation for building a sense of meaning and vision for our people. We have sought to understand our specific geographic, economic, and cultural placement as a nation in Southern Africa, on the African continent, and within the 'south', in a global world where power and wealth are unequally distributed.

This report reviews and assesses educational transformation in South Africa since the 1994 elections. Educational reform has been a central part of the country's reconstruction and development project. It has been driven by two imperatives. First, the government had to overcome the devastation of apartheid, and provide a system of education that builds democracy, human dignity, equality and social justice. Second, a system of lifelong learning had to be established to enable South Africans to respond to the enormous economic and social challenges of the 21st century. This paper outlines the government's efforts to address and reconcile these two imperatives in the first seven years of post-apartheid rule.

Section 2 of the paper reviews the key shifts in policy and practice in the last seven years. The first period of education reform had as its central task replacing minority rule, balkanised, racially resourced organisations, institutions and governance, with a democratic order marked by non-racialism and non-sexism. We sought to establish visionary policies, new organisations, institutions, governance structures, and resourcing patterns, supported by a sound legislation. The second period deepened systemic reform through the *Tirisano* programme, where key policy goals, undergirded by sets of targeted and prioritised interventions, aimed for stronger accountability for performance and delivery across the system. The third phase, having met some of the key challenges of systemic reform, is now focused on creating greater equity and quality of learning conditions, and improving standards and learner outcomes. A key feature of this phase is the deepening reform of institutional processes in all sectors.

Section 3 highlights the key pillars of systemic transformation - the establishment of inter-governmental forums and co-operative governance, and resource allocation. Section 4 presents our progress in transforming learning and teaching, through principles of lifelong learning, the National Qualifications Framework (NQF), curriculum transformation, values in education and systemic quality.

Section 5 overviews innovation and change in our higher education system and reviews the policy goals we had outlined for ourselves in Education White Paper 3 and the legislative and regulatory framework we created through the Higher Education Act in the first period. It then looks at the subsequent period of developing the plans for higher education restructuring which are now outlined in the National Plan for Higher Education.

Section 6 outlines the newly launched Human Resource Development Strategy for South Africa, a collaborative effort between the Departments of Education and Labour.

Section 7 takes up issues of HIV/AIDS and education. South Africa's reconstruction and development greatly depends on our determination and creativity in addressing the HIV/AIDS pandemic. The challenges are daunting, and the government is committed to responding to them in holistic and effective ways. Our concern must be for South Africans who are infected and, at the same time, for all of those who are affected by the disease. Responding to the HIV/AIDS pandemic will continue to be a priority for government, and the education sector in particular.

Central to our framing of policies is our belief that high quality education cannot be built by government alone: it depends on creative and dynamic partnerships between the public sector, civil society and external partners. Section 8 reports on these evolving partnerships.

In the final section, the report reflects on the challenges ahead. While addressing the challenges and opportunities of the 21st century, we affirm our commitment to overcoming problems from our past – for many of the challenges facing South Africa in the future are rooted in our past. It is absolutely vital that we:

- Continue our efforts to build a public service characterised by quality, accountability, transparency and efficiency.
- Continue to fight racism, reclaim our identity and reduce inequalities.
- Maximise effectiveness in our investments in education, while remaining within budgetary affordability.
- Continue to seek innovative partnerships with civil society, and build a dedicated community of educators.
- Continue building the basic quality of general, further, and higher educational systems.

Within this complex of activity, the ultimate goals must remain in clear focus: ensuring that South Africans have the knowledge, values and skills required to facilitate social and personal development and economic growth, strengthening our democracy, our people and our nation. During the last seven years we took the first steps along this road, and we are now even more prepared than before to continue our march towards these goals.

Professor Kader Asmal

Minister of Education

1. Education change and transformation: key strategic shifts 1994-2001

The demise of apartheid in 1994 was heralded nationally and internationally as a victory for democracy and human rights. It offered unique opportunities – and responsibilities – to reconstruct a fragmented and deeply discriminatory education system, and establish a unified national system underpinned by democracy, equity, redress, transparency and participation. This social reconstruction had to be linked to economic development in the context of global economies and internationalisation. The dual goals are captured in the mission statement of the Department of Education:

"Our vision is of a South Africa in which all people have equal access to lifelong education and training opportunities which will contribute towards improving the quality of life and build a peaceful, prosperous and democratic society." (DoE 1996)

For us, therefore, education is pivotal to economic prosperity, assisting South Africans – personally and collectively – to escape the “poverty trap” characterising many of our communities. It has also to reach beyond economic goals, enabling South Africans to improve the quality of their lives and contribute to a peaceful, concerned and democratic nation. And, education is now a basic human right, established in the Constitution (Section 29, 1996): “everyone has the right to basic education, including adult basic education” without discrimination of any sort.

In the first phase of education reform, the government placed much emphasis on developing legal and regulatory policy frameworks to facilitate change, including the establishment of organisations and institutions that created the conditions and structures for effective transformative actions.

Transforming the system during the first period: creating the framework (1994 – 1997)

During this period, the Ministry of Education confronted three inter-related tasks: dismantling apartheid structures and creating a unified education system, creating a more equitable system of financing in a context of huge demands on our limited financial resources, and creating a policy framework which gave concrete expression to the values that underpinned the post-apartheid state.

1. Dismantling apartheid structures

The first five years of educational reconstruction focused on systemic reform geared to dismantling apartheid-created structures and procedures. Organisationally, this involved integrating formerly divided bureaucracies and transferring institutions, staff, offices, records, assets and more than ten million learners and teachers into a new system, without a breakdown in service delivery. The establishment of one national and nine provincial education departments, all new, was achieved mainly by new and old professional public servants, under the guidance of the Council of Education Ministers. The enormity of the task must not be

underestimated. Provincial departments of education are much larger and more complex than the national department, and faced acute problems in their inherited organisational structures. A unified system had to be created across diverse racial and economic conditions, and large geographic areas, in a short space of time. The new Ministry had to undo more than 40 years of formal apartheid education structures and procedures in a matter of a few years. This was an important pre-condition for policy development and new and more effective modes of educational provision.

The Ministry had also to pay important attention to its own nature and role. Organisational cultures from nineteen racially and ethnically divided departments had to be blended and reshaped, to define and meet common goals. New civil servants and those who had been part of the old order had to come together to mould a public service with a new working culture.

Systems and procedures also had to be changed to improve performance and outcomes, teamwork and customer-focused service in the spirit of Batho-Pele, a strategy aimed to improve human capacity at different systemic levels. The Ministry established the Education Departments Support Unit (EDSU) within the national department, following on the Ncholo Provincial Review report in 1996. The EDSU was funded by the Policy Reserve Fund (PRF), a conditional grant mechanism for strengthening management and enhancing quality in provincial systems. We initiated the District Development Project to develop new organisational models and to improve administrative and professional services at the district level, where the education system interfaces directly with learning sites. The Education Management and Governance Development (EMGD) programme created an inter-provincial network to effect staff and governance development programmes.

In these ways, the Ministry sought to create a quality, efficient, accountable and effective public service. This work is far from complete: it is not only about bringing people into a unified system, but also about the development of a shared vision, new values and attitudes, and the creation of capacity and an ethos that can drive achievement of organisational goals.

2. An equity-driven financing model of education

During this period, the Ministry established a more equitable basis for the financing of education (in particular, the extent and distribution of resources). In terms of the wider movement away from racial inequality, spending patterns were reoriented towards one budget, allocated on the basis of racial equity, and towards redress through funds made available from the Reconstruction and Development Programme. Primary school nutrition and school renovation projects were key programmes of the Reconstruction and Development Programme (1995-1997), reflecting the Ministry's resolve to target social development.

Significant and detailed attention was paid to strengthening and streamlining provincial budgeting processes, reforming the budget process through the Medium Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF) of 1997, and establishing budgets that involved greater participation and realism. Key aspects were the provision of greater technical support to provinces from the national sphere, and the establishment of a budget based on greater institutional co-ordination rather than legislative prescription. Addressing the deep-rooted systemic and structural inequalities inherited from apartheid, and establishing a coherent redress and poverty targeting strategy continue to be an enormous challenge. Significant progress has been made, details of which are provided in Section 3, on budgetary frameworks and redress.

3. A policy framework for educational transformation

The energies of the Ministry of Education during the first period of democratic rule were applied to creating a sound legislative policy framework for educational transformation. Key policies and legislation in this phase included:

- The SA Constitution (1996) required that education be transformed and democratised in accordance with the values of human dignity, equality, human rights and freedom, non-racism and non-sexism. It guarantees access to a basic education for all through the provision that 'everyone has the right to basic education, including adult basic education,' The fundamental policy framework of the Ministry of Education, set out in the Ministry's first White Paper, *Education and Training in a Democratic South Africa: First Steps to Develop a New System* (February, 1995). This document took as its starting point the 1994 education policy framework of the African National Congress. After extensive consultation, negotiation and revision, it was approved by the Cabinet and has served as the principal reference point for subsequent policy and legislative development.
- The National Education Policy Act (NEPA) (1996), designed to inscribe in law the policy, legislative and monitoring responsibilities of the Minister of Education and to formalise the relations between national and provincial authorities. It established the Council of Education Ministers (CEM) and Heads of Education Departments Committee (HEDCOM) as inter-governmental forums to collaborate in building the new system, and provides for the determination of national policies in general and further education and training for among others, curriculum, assessment, language policy and quality assurance. NEPA embodies the principle of co-operative governance, elaborated in Schedule Three of the Constitution.
- The South African Schools Act (SASA) (1996), to promote access, quality and democratic governance in the schooling system. It ensures that all learners have the right of access to quality education without discrimination, and makes schooling compulsory for children aged 7 to 14. It provides for two types of schools – independent schools and public schools. The Act's provision for democratic school governance through school governing bodies is now in place in public schools countrywide. The school funding norms outlined in SASA prioritise redress and target poverty in funding allocations to the public schooling system.
- The Further Education and Training Act (1998), Education White Paper 4 on Further Education and Training (1998) and the National Strategy for Further Education and Training (1999-2001), which provides the basis for developing a nationally co-ordinated further education and training system, comprising of the senior secondary component of schooling and technical colleges. It requires that further education and training institutions, created in terms of the new legislation, develop institutional plans, and provides for programmes-based funding and a national curriculum for learning and teaching.
- The Higher Education Act (1997), which makes provision for a unified and nationally planned system of higher education and creates a statutory Council on Higher Education (CHE) which provides advice to the Minister and is responsible for quality assurance and promotion. The Higher Education Act and Education White Paper 3 on Higher Education (1999) formed the basis for the transformation of the higher education sector through an institutional planning and budgeting framework. This culminated in the National Plan for Higher Education in 2001.
- A range of legislation, including the Employment of Educators Act (1998), to regulate the professional, moral and ethical responsibilities and competencies of teachers. The historically divided teaching force is now governed by one Act of Parliament and one professional council – the South African Council of Educators (SACE).
- The Adult Basic Education and Training Act (2000), which provides for the establishment of public and private adult learning centres, funding for ABET provisioning, the governance of public centres, and quality assurance mechanisms for the sector.

- The South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) Act (1995) that provides for the creation of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF), which establishes the scaffolding of a national learning system that integrates education and training at all levels (see Appendix). The NQF was an essential expression and guarantor of a national learning system where education and training are equally important and complementary facets of human competence. The joint launch on 23 April, 2001, by the Minister of Labour and the Minister of Education of the Human Resource Development Strategy reinforces the resolve to establish an integrated education, training and development strategy that will harness the potential of our young and adult learners.
- Curriculum 2005 (C2005), which envisaged for general education a move away from a racist, apartheid, rote learning model of learning and teaching to a liberating, nation-building and learner centred outcomes-based one. In line with training strategies, the re-formulation is intended to allow greater mobility between different levels and institutional sites, and the integration of knowledge and skills through "learning pathways". Its assessment, qualifications, competency, and skills-based framework encourages the development of curriculum models aligned to the NQF in theory and practice.

Policy and legislation acted as levers for fundamental change in the first three years, as the indicators below illustrate:

- Access to primary and secondary schooling improved significantly, with near universal enrolment in primary schooling and 86% enrolment in secondary schooling by 1998. The net enrolment in secondary schools continues to be a concern.
- There was a considerable improvement in the qualifications of educators, with the proportion of under-qualified educators reduced from 36% in 1994 to 26% in 1998.
- Educators have been redistributed, through redeployment and post provisioning strategies, to areas of greatest need. This has led to vast improvements in establishing more equitable learner:educator ratios, from an average of 47:1 in 1994 to 35:1 in 2000.
- Per capita expenditure on learners showed significant convergence across provinces, and an overall increase from R2 222 in 1994 to R3 253 in 2000.
- Improvements in inter-provincial equity have been achieved utilising the inter-governmental fiscal framework and the Equitable Shares Formula. Expenditure in the Eastern Cape and Northern Province – two of the poorest provinces – improved in 1997/98 by 49% and 36.9% respectively.
- Through the Reconstruction and Development Programme, R1.4 billion was allocated for school construction and maintenance between 1995-1997. Much progress was made in school electrification, and increased water supply to schools.

The first five years of democratic government witnessed significant reform in education – establishing democratic governance and democratising relations within and outside of the state, establishing sound systems at national and provincial levels to manage reform, review and strengthen resource allocation on the basis of redress and equity, take the discourse of education policy and reform into the public arena for debate and discussion, and transform learning by offering a curriculum that would shape future possibilities for education and training for the nation.

At the same time, important challenges were featuring on the agenda about the appropriate level for the financing of education, the impact of the macro-economic and fiscal policy on educational provision, the extent of state intervention required in educational change, the veracity of the vision of education and

training offered through the NQF and Curriculum 2005, and the capacity for implementation throughout the system.

Transforming the system during the second period (1998-2000): from frameworks to action

By 1999, systemic transformation in terms of policy was in place, but the challenges of implementation remained, as mandated policy by itself does not lead to institutional change. With new systems of educational administration and governance largely established, we turned attention to implementation and delivery. Several related elements needed to be examined:

- The social mandate of schooling – providing an education that contributed to learners’ personal and social development – and the need to strengthen community and civil society participation in schooling were pressing issues. Racism, violence and other manifestations of anti-social values were deeply rooted in our history and would not diminish without direct attention.
- A high turnover of personnel, particularly senior leadership, carried severe consequences. Equally pertinent were the highly variable capacities of individuals and teams at all levels of the system. The problem presented itself in two forms – the need for skilled and capable personnel, and the entrenched bureaucratic and hierarchical management practices inherited from apartheid traditions. These continue to be critical challenges.
- Improvements in the material conditions of education and the quality of education practice required serious attention. Large pockets of the education system continued to be non-functional. International experience indicates that systemic functionality is critical for implementation, and even then major pedagogical changes and improvements in a national system may take a decade or more to institutionalise. A clearly defined yet flexible implementation strategy was required.
- Disparity in incomes and high poverty levels continued to frame the reform agenda. The slowdown in the South African economy during the mid-1990s led to downward adjustments in expected growth. The lower growth rate projected by the November 1998 Medium Term Budget Policy Statement was largely a consequence of the global financial crisis, a slowdown in world trade, and financial disinvestment from emerging markets. Lower growth limits the availability of funds for social spending. One of the most complex challenges for South Africa as an emerging market negotiating the global economy continues to be the difficulty of the market to create employment, even in the context of an investor-friendly climate. Unemployment rates are highest amongst young people, with youth unemployment estimated at 53.9%. Literacy and education levels remain high. The 1996 Census reveals that 19.3% of South Africans aged 20 years or more have no formal education and only 24% have some, or have completed primary education. This scenario, if allowed to perpetuate itself, makes it difficult to avoid the social alienation of youth.

The goals of the next phase of education reforms were set on 25 June 1999 by President Mbeki in his State of the Nation Address to Parliament. He noted the increasing urgency to produce an educated and skilled population. Describing education and training as the “decisive drivers” in our efforts to build a winning nation, he also noted that it was necessary to mobilise civil society, and parents in particular. The President’s emphasis on implementation and service delivery is the overriding theme for the government for the next five years, and one that the Education Ministry is giving priority.

In a sober assessment in 1999, the Ministry reported that, while the systemic changes brought about in the first five years provide a progressive and durable basis for improvements in the quality of learning, transformed learning opportunities were not yet accessible to the majority of poor people. “Inequality is still

writ large in the education system, and too many families are on the receiving end of an unacceptably low standard of education delivery” (Status Report, 1999). The Ministry responded with an intensive period of consultation and review of the state of the education system, and reported:

“The public believes that we have a crisis on our hands. Our people have rights to education that the state is not upholding. They have put their confidence in the democratic process, and returned their government with an overwhelming mandate. After five years of democratic reconstruction and development, the people are entitled to a better education service and they must have it.” (Minister Asmal, August 1999).

The Minister acknowledged that South Africa had committed leaders and excellent policies and laws for the 21st century. At the same time, large parts of the system were seriously dysfunctional, rampant inequality existed, teacher morale was low, governance and management were yet to strengthen, and quality and learning outcomes were poor.

Meeting the challenge through working together: *Tirisano*

Against this backdrop, Minister Asmal outlined his Call to Action in July 1999. This was operationalised in January 2000 in a plan known as *Tirisano* – a Sotho word meaning ‘working together.’ The choice of this word reflects the contention that an education system of the 21st century cannot be built by a small group of people, or even by the government. It calls for a massive social mobilisation of parents, learners, educators, community leaders, NGOs, the private sector and the international community, motivated by a shared vision.

Tirisano identifies nine strategic priorities as the basic building blocks to enable the development of a fully functioning education and training system that will “drive South Africa into the 21st century to contribute to the health and prosperity of the nation”. The nine priorities are outlined in Box 1, below.

Box 1: The Nine Priorities of *Tirisano*

1. We must make our provincial systems work by making co-operative government work.
2. We must break the back of illiteracy among adults and youths in five years.
3. Schools must become centres of community life.
4. We must end conditions of physical degradation in South African schools.
5. We must develop the professional quality of our teaching force.
6. We must ensure the success of active learning through outcomes-based education.
7. We must create a vibrant further education and training system to equip youth and adults to meet the social and economic needs of the 21st century.
8. We must implement a rational, seamless higher education system that grasps the intellectual

and professional challenges facing South Africans in the 21st century.

9. We must deal urgently and purposefully with the HIV/AIDS emergency in and through the education and training system.

The nine priorities are divided into five programme areas:

- HIV/AIDS;
- school effectiveness and teacher professionalism;
- the fight against illiteracy;
- further education and training and higher education; and
- organisational effectiveness of national and provincial systems.

Each of these core areas has a set of projects, clearly identified priorities, targets, performance indicators and outcomes. Each area is led by a "champion" from the national department. Three gaps existed in the initial plan: gender equity, early childhood development, and education for learners with special needs. Initiatives are now underway in each of these areas. They include the White Paper on Early Childhood Development, the Special Needs Education White Paper, and the Platform For Action on Gender Equity in Education. The implementation plan will be adjusted to accommodate plans and priorities emerging from these processes.

The second stage of *Tirisano* places greater emphasis on clearly defined delivery strategies. We are moving towards greater co-ordination through more focused policy goals, systemic reform and better alignment of national and provincial systems. Two emphases stand out. The plan prioritises the establishment and strengthening of structures, building capacity, filling vacant positions, and improving information-gathering systems and analysis. And it sets in place mechanisms for measuring, appraising, evaluating and monitoring reform. The *Tirisano* strategy is in line with global shifts in school and educational reform which focus on outcomes and outputs, accountability, efficiency and performance.

Particular strategies related to *Tirisano* include:

- Public sector reforms through the Batho-Pele strategy aimed to improve service delivery and accountability through the establishment of clear targets and performance indicators.
- Reforms in the budget process and the public financial management framework through multi-year budgeting and planning, in line with the Medium Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF). The goal is to link plans, priorities, budgets and implementation targets with clear performance indicators against which to monitor achievements.

Where are we now? Deepening the *Tirisano (Year 2)* strategy: from action to institutionalisation

Through *Tirisano*, we have achieved greater stability in the system, as evidenced by increased basic school functionality, the ability of provincial education systems to better manage both human resources and financial policy, and a clearer focus on delivery and implementation. Much of the specific *Tirisano* 2000 targeting is now complete. In 2001, we are shifting our attention from basic functionality of the system to institutional renewal and enablement, focused on teaching, learning and whole school development. These shifts occur in the context of the government's overall strategy shift to targeted, integrated social service delivery and clear prioritisation. This includes targeting increased participation rates in further and higher education, maths, science and technology, and targeting defined communities as part of a government-wide programme in defined rural and urban development nodes.

Analysis of achievements over the last few years reveals the need for closer attention to communities in particular need of development. In keeping with President Mbeki's "Unity in Action for Change" call, our programmes must target the poorest of the poor and focus on nodal development areas. Poverty targeting in education resource allocation, as part of the school funding norms, will continue to be significant. The second year of *Tirisano* focuses on institutional and spatial targeting aimed at integrating programmes in HIV/AIDS; school maintenance and renewal; school safety; maths, science and technology; matric improvement for those who achieved 0-30% in the Senior Certificate examination in 2000; school effectiveness; values in education; provision of Learning Support Materials; and the South African History Project.

Meanwhile, system-level priorities continue:

- To establish the assessment and administrative systems for the new general education and training certificate at the end of general education (Grade 9).
- To lay the basis for a national early childhood development programme, with emphasis on the reception year.
- To implement the Higher Education Plan.
- To establish a new institutional landscape for Further Education and Training, and
- To implement the Human Resources Strategy.

These projects have already gained support through HEDCOM and the CEM, and business plans have not been completed. Other key areas that continue to receive priority attention are the national literacy initiative and upgrading teachers' qualifications.

Our education reconstruction project is far from complete. Of continuing concern are the serious pressures on non-personnel expenditure items in provincial budgets, limitations of individual and institutional capacity (including the ability of districts to perform their vital functions of administrative and professional support), flow-through rates in secondary schooling, the quality of learning, and equity of learning conditions. Further, evidence is mixed - in South Africa or internationally - about what specific inputs are required for quality outcomes in education. Through *Tirisano*, however, we have clearly established our own priorities.

The national project of education transformation is multi-faceted and complex - requiring systemic transformation at all levels and in all sectors. It takes account of widely disparate conditions, characterised by differing degrees of capacity, poverty, inequality and privilege. It must go beyond mechanisms of delivery, seeking to mobilise educators, young people and communities to celebrate learning: as a celebration of human nature and as a means to personal and social development, employment, and opportunities for a better quality life.

2. Innovation and change in education: laying the foundation of the post-apartheid education and training system

The transformation of teaching and learning across the nation requires an appropriate infrastructure. This section discusses two pillars of the system – establishing and strengthening of inter-governmental relations, and budgetary processes. These lie at the heart of equity, participation, and the *Tirisano* programme, and are important expressions of our collective commitment to education change.

2.1 Establishing the new inter-governmental systems

Legal Framework

The Constitution (1996) provided the framework for a unitary system of education, managed by the national Department of Education and nine provincial departments. (The exception is higher education, where the national department has sole responsibility.) The National Education Policy Act (1996) gives the Minister of Education the power to determine national norms and standards for educational planning, provision, governance, monitoring and evaluation. The principle of democratic decision-making must be exercised within the context of the overall policy goals. Consequently, provincial powers and those devolved by the provinces to regions, district and educational institutions must align with the goals of equity, redress, quality and democracy. In determining policy, the Minister must take into account the competence of provincial legislatures, and the relevant provisions of any provincial law relating to education.

The principle of co-operative governance (the term used in the Constitution) underpins provisions in education. Co-operative governance is a South African phenomenon arising from our unique political settlement translated into the Constitution. Within an agreed national framework, provinces are given a significant degree of autonomy in educational provision. The establishment of decentralised governance at the provincial level has been one of the most complex areas of education transformation. Of particular concern has been the constrained ability of provinces to apply national norms based on principles of equity and redress because of organisational, financial and service delivery limitations. Since 1997 there have been calls – not only in education but in all sectors – for national government to intervene in order to safeguard the overall project of transformation. From mid-1998, the national Department of Education indicated that it would actively intervene to safeguard key transformation initiatives, such as Curriculum 2005 and the provision of learning support materials. Moreover, it would review mechanisms to strengthen inter-governmental relations.

The Minister's statement of July 1999 on co-operative governance, which emphasised a greater degree of co-ordination and direction by the national sphere, was welcomed. It gives support for systemic reform through:

- The provision of technical support.

- Central funding for specific projects.
- Collaboration regarding provincial budgeting.
- Deployment of national officials for the purpose of monitoring; and
- Support in provinces (particularly to review the implementation of national policies and legislation), and greater accountability through regular reporting.

A key issue has been the establishment of appropriate capacity to “manage” the education system. The Provincial Review Report (1996) and an Education Sector Review (1998) evaluated educational administrative structures and, while recognising that considerable progress had been made since 1994, identified serious managerial dysfunctions, poor performance and systemic inefficiencies. Mindful of the need to develop greater capacity to realise the goal of co-operative governance, and in view of the *Tirisano* programme, from October 2000 greater emphasis has been placed on:

- Immediate appointments of heads of provincial departments, where vacancies arise, given the importance of their leadership.
- Reviewing and overhauling the operation of the CEM.
- Intensifying the dialogue with the Ministry of Finance with respect to adequacy of management of provincial education budgets, in order to improve resource flows to essential areas of service provision; and
- Opening dialogue with development agencies to achieve additional and higher quality technical support for key national and provincial projects.

Better information flow between the national and provincial departments, and regular monitoring and evaluation of provincial activities occurs through a quarterly report to the President. Capacity-building for better information use and analysis is supported through a grant from the European Union.

The creation of a functional link between national norms and standards, on the one hand, and implementation (delivery) on the other is essential. Through experience, a greater maturity is developing in the relationships between institutions, the national and provincial legislatures, the Members of the Provincial Executive Councils responsible for education and the national and provincial education departments. Of particular importance is the re-enforcement of the role in 2000/2001 of the CEM, together with the Minister and Deputy Minister of Education, to provide critical political leadership and direction, and the HEDCOM to provide significant legislative and policy support to the Department and Ministry.

Examples of strengthening inter-governmental co-operation in the last three years include the strengthened administration of the senior certificate examination and the implementation of matric improvement programmes, the improved levels of procurement and delivery of learning support materials, and the development of Education Management Information Systems (EMIS). Capacity building for provincial departments to manage and utilise data at a provincial level continues. Provinces have taken ownership of the School Register of Needs database and are using it for decentralised project planning. And, a more robust EMIS at national and provincial levels is providing indicators to evaluate the extent to which equity and redress targets are being achieved.

Co-operative governance and stakeholder participation

One of the key commitments of the National Education Policy Act (1996) is the participation of stakeholders in policy development. The formulation of policies since 1994 has created structures and mechanisms for active stakeholder participation. For example, the National Commission on Higher Education (NCHE) and the Education Labour Relations Council (ELRC) demonstrate ways in which stakeholders can dialogue in developing policies. The creation of expert advisory bodies, such as the Council on Higher Education (CHE) and the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) are another.

At the institutional level, policy frameworks have been established for the creation of participatory structures in, for example, higher education institutions (institutional forums to facilitate the creation of legitimate and representative governing councils) and schools (school governing bodies). Such bodies have now been democratically established.

We are mindful of the problems of capacity, genuine representation and effectiveness in stakeholder participation. Intensified and extensive training are necessary (which in turn require resources and support), as is time. One concern is the shortage of strong social movements in communities and civil society which could strengthen participation in governance. The *Tirisano* call for schools to be centres of community life is one response to this concern. More careful audits of what is occurring, and the effectiveness of co-operative governance in practice, will be undertaken.

2.2 Achieving equity in education provision

Education is one of the most significant long-term investments a country can make. It lays the foundation for a higher quality of life, greater employment opportunities and a better-skilled workforce. There has been a significant increase in education expenditure under the post-apartheid democratic government, from R31.8 billion in 1994 to R51.1 billion in 2000. At almost 6 percent of GDP, South Africa has one of the highest rates of government investment in education in the world. Yet education outcomes continue to lag behind those of other middle-income countries, reminding us of the enduring legacy of an apartheid education policy, and the need to strengthen and widen our efforts to eliminate it.

Achieving equity objectives in education provision through restructuring education expenditure has been one of the main achievements of the post-apartheid period. The most direct implication of our particular constitutional dispensation and education legislation is the decisive thrust to greater equity in all aspects of learning provision. In particular, the focus has been on achieving racial and gender equity in spending patterns, inter- and intra-provincial equity and increasing equity of access for those who are out of the formal education system.

The Medium Term Expenditure Framework

This section examines the financing processes described in the Medium Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF). The MTEF is a key policy framework which ensures an equitable and planned distribution of expenditure, and outlines specific mechanisms for equity and redress. The imperatives for the post-apartheid budgetary process to reach equity targets cannot be understated, as is the complexity of achieving them. At the same time, our experience has shown starkly the possibilities and limits of fiscal affordability. Specific constraints in the 1996-1998 period included the increase in the budget deficit (from 3.2% of GDP in 1980 to 5.5% in 1996), the moderate economic growth in the context of global and local economic slowdown (reducing funds for social sector spending), and the particular form of South African constitutional arrangements (which devolve significant executive authority to provinces for decision-making in expenditure). Improved fiscal management, combined with our own fiscal expenditure policy in education, have released resources for expanding social expenditure in the current period.

In the 1995-1997 period, the Minister of Education had responsibility for provincial budgetary allocations. As a result of a strong national equity programme, inter-provincial inequity was reduced by almost 60% during this period. In 1997/8, provincial governments were allocated an "equitable share" of national revenue as a block grant and, for the first time, were responsible for dividing their own budgets among their line function departments. During this transition period, we were faced with many challenges that suggest that budgets were not credible and effective expenditure management difficult. One of the most dramatic consequences of this situation was considerable over-expenditure by provincial education, health and social welfare departments. In education, in addition, there was a net increase in pupil enrolment, especially in the junior primary phase. The national and provincial treasuries, and the Department in the case of education, responded by assisting with the development of more credible budgets and enforcing tight controls to bring actual expenditure in line with a more budgeted expenditure.

In 1997 the Ministry of Finance introduced the MTEF as part of government's budget policy process. The main features of the MTEF are:

- Three-year forward estimates of expenditure.
- A focus on outputs and outcomes of government spending.
- A co-operative approach to expenditure analysis and planning.
- More detailed budget information to promote understanding and debate; and
- Political ownership of budget priorities and spending plans.

In 1997 and 1998, an Education Sectoral MTEF Review Team, representing national and provincial finance and education departments, undertook significant analyses of provincial education spending patterns and policy priorities. Their report included an analysis of cost drivers, a computer model of education spending, and strong recommendations to curb enrolment bloating and to control personnel costs through improved management practices. There was a clear message that no qualitative improvement in education could be expected unless efficiency savings were made and directed to this end. The Review Team also recommended that the ratio of personnel to non-personnel expenditure be reduced to 80:20 in the long term.

The national and provincial education departments have acted decisively to improve the credibility of budgets and the quality of spending. In 1998, the Minister published an admissions policy, age-grade norms,

and an assessment policy, all of which were aimed at reducing out-of-age enrolment and excessive repetition. Already these have led to better flow-through rates and improved system efficiency, and have released much-needed resources for redistribution to critical areas, such as quality improvement. The question of shifting funding to non-personnel functions has been discussed with teacher unions as part of a consultation process on the education budget, and agreement has been reached on a norm.

The majority of provinces were able to reflect positive changes in their 1999/2000 budgets, but the budgets of the poorest and most vulnerable provinces exhibit improving but still inadequate allocations for non-personnel functions. In particular, allocations for learning support materials and school stationery were inadequate, especially given the requirements of the new curriculum. The same goes for new school construction and other capital works, particularly in poor rural provinces with massive inherited backlogs. This matter has received serious consideration, and an additional R1.5 billion will be allocated through the government allocation on infrastructural development. The allocations for schools will be for the purposes of school and classroom development, and maintenance and upgrading of schools. This will contribute significantly to the creation of an enabling environment for quality learning conditions across the public school sector. An amount in excess of R1 billion per year over three years has also been allocated by provincial departments for the provision, development and delivery of learning support materials, beginning with the 2002 school year.

Equity and redress

In order to effect equity and redress, necessary in a public education sector characterised by huge inequalities and disparities, careful consideration was given to policy options. Following on international experience, we pursued a mix of policy options. They included strategies to distribute all personnel equally while reducing personnel costs in overall expenditure, a re-prioritisation in the budget, the freeing of additional resources through efficiency gains, and the establishment of conditional grant funding through the national Department of Education to safeguard the application of national norms and key transformation initiatives such as curriculum implementation, district development and school management and quality assurance.

Equitable Shares Formula

The government has moved swiftly to improve equity in education spending, particularly through two mechanisms. The first was the introduction of an equitable shares formula. This formula is used to allocate provincial revenue levels for each province from the provincial share of national revenue. It reflects several provincial variables including the size of the school-age population and the number of learners enrolled in public ordinary schools, the distribution of capital needs in education and hospital facilities, the size of the rural population in each province, and the size of the target population for social security grants weighted by a poverty index. Over the last year, the equitable shares formula has been adjusted to reflect historically accumulated backlogs more accurately. Moves toward equity have been remarkable, with the budget of the most rural provinces increasing by up to 30%. In 1995, inter-provincial inequity stood at 34%; by 2000/2001, it had been reduced to 14%. This inter-provincial shift in revenue has also translated into a more equitable financial allocation at the school level, with the poorest schools benefiting. The Department, the National Treasury and the Financial and Fiscal Commission, a constitutional body responsible for making recommendations to inform the inter-governmental process, will continue to explore ways of effecting greater poverty targeting of education funding.

National Norms and Standards for School Funding

The second mechanism to achieve redress through distribution of the education budget is articulated in the National Norms and Standards for School Funding. This policy provides a framework for allocating non-personnel recurrent costs on the basis of need. Each provincial education department is required to produce a "resource targeting list" informed by physical conditions, available facilities, the degree of crowding of the school, educator:learner ratios, the availability of basic services, and the relative poverty of the community around the school. The main effect of the revised formula is that the poorest 40% of schools receive 60% of the provincial schooling non-personnel budget allocation, and the least poor 20% receive 5% of the resources. The main aim of the norms and standards is to redistribute non-personnel expenditure to the neediest learners. A basic package of R100 per learner is to be allocated to learning support materials by provinces.

Other equity mechanisms

A key driver of equity and redress has been to equalise educator:learner ratios. Inequitable ratios are addressed through the national norms for the provisioning of educator posts to schools. Within these norms, each province sets its own targets, guided by a national post-provisioning model. A significant achievement since 1994 has been a convergence of learner:educator ratios to an average of 34:1, and a dramatic increase in the number of educators in formerly disadvantaged areas.

While shifts towards the equalisation of educator:learner ratios have been important steps for redress, they had initially led to increases in personnel expenditure in many provinces, 'crowding out' non-personnel expenditure on items such as stationery, textbooks, infrastructure upgrades, and educator support and training. Personnel expenditure increased to a high of 91.2% in 1998/9. Since then, and as a result of improved financial management, it has stabilised and is beginning to decline. The education sector aims to reduce personnel costs to 85 percent of total expenditure over the medium term. As the ratio of personnel to non-personnel expenditure begins to decrease, more resources can be devoted to these complementary inputs. Personnel reductions saved about R79 million in 1999/2000, freeing resources to address classroom backlogs, increase expenditure on school maintenance and sanitation, improve teacher support systems, and procure new learner support materials.

The outcome of the measures introduced to stop the spiralling over-expenditure of 1997-99, improved financial planning and management and greater financial accountability, now required in terms of the Public Finance Management Act, have enabled us to address social expenditure concerns that could not be given priority in the early period. These include the following commitments over the next three years: in excess of R1 billion per year to learning support materials, beginning with the 2002 school year; a conditional grant of R280 million per year in support of improving financial management and education quality; and, an estimated additional R150 million per year for HIV/AIDS, implementing the pre-school Reception Year, beginning in the urban and rural nodal development points, adult literacy and skills development and innovation in school design and building.

A significant redress mechanism in higher education has been the expansion of access for students from poor families through the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS). NSFAS reached 81 609 students in 2000, up from 72 788 in 1996. The total value of awards over this period increased from R333 million to

R551 million, while the total awards made, including 2001 will exceed R2 billion. When combined with donor contributions, by the end of 2001, total awards made through NSFAS would exceed R2.8 billion.

As noted above, an Education Policy Reserve Fund (PRF), established in 1998/9, provides conditional grants for improved financial management and education quality in provincial education systems. It continues to assist the Education Departments Support Unit (financial management and administrative capacity building), Education Management Development (including school governing body training and development), teacher development for Curriculum 2005, the Culture of Learning, Teaching and Service (COLTS) programme, and the integrated District Development Project. This conditional grant allows the national department to provide smaller grants to priority areas, encouraging innovation with possibilities of replication on a larger scale.

The funding mechanisms we have now instituted enable better planning through joint activity of national and provincial structures, and institutional co-ordination rather than legislative prescription. Monitoring of provincial budgetary practices is taking place and has resulted in better and more equitable expenditure patterns. Inter-provincial expenditure shifts are reflected in better teacher distribution, converging per capita expenditure and more equitable educator:learner ratios.

Intra-provincial inequalities remain our challenge. Even in 1996, before inter-provincial inequality was reduced, intra-provincial inequality was up to three times higher than inter-provincial inequality. Intra-provincial inequality is most evident in the inability of many disadvantaged schools to improve education outputs and outcomes. Key contributory factors are teacher quality, management capacity, income levels of parents and the literacy and learning levels amongst parents. Poorer provinces continue to be less efficient, with slower learner progression and higher failure and repeater rates. Thus, while provinces have moved to greater per capita equity, attention still has to be focused on equalisation of education inputs and good quality education to the poor. Redistribution of teacher quality has also proved complex, highlighting the limits of personnel redeployment strategies. The establishment of a preferential weighting for subjects such as maths and science will, in part, address this issue. A coherent and systemic teacher development strategy (in-service and pre-service training) is a priority. Significant strides have been made, with approximately 10,000 under-qualified teachers earmarked for annual upgrading through the National Professional Diploma in Education, and the upgrading of 900 maths and science teachers (Grades 4–6) in 2001 and a further 1 800 in 2003 (Grades 4-9).

Inequality in education, and more generally, continues to be one of the most vexing issues for the Education Ministry. Income inequality is simultaneously an object of equity strategies and a factor that mediates these strategies. Wealthier parents are able to maintain relative privilege in schools through school fees; poorer parents cannot. It is necessary to work on many fronts at once: the distribution of managerial and teaching skills, the distribution of resources across and within provinces, and integrated approaches to poverty-fighting and growth. Various programmes are underway through *Tirisano* to support these.

2.3 Systemic inequities

The School Register of Needs (SRN) provides an important benchmark for addressing historical inequities. More than three years after the dismantling of apartheid, the SRN Survey, completed for us by the Human Sciences Research Council in 1997, showed the depth of the inequities in stark terms. While a small proportion of schools historically serving white learners were well-resourced – with libraries, computer centres, and scientific laboratories – the vast majority of children continued to be educated in conditions of

extreme neglect. In 1996, one in four schools had no water within walking distance, and nearly one in ten had to get their water from dams and rivers. Over half (57%) did not have electricity. Over half (52%) had pit latrines for toilets, and 13% had no ablution facilities at all. There was no learning equipment in 73% of schools, and 69% had no learning materials. Nationally, 57 499 classrooms were needed. The level of library provisioning was appalling, with 72% of schools having no library collection. Approximately half of the schools in the most rural provinces had no sports facilities.

Considerable progress has been made since 1994 in decreasing these inequities. The School Register of Needs in 2000 reported less overcrowding in institutions overall, with a decline in the average number of learners to a classroom from 43 (in 1996) to 35 (in 2000). Except for Mpumalanga, learner:classroom ratios have also decreased. Classroom shortages decreased from 49% (1996) to 40% (2000). In 1996, 40% of all schools nation-wide had no access to water, and in 2000, this was reduced to 34%. There is a 68% improvement in the provision of sanitation, although 16.6% of learners continue to be without toilet facilities. Fifty-nine percent of schools had no telephones in 1996, reduced to 34% in 2000. On the other hand, the biggest decline has been in the number of schools in excellent and good condition, indicating that investments in infrastructure have not been adequately maintained. The number of buildings in good condition has declined from 9 000 to 4 000, with at least 12 000 buildings in need of repair. Government's commitment of an additional R1.5 billion over three years for infra-structural development in key rural and urban nodal points will significantly affect the physical provisioning of schooling.

We continue to have a vastly differentiated public schooling system in South Africa, with highly inequitable learning conditions continuing to exist within our provincial systems. The Department is currently exploring the minimum learning conditions necessary for every learning site, especially in terms of specific physical and resource conditions, to maintain system functionality. While we can report on the significant progress in achieving equity in terms of resourcing for education, the scale and the depth of the problem will require even more investment of effort and a pro-active targeting of resource provision. There is much to be done.

3. Innovation and change in education: transforming learning and teaching

3.1 Lifelong learning

The pace of change in cities and villages around the world continues to accelerate as a result of globalisation and technological innovation. The changes are dramatically altering the nature and management of work, social structures, values and cultures. Lifelong learning, for all citizens, becomes imperative. It is crucial additionally in South Africa because so many of our people, young and old, were so long denied access to quality education and employment. The White Paper on Education and Training (DoE, 1995: 21) argues:

The overarching goal of policy must be to enable all individuals to value, have access to, and succeed in lifelong education and training of good quality... The Constitution guarantees equal access to basic education for all... It must provide an increasing range of learning possibilities, offering learners greater flexibility in choosing what, where, when, how and at what pace they learn.

There must be special emphasis on the redress of educational inequalities among those sections of our people who have suffered particular disadvantages, or who are especially vulnerable...

In formulating education policies, we envisaged a seamless system, encompassing early childhood development (ECD), general education and training (GET), adult education and training (ABET), further education and training (FET), and higher education (HE). We sought this integration through a National Qualifications Framework (NQF). In October 1995, the South African Qualifications Authority Act was passed into law. The South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA), responsible for overseeing the establishment of the NQF, was established in 1996.

The NQF is bold in its vision and ambitious in scope. It seeks to bring together education and training, skills development and the needs of a critical democracy, personal, social and economic development. Historically, it drew from two significant movements: the People's Education Movement, with a focus on transforming general education, and the Congress of South African Trade Unions focusing on the reform of workplace and vocational education and training. In fact these two traditions (general education and vocational education) do not come together easily. They have separate histories, different ways of thinking about education, and different approaches to curriculum structures and management. Nevertheless, we succeeded in creating a framework for an integrated system of education and training.

The NQF provides for flexibility of delivery, portability of credentials and recognition of prior learning by promoting modular approaches, expressed through 'unit standards' and registered programmes. To support integration of the various components into a single system, all components, from Early Childhood Development to Higher Education, including workplace and vocational education, employ outcomes-based approaches. A single set of 'critical and developmental outcomes' overarches all programme development. The critical outcomes emphasise the competencies necessary to a vibrant democracy and to economic development, including problem solving, critical thinking, working in teams, communicating, and using science and technology. Curriculum design, in all unit standards and in all learning programmes, must express the critical outcomes, and articulate them with specific outcomes, knowledge and skills in defined 'fields of learning' or 'learning areas'.

The role of SAQA is to establish standards, quality assurance systems, and management information systems to support the NQF. This includes ensuring that standards and qualifications registered on the NQF are internationally comparable and consistent across a range of providers.

There are many complexities in the NQF approach, as a single national framework for all educational programmes, at all levels of education. Too great an emphasis on pre-set standards and specified outcomes runs a risk of blocking innovation and localisation, and compromising the qualitative dimensions of learning and classroom processes that are inherent in inputs, but not easily captured in outcomes. Administratively, the registration of standards and providers nationally, the processes of appraisal and quality assurance, and the management of information are immense tasks. The bureaucratic requirements of documentation and registration (as they exist within and between institutions and SAQA) run the risk of becoming ends in themselves, masking their service functions and creating a monolith with enormous inertia. In addition, we run the risk of creating structures that are cumbersome to operate efficiently and lacking in capacity. Ultimately, the quality of the system depends not only on vision and structural aspects, such as the defined outcomes, standards, linkages and continuities, but on the creativity of curriculum designers and educators in their institutions, as they develop and present learning programmes to reach the set standards. Placing some curriculum and assessment responsibilities with teachers seeks to take advantage of educator's direct knowledge of their learners, communities and industry, and the local context, but according to the central

framework and standards. Educators must be helped to understand and develop their roles in curriculum and teaching, and systems of accountability have to be in place at all levels of the system. The outcomes-based approach makes new demands of educators and institutions; they may be experienced in specific fields, but short of capacity and technical skills in curriculum and teaching of this kind. Through the government's awareness of these dangers, and in the light of our experiences and progress over the last five years, we are confident we can guide the continued development of a flexible, imaginative and effective system of lifelong learning.

The South African education system accommodates more than 12.3 million learners (50.5% female), 300 000 university students (54.6% female), and 190 000 technikon students (45.5% female). The system encompasses 29 386 primary and secondary schools, 375 000 educators, 5 000 inspectors and subject advisers, and 68 000 officials, managers and support personnel (DoE: 2000b: 157-161). There are 156 technical colleges accommodating 125 000 students in the FET sector.

Formal education is categorised into three levels. The General Education and Training (GET) band incorporates a reception year and learners up to Grade 9, as well as an equivalent adult basic education qualification. The Further Education and Training (FET) band comprises Grades 10-12 in school education, out-of-school youth and adult learners. Technical, youth and community colleges, as well as a range of other industry-based and non-formal providers, also fall into the FET band. The Higher Education (HE) band incorporates a range of national diplomas and certificates up to and including postdoctoral degrees. These levels are integrated within a National Qualifications Framework (NQF) provided for by the South African Qualification Authority Act (RSA, 1996b), and below.

Figure 1: National Qualifications Framework

National Qualifications Framework Structure			
NQF Level	Bands	Types of Qualifications and Certificates	
8	Higher Education and Training Band	• Doctorates, further research degrees	
7		• Higher Degrees, professional qualifications	
6		• First Degrees, Higher Diplomas	
5		• Diplomas, Occupational Certificates	
4	Further Education and Training Band	• School/College/Training Certificates /Mix of units from all (NGOs)	
3		• School/College/Training Certificates / Mix of units from all (NGOs)	
2		• School/College/Training Certificates Mix of units from all (NGOs)	
1	General Education and Training Band	• Senior Phase	• ABET Level 4
			• ABET Level 3
		• Intermediate Phase	• ABET Level 2
		• Foundational Phase	• ABET Level 1
• Pre-school / ECD			

3.2 Curriculum

Curriculum is central to educational policy. It provides a vision of what learning and teaching might be – including what is to be learned, processes of learning, teaching and assessment, relationships, power and authority in the system and in schools. Curriculum, as learners experience it in classrooms, defines their education and hence the quality and achievements of the system. Through the curriculum and learning outcomes, schools and learners' communities know and judge the system. For these reasons, we gave curriculum policies, curriculum development and curriculum support high priority, especially for the compulsory years of schooling. The flagship of this development was Curriculum 2005.

The development has occurred in an extraordinarily complex environment, on our way to a single, national, equitable system of quality schooling. We needed to create national and provincial education departments which could provide professional leadership as well as administration; to design the NQF and related administrative structures; establish policies and frameworks for school governance and financing; improve equity and capacity in the distribution of teachers, resources and facilities; build the professionalism of school managers; and reframe teacher education. All of these programmes directly affect learner's achievements, and in that sense are part of curriculum. We have set them in place and made great progress building their effectiveness. We went about the tasks knowing we had to operate an existing educational system as well as change it, in the face of many demands on the budget and existing professional capacity.

Framing a vision of curriculum is an exciting and delicate task. We had to find ways through inevitable and healthy conflicts of ideologies and interests, such as those between liberal education and vocational training, the demands of global economic development and local social transformation, and competing views of how effective learning occurs. These debates, ultimately, are about the very purposes of schools. We had to decide whether we wanted a system driven by outcomes (especially learning outcomes), inputs (including syllabuses, texts and teaching methods), or some combination. The choice is more than a matter of philosophy; it greatly affects the curriculum in action. We only partly understood the extent of diversity in educational backgrounds, socio-economic status, culture, language, environment and human experience across the nation. Could the curriculum celebrate and build on the diversity of learners' experiences and dreams and at the same time provide for the 'common outcomes' necessary for equitable access to employment and higher education and develop a vision of common nationhood? Could we strike a sensible balance between centralised design and control of curriculum (with inevitable reductions in diversity) and devolution of curriculum responsibilities to schools, districts and provinces? If we encouraged diversity across schools and classrooms, how would we monitor, at a national level, standards and learners' achievements? (We knew, for example, that accountability based on national testing would be problematic if the details of what is learned varied greatly from one school to another.) Then there were questions of capacity. What would be the consequences of defining a curriculum vision that was too far from schools' existing experiences and capacities, or too close (regardless of the desirability of new goals and recommendations from educational research)? If we held to a long-term ideal, what would be the most appropriate pathway from the existing situation to the ideal?

The Constitution, Education White Paper 1 and the NQF provided us with the framework for tackling these questions. Coupled with the NQF strategy of outcomes-based education, the curriculum was to be learner-centred:

Educational and management processes must therefore put the learners first, recognising and building on their knowledge and experience, and responding to their needs. (Education White Paper 1, DoE, 1995: 21)

This focus on learner-involvement, in turn, requires that schools and teachers take major roles in curriculum design: teachers know, more closely than anyone else in the system, learners' experiences and needs. They are in a position to decide what is locally relevant, and implement with devotion programmes they have designed or chosen themselves.

If teachers are to have central roles in curriculum design, they must also take major responsibilities for assessment of learners' achievements. This is so not only for assessment to guide teaching and learning, but also for assessment to provide summary statements of learners' achievements, for purposes of reporting and accountability. Teachers' responsibilities for assessment arise in part from the diversity that school-based curriculum development permits, and in part from the emphasis that learner-centred education gives to 'deep learning'.

To support the curriculum functions of schools as centres of professional activity, schools and provincial departments must be reshaped. School managers have to provide professional leadership in curriculum, not only administrative efficiency. Schools have to have management structures and systems that harness creativity and skills within the schools, promoting experimentation and continuous improvement. Provincial departments – especially at the district level – have particular responsibilities to provide professional support and leadership in curriculum, management and quality assurance. Teachers, school leaders and district officers require access to professional development and training, to build their capacities individually and in teams. They, too, are learners.

Finally, systems of quality assurance and accountability have to be established, in ways that promote accountability directly (schools to learners), and more broadly to communities and the nation. Accountability systems, like assessment in classrooms, have to provide not only judgmental data on the successes of particular schools and districts, but diagnostic data that can be related to relevant contextual factors and used to improve the quality of learners' school experiences and achievements.

These characteristics of our vision of curriculum and schooling we saw as corollaries of the emphasis of Education White Paper 1 on learner-centred education, lifelong learning, and effective learning. Outcomes-based education provided a technology for managing curriculum design and accountability at the local level. We had then to develop policies and frameworks that measured the vision and connected it to existing conditions in the system.

3.2.1 General Education and Training: Curriculum 2005

We defined the years of general education and training (GET) to span Grades 1-9 and lead to a national certificate, the General Education and Training Certificate. As noted earlier, we gave GET high priority, because of the particular role that it has in providing education for all learners. We recognised also that transformation of general education has symbolic value: it would offer communities a vision of the 'new

education', and the ways educational change would address questions of equity and quality in schooling. We named the policy Curriculum 2005 – pointing to the future, and suggesting a time-scale for implementation.

Curriculum 2005 was developed through extensive processes of participation, through a number of 'technical committees' and wide consultation, assisted by international leaders in curriculum design. Draft documents were offered for public discussion during 1997, and the policy was released later that year.

Curriculum 2005 is arguably one of the most progressive of such policies in the world. Guided by principles of outcomes-based education and learner-centred education and the critical outcomes of the NQF, it defined specific outcomes and standards of achievement in eight learning areas. The critical and specific outcomes, together, represented major shifts in what is to be learned in schools, emphasising competencies rather than particular knowledge. The specific outcomes delineated learning areas more broadly than in traditional 'subjects', building links from subject knowledge to social, economic and personal dimensions of learning and the multicultural character of South African society.

The conception of learner-centred education, as recommended in Education White Paper 1, goes beyond ensuring that all learners achieve the set outcomes. It involves them as participants in curriculum and learning, responds to their learning styles and cultures, and builds on their life experiences and needs. The policy commends 'continuous formative assessment', in which learners and teachers accept responsibilities for assessment, to promote continuous learning and enable the assessment of competence and complex performances. Assessments of critical outcomes such as problem-solving, teamwork, communication and critical use of information cannot be done simply through written tests; they need to be made in the context of 'real performances'. Continuous assessments become also a basis for judging overall achievements and reporting to learners, parents and the system.

Curriculum 2005 defines particular balances between central control and devolution, between common, national outcomes and learner-centred education. Consistent with the strategy of the NQF, our guiding principles were to set the outcomes centrally, but devolve responsibility for inputs (learning programmes, teaching, choice of resources, etc) to schools. The outcomes had to be defined loosely enough to enable flexibility at the school level, but tightly enough to represent common achievements.

Curriculum 2005 shifted the emphases and nature of the desired outcomes and learning areas, and called for radically new approaches to programme design, teaching methods, power relationships and assessment. It redefined the roles of teachers, learners and school managers, and of text-books and exams. These shifts, in general and in their details, prompted wide and continuing debate. Through DoE communications (including documents, public presentations, media support and workshops), news media, conferences and letters, curriculum was on the agenda as never before.

Implementation began in 1998 in Grade 1, followed by Grade 2 in 1999, Grades 3 and 7 in 2000, Grades 4 and 8 in 2001, and followed by Grades 5 and 9 in 2002. It was accompanied by large-scale programmes in teacher education and classroom support, involving national and provincial education departments, NGOs, television and newspapers, higher education institutions and private publishers. Much of the concern, in schools and from the public, focussed on implementation. It became clear that some shortcomings in the basic documents were compounded by diverse interpretations amongst trainers, education department officers, NGOs, and writers of learning materials. For many teachers and trainers, the vision was, necessarily, far from their own experience and habits. Few teachers and trainers had first-hand knowledge

of the kinds of curriculum and teaching envisaged; few schools had management structures and professional capacity to manage the changes. Where schools and teachers embraced learner-centred education, they often interpreted it as *laissez faire* activity and groupwork in which the focus on outcomes and needs for careful design were lost. Alternatively, too excessive a focus on outcomes led to simplistic algorithms for curriculum design, in which attention to learner-centred approaches was lost. Concern to integrate learning areas in some cases diminished attention to progression of concept development from grade to grade. Even then, integration of knowledge presented from different learning areas often occurred with inadequate concern for how and whether integration occurred within the learners' minds, or whether learners were integrating theory with practice, in-school experience with daily-life experience. "Continuous assessment" was interpreted by some as frequent testing, becoming a nightmare of accounting and record keeping in the classroom, interfering with teaching and learning. Training programmes and follow up support were generally too few in number, and often did not model the approaches they were advocating. Frequently they assumed top-down, bureaucratic approaches to the documents and lost sight of teachers' experiences and existing professional insights as critical inputs to their learning.

In February 2000, the Ministry commissioned a review of Curriculum 2005, which was completed in May. The central findings were that:

- There was wide support for the curriculum changes envisaged (especially its underlying principles), but levels of understanding of the policy and its implications were highly varied.
- There were basic flaws in the structure and design of the policy. In particular, the language was often complex and confusing (including the use of unnecessary jargon). Notions of sequence, concept development, content and progression were poorly developed, and the scope of the outcomes and learning areas resulted in crowding of the curriculum overall.
- There was a lack of alignment between curriculum and assessment policies, with insufficient clarity in both areas.
- Training programmes, in concept, duration and quality, were often inadequate, especially early in the implementation process.
- Learning support materials were variable in quality, and often unavailable.
- Follow-up support for teachers and schools was far too little.
- Timeframes for implementation were unmanageable and unrealistic – the policy was released before the system was ready, with timeframes that were too rushed.

We have responded to the review. We have retained the broad vision of Curriculum 2005, but are refining policy documents. A set of National Curriculum Statements will be ready by the end of July, 2001, for public discussion. The revisions will simplify the structure, redefine the outcomes, and give closer guidance on progression and content. As part of the National Statement, assessment standards are being prepared for each grade level, in each outcome. We are reconfiguring processes and structures to support implementation. Following a period of public comment and feedback, we will work with publishers, provincial education departments and higher education institutions to provide learning support materials, professional development of educators, and support systems for general implementation.

As part of quality assurance and system monitoring, we have begun the development and piloting of suitable learner assessment strategies and instruments, with a view to assessing learners' achievements at Grades 3 and 6, as well as Grade 9 for the award of the GETC.

The history of Curriculum 2005 in many ways reflects the history of educational change more generally over the last five years. Our first priority was to create a vision of education, and disseminate that vision, largely through workshops and implementation programmes. Implementation was hampered by weaknesses in the system and the complexity of changing so many aspects of the system at once, as well as by weaknesses in the documents. We are in a different situation now. Administrative and support systems are stronger, general understanding of the underlying curriculum principles is better, there exists a wider pool of professional expertise and experience to lead the changes, and the National Curriculum Statement is being strengthened. We are now in a position to put more focussed effort into implementation at the school level, with all that this involves with respect to school development.

3.2.2 Further Education and Training

Further education and training (FET), conceptually, administratively and politically, is more complex than general education and training. FET must serve the often competing purposes of preparation for higher education, preparation for work, and education for personal and social development. It involves a wide range of providers, with different interests, administrative structures and traditions. The great majority of learners are in schools (in Grades 10, 11, and 12), but many study in colleges and through private providers. Schools, traditionally, have been oriented to academic approaches and higher education, colleges to vocational programmes and the workplace. However, given the number of FET learners in schools, we are giving consideration to whether and how vocational education should be extended into the school curriculum. FET, especially the current Senior Certificate, holds high stakes for learners and their families (and for schools), as a gateway to higher education and employment. The FET curriculum is of particular interest to higher education institutions, which wish it to provide a strong foundation for their courses. It must also build on and be continuous with the GETC and developments in Curriculum 2005.

The National Strategy for Further Education and Training, 1999 – 2001 (DoE; 1999) includes strategic objectives in learning and teaching:

- Management of learning programmes and qualifications framework(s) and innovation.
- Increased learner participation and achievement, particularly in Maths, Science, Technology and Engineering.
- Learning support materials.
- Flexible learning.
- Learner support services.
- Ongoing professional development.
- Articulation and learner mobility.
- Technical college and Senior Certificate examinations.

We are developing the curriculum framework for FET as a single national framework for schools, colleges and private providers. Consistent with the NQF, the FET is outcomes-based and learner-centred, with unit

standards and registered programmes drawn from twelve fields of learning. It will lead to a single certificate, the FETC, with programmes of two types: general/academic/vocational (offered in schools) and vocationally specific (offered in technical colleges). In each case, the curriculum will have a fundamental component (communication and mathematical literacy), a core (in the area of specialisation) and electives. The number of subjects available in the general/academic certificate will be greatly reduced, removing many existing subjects in which enrolments are low. This reduction will be in line with national needs, international trends and the interests of most learners. It will shift the concept of choice for learners to choosing from a fixed portfolio of subjects and choosing *within* subjects. It will make delivery more manageable and hence more equitable and more effective.

To support the development of outcomes as competencies and enable learner-centred education, assessment for the FETC will incorporate classroom-based (continuous) assessment as well as externally based assessment. Continuous assessment will focus on oral and practical work and achievements not readily accessible through written tests. The weighting of practical and oral assessment in the overall assessment will generally be limited to 25%. Moderation of teacher judgments will be achieved through face-to-face moderation, coupled with statistical moderation against standardised examination marks. Externally-based assessments, in most subjects, will be the responsibility of provincial departments of education. However, in 2001, national examinations will be conducted in the key subjects of Mathematics, Languages, Physical Science, Biology and Accounting, and one other subject, on a rotational basis.

Work in the development of curriculum and assessment for the FETC is in progress, including teacher education and trials in the uses of continuous assessment and moderation, and interventions that have increased achievements and pass rates in the Senior Certificate.

3.2.3 Curriculum-related policies and programmes

Curriculum policy and implementation must link closely with supporting policies and programmes. These range from the provision of facilities and materials, through management and information systems to human resource development. For example, the Norms and Standards for Educator Development, as a framework for pre-service and in-service education, redefine the roles of teachers consistent with Curriculum 2005, the envisaged FETC and the new roles of teachers and schools in curriculum and assessment. Programmes are underway in management training, organisational development, and promotion of a culture of learning and teaching in schools. Pilot studies are in progress, exploring approaches to school evaluation and school improvement that give particular emphasis to schools managing their own evaluation and planning. Developmental appraisal of teachers, in relation to quality of performance, school development and career development are also being piloted. And, provincial departments are strengthening their systems, especially in the functions of districts in school support, leadership and administration.

As well as linking programmes and policies related to curriculum, it is necessary to form and support partnerships. We have regarded as particularly important partnerships with higher education institutions (in the provision of teacher education), NGOs (in teacher education, school support, and the development of learning materials), international groups (through funded projects in curriculum and research), and publishers. The National Centre for Curriculum Research and Development was established within the national department to support these functions, and provide input to planning.

Partnerships between government ministries and departments are also essential. For example, vocational training is also a responsibility of the Ministry of Labour, social development and redress involve many different departments, as does the HIV/AIDS pandemic. The educational challenges we face require closer cooperation and synergy between government departments. The work continues.

3.3 Values in Education

Education is fundamentally a character forming and development activity through the values expressed in behaviour, and the values promoted. Values and the development of values are inevitable parts of schooling – underlying the formal selection of outcomes, teaching methods and assessment, and implicit in classroom processes, authority relationships, and the selection of contexts and examples to advance learning. Values need to be surfaced, and addressed consciously, critically and publicly. A nation emerging from apartheid cannot think of values in education independently of the deep racism embedded in the apartheid curricula and school systems. The apartheid system was intended, overtly and implicitly, to link concepts of ability and potential for learning to culture and race, and hence to build and reinforce particular social structures and hierarchies. Those habits and underlying values need to be reversed, promoting instead anti-racism, inclusivity, human dignity, equity and democracy. We are proceeding cautiously, however, well aware of a history that prescribed values and used the prescription to control rather than grow a nation. In South Africa now, values in education must celebrate and promote diversity rather than homogenize, simplify or undermine it, and develop a platform for a collective vision of our future. We are developing our own approach to values in education, perhaps uniquely South African, based deeply on lessons from the past and moving us into the future. To this end, the Ministry convened a national conference on Values, Education and Democracy in February 2001, and has established a panel on History and Archaeology which investigated the role of history in the curriculum.

Consistent with the Constitution and Bill of Rights, we have focused on the values of equity, tolerance, openness, accountability and social honour. However, we have concerned ourselves not so much with the prescription of values per se as with defining a framework for approaching values education in schooling. The pathway we have chosen is to go beyond awareness of values, and provide learners with experiences that confront and cultivate values in action: critical thinking, personal expression, a local sense of meaning, and expanded ways of thinking and communicating. Four cornerstones have been identified as central strategies to 'seed' democratic values in our context (DoE, 2000d: 10): critical thinking, creative expression through art, a critical understanding of history, and multilingualism.

Nurturing critical-thinking skills. A democratic society flourishes when citizens are informed about local and global processes, when nothing is beyond question, and when ideas and ideologies are fully explored. Critical thinking skills can be nurtured through critical pedagogies, a critical look at history and current events, debating societies, and emphases on numeracy and scientific approaches to problem solving. Critical thinking and discussion allow diverse values to be surfaced and questioned in the classroom, and more deeply understood. Further, the values are set into the context of action.

Widening creative expression through art. Creative expression and participation assist in cultivating knowledge of self and others, expressing and communicating values. The power of performing arts and creative participation as an active celebration of diversity and expression must be harnessed as a tool to cultivate tolerance, openness, and compassion. Again, the classroom provides a context in which ways of expressing values, the values expressed, and the diversity of values can be discussed, and followed into action.

Nurturing a critical understanding of history. History, as a memory system, shapes our values and morality because it is the avenue through which we reflect on human dreams, achievements, failures and possibilities. Four challenges stand out for teaching history in South Africa. Learners must be provided with a thorough understanding of human evolution, to combat the myths underlying racial prejudice and acknowledge Africa as the birthplace of humanity. Second, schools must provide a comprehensive history of all South African peoples, connected to the history of Africa, Asia, and Europe. Third, history must stare down past abuses of human rights, to understand the causes and effects of genocide and oppression. Fourth, history is not only a reflection on the past; it is a way of thinking about the future, hope, and the transformation of a nation and its peoples. History, taught by committed and engaged educators, can be a powerful reflective tool for formulating values in a context wider than our daily lives.

Nurturing multilingualism. Speaking the language of other people not only facilitates meaningful communication, but also builds openness and respect as barriers are broken down and new meanings are explored. We are committed to providing an initial grounding in mother-tongue education. We are considering ways to increase second-language learning. Given the historical onus on black learners to learn English and Afrikaans, it is reciprocally important now that non-African learners acquire at least one African language. Multilingualism must be a more central educational requirement, particularly for learners entering the fields of education, welfare and health.

Notwithstanding these plans, we are well aware that the impact of colonization on South African life may find fresh echoes in globalization. The threats of market values, materialism, individualism and fragmentation to human values, community and environmental sustainability are dire for relatively poor countries, such as South Africa, especially while great inequities already exist. Education has special responsibilities to lay strong bases for social cohesion, solidarity, democracy and equity as well as economic development and prosperity. We therefore continue to invigorate debates about values in the context of globalisation, the principles and values enshrined in the Constitution, and the development of South African cultures.

3.4 Quality education for all

Our national project and the imperatives of the new global era both emphasize the importance of providing quality education for all of our citizens. Even more than in the industrialised era, the information society places human capacity in the centre of the circle. While access to capital and raw materials remains important, the human capacity to imagine productive and creative applications of new technologies has become at least equally important. Capacities such as literacy, numeracy, critical thinking, conceptual imagination, and communication skills are central to individual and national development. Our challenge then, is not only to provide education to all, but also to provide a high quality education to all.

We recognize two elements to this challenge – universal access and systemic quality. The right of access to education is a cornerstone of the post-1994 education system. The Constitution recognises education as an essential right. It states:

Everyone has the right –

To basic education, including adult basic education; and

To further education, which the state, through reasonable measures, must make progressively available and accessible.

The South African Schools Act and the Admission Policy to Ordinary Public Schools takes this further by making school compulsory for children between the ages of 7 and 14, and by guaranteeing learners equal access to basic and quality education without discrimination of any kind. It states that:

...no learner may be denied admission to an ordinary school on any grounds, including grounds of disability, language, learning difficulty, or pregnancy.

Post-apartheid education legislation identifies the objective of *quality* education as a core principle driving educational reform. The National Education Policy Act includes among its concerns 'achieving redress and enhancing quality'. The South African Schools Act of 1996 identifies quality improvement as an important role for school governing bodies. The National Qualifications Framework (NQF) provides the framework for building an integrated and quality educational system to facilitate lifelong learning, and a systemic approach quality assurance through the provisions of the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) Act.

In 1997, the Department's focus on quality improvement was reflected in the establishment of the Directorate: Quality Assurance. Notions of efficiency, effectiveness and standards were under increasing discussion, and we took a number of initiatives to address these concerns directly. A campaign designed to enhance the Culture of Learning, Teaching and Service (COLTS) emphasised the improvement of physical infrastructure, the development of school management and governance capacities, and engagement with learners' and educators' attitudes toward learning and teaching. This campaign has now been subsumed in the *Tirisano* Programme of Action. The focus of *Tirisano* has been extended through whole school evaluation and the appraisal of teachers. The emphasis is on raising the accountability of schools for their performance, and the development of instruments for their evaluation, to be utilised also by a service of provincially based supervisors working with district level teams.

The DoE has fine-tuned its focus on the development of a national quality assurance framework including the development of quality indicators and performance assessment tools. Currently, a number of quality assurance and benchmarking mechanisms are being put in place. These include whole-school evaluation instruments to be used by schools for self-evaluation and development, and by supervisors for monitoring and moderating school performance, a systemic evaluation of learners' attainments against national benchmarks in Grades 3 and 6, the introduction of the General Education and Training Certificate at the end of Grade 9, a forthcoming Further Education and Training Certificate, the establishment of the Education and Training Quality Assurance Body for General and Further Education, and the establishment of a Higher Education Quality Committee developing quality management systems in Higher Education. Emphasis has also been placed on developing education management and establishing a credible education management information system (EMIS). All of these contribute to better diagnostic analysis of and development strategies for improving the performance of the public education system.

Although both national and global imperatives challenge us to define and infuse quality throughout the system, the consideration of 'quality' from a global perspective will not shift our focus from the basic operational quality that provides a foundation for learning. We will align structures and personnel at all levels to support and promote quality.

4. Innovation and change in education: building a nationally co-ordinated and planned higher education system

Policy goals and process in the post-1994 period

Higher education has a critical role to play in the transformation of post-apartheid South Africa. It must provide the range and quality of graduates and knowledge required to drive national reconstruction and development in a rapidly globalising world. It must also help to consolidate our new democracy through developing critical citizenship.

The system of higher education inherited by the democratic government in 1994 was highly unequal, fragmented and largely dysfunctional in meeting the development priorities of the nation as a whole. Consequently, the challenge facing the new government was to create a policy framework and an implementation plan for the fundamental systemic restructuring of higher education. Three distinct phases in the period since 1994 can be distinguished: first, the initial focus on macro-policy formation, in which the policy and the regulatory framework for this systemic restructuring was elaborated by 1997; second, the phase of developing the planning framework, including the development of a new budgetary framework; and third, the incremental implementation of the planning framework at the national and institutional levels which is taking place now.

The immediate tasks of the post-1994 phase were: to establish a consultative process by which the new policy framework for the transformation of higher education could be developed; to promulgate the required legislation to guide this transformation; and to strengthen the bureaucracy and statutory organs to manage the process and to attend to emerging priorities.

The first involved the establishment of the National Commission on Higher Education (NCHE), which was mandated to provide comprehensive recommendations for a new higher education policy framework. Following broad consultation, its 1996 report, *A Framework for Transformation*, set out a new vision for higher education, identifying the principles, goals and features by which transformation should occur. In late 1997, *Education White Paper 3: A Programme for the Transformation of Higher Education* was published, followed by the *Higher Education Act (no. 101)*.

The framework for higher education transformation was shaped by two sets of conditions. First, South Africa is a middle-income developing country, characterised by a highly stratified race and class structure and great disparity between rich and poor. Second, its democratic transformation and its simultaneous re-entry into the international arena occurred during the period of the intensifying globalisation of social, cultural and economic relations in the 1990s. As a result, our dual national development challenges are to address the basic needs of the majority and to build our capacity to engage competitively in the global economic arena and the new knowledge society.

To these ends, the White Paper sets out the following policy goals:

- The development of a single, national, integrated, planned and co-ordinated system, funded on a programme basis;
- Increased and broadened participation in higher education, thereby simultaneously meeting personpower needs and advancing social equity;
- Co-operative governance between government and institutions and within institutions, based on the democratisation and restructuring of governance structures;
- Responsiveness to societal needs through curriculum restructuring and relevant knowledge production;
- Quality assurance through the promotion and assessment of quality and the accreditation of programmes;
- Promoting articulation, mobility and transferability across the education and training system by incorporating higher education qualifications into the National Qualifications Framework.

The White Paper indicates that, as part of the broader transformation of South African society, the reconstruction of higher education will be guided according to the principles of equity and redress, democratisation, development, quality, effectiveness and efficiency, academic freedom, institutional autonomy, and public accountability.

To ground these principles, the key mechanism proposed in the White Paper is a process of national and institutional three-year rolling plans based on programmes, linked to a revised, goal-oriented state funding framework and to quality assurance. Required institutional plans will include a statement of mission and vision, indicative enrolment targets in various fields of studies and qualifications levels, and a series of plans: for equity and staff development, for quality improvement, for research and infrastructure development. Institutions will therefore be challenged to identify niche areas of concentration in terms of which their mission and purpose can be identified or redefined, taking cognisance of other national and regional offerings.

Having established the policy and legislative framework for transformation, the next task in the post-1994 period was to strengthen the bureaucracy and to establish the required statutory structures. This was achieved by creating the Higher Education Branch in the Department of Education and by appointing the Council on Higher Education (CHE) in 1998, which is responsible for advising the Minister on all aspects of higher education. In addition, it holds executive responsibility for quality assurance through its permanent sub-committee, the Higher Education Quality Committee (HEQC).

The current phase of policy implementation

With this policy and legislative framework and the required structures in place, the Ministry adopted an incremental approach to implementation. The Education White Paper 3 on Higher Education and the *Higher*

Education Act represented a broad framework of transformative vision, goals and principles and not an implementation plan. After these policy documents appeared, several further incremental steps were therefore necessary: to develop the implementation process of planning framework and the systemic capacity to achieve this; to develop an adequate information base; and to finalise the new funding framework. Concurrently, the HEQC was established by the CHE to provide a quality assurance framework.

This delay in fully implementing the regulatory mechanisms of the planning framework created something of a 'policy vacuum'. In the absence of the regulatory influence of the national plan, a competitive market climate among public and private institutions alike emerged. Driven by the overall decline in student enrolments and by ongoing fiscal constraints, competition in the higher (and further) education marketplace intensified. Many institutions strategically positioned themselves to ensure greater market share and diversity of income sources. This has manifested in the growth of distance education provision among residential institutions, the mushrooming of satellite campuses, and the proliferation of local and transnational private provision and public-private partnerships.

The consequences of these unregulated developments are potentially damaging for a co-ordinated system. Institutional capacity to maximise competitive advantage is broadly commensurate with historical and geographic position. The new competitive climate thus exacerbates existing institutional inequalities. The sustainability of dedicated distance education institutions and of contact institutions in close proximity to new satellite campuses is compromised. In offering a narrow range of commercially lucrative programmes, many private providers gain unfair advantage by not having to fulfil the broader public purposes of higher education: to provide a broad array of programmes, to conduct research and community service and to carry responsibility for academic development and education for citizenship.

In addition, in the absence of the planning framework, a sometimes too literal reading of the White Paper programme-based approach arose, with some institutions undertaking large-scale restructuring and creating new inter-disciplinary programmes. While the importance of these is unquestioned, their uncritical adoption could be counter-productive in undermining the firm disciplinary foundations required for the generation of adequate knowledge and skills among graduates.

These developments underscore the need for appropriate regulation of the system. This is not to deny the importance of competition, the right to diversity and the need for innovation. It merely stresses the necessity to avoid incoherent programme development and duplication in a resource-constrained developing country such as ours.

Development of the planning process and funding framework

During 1998 and 1999, the Department initiated two phases of submissions for three-year rolling plans. This exercise revealed the sometimes wide variances between projected and actual institutional enrolments as well as the serious lack of planning methodology and instruments. Few institutions showed evidence of utilising statistical modelling techniques and detailed analysis of institutional, regional and national trends. This highlighted the urgent necessity for planning and managerial capacity building.

The three-year planning process will be fully implemented and linked to the new funding framework by 2003. Funding is a pivotal component of the new planning framework, as it provides (along with quality assurance) one of the two main levers for government's steering of the system towards national policy priorities. After completing the necessary groundwork, a discussion document outlining proposals for a revised funding framework was published in April 2001, shortly after the release of the National Plan for Higher Education.

Funding in the form of block grants and earmarked funds is proposed. The former will be allocated for teaching inputs (staff and other costs); teaching outputs (graduates); research outputs (publications and masters and doctoral graduates); institutional setup, running and development costs; and foundation programmes (academic development). Allocations will be made on approval of programme-based institutional plans, which must specify targeted and achieved enrolments, graduation numbers, research outputs, and development plans. Earmarked funds will be allocated: to the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS); for institutional redress and development (including research development); for approved capital projects and other development priorities identified in the *National Plan for Higher Education*. This new framework will have major implications for institutions. Implementation will therefore be phased in over a number of years to offset any negative short-term impacts.

Given prevailing fiscal constraints, it is unlikely that additional resources will be available to higher education. The new framework will however redistribute funds more effectively within the system. It will thereby shape the institutional landscape towards the optimum range of differentiated institutional missions and programme offerings required to meet the policy goals of equity, quality, responsiveness and efficiency. Increased support of the NSFAS and the funding of academic development activities are important steps in promoting equity of access and success for disadvantaged students. Likewise, the approval of institutional block grants according to national human resource development needs will help to ensure the relevance of publicly funded higher education programmes.

The regulation of the private higher education sector

Along with many other countries, South Africa has witnessed growth in private provision. This has manifested in various types of linkages between local and foreign public and private institutions and in the proliferation of programmes in certain fields. While some providers are long-established reputable institutions, a number of 'fly-by-night' institutions emerged. As a result of these developments, an appropriate regulatory framework is being established in the public interest to ensure academic quality, financial sustainability and a constructive complementary role for private providers within the overall system. Initial steps have been taken in terms of the *Higher Education Act* and its subsequent Amendment. Private providers are now required to apply for institutional registration and for programme accreditation. This process has sometimes been contentious. In cases where registration has been withheld or conditionally granted, the Department has faced legal challenges.

The Department has initiated research into the size and shape of the private sector, its possible role and impact, and into the required changes to legislation in order to provide an adequate regulatory framework. Though the currently available data are sketchy, initial findings indicate that the private higher education sector proper is not as large as anticipated, with considerable enrolments 'duplicated' in public and private partnerships. Private provision is concentrated at lower qualifications levels (certificates and diplomas) and in a narrow range of fields (mainly business/commerce, and education). With the acquisition of more reliable data during 2001, a far clearer idea of the nature of the private sector will emerge.

Incorporation of colleges into the HE sector and the development of norms and standards for teacher education

An important aspect of systemic restructuring involves the incorporation of colleges of education into higher education institutions. These colleges previously fell under provincial jurisdiction, but as higher education is a national competence, they have had to be integrated within the single, co-ordinated national system. This has proved to be a highly complex and sometimes contested process, requiring considerable consultation and negotiation with affected stakeholders, and careful handling of the sensitive labour relations issues involved.

The process began in 1998 with the release of a framework document, which identified criteria for provincial rationalisation by which the number of colleges were reduced from 120 to about 50. The process was completed this year when identified colleges were incorporated into the higher education system. In addition, a technical team established by the Committee on Teacher Education Policy (COTEP) undertook the revision of the Norms and Standards for teacher education in 1997. The Department also initiated the development of teaching and learning materials to introduce teacher educators to outcomes-based education. Processes have now also begun to incorporate colleges of nursing and agriculture into the higher education system.

Institutional governance, capacity-building and crisis management and responses to policy change

One of the tasks of the Department is to assist in the transformation of institutional governance to reflect the democratic values of increased participation and transparency. The transformation of institutional statutes in line with the requirements of the *Higher Education Act* has been completed, with the reconstitution of Councils and Senates to ensure greater representivity.

Departmental energies have, however, largely been diverted to dealing with financial and management crises at several institutions. The approach has been two-fold: to address issues before they reach critical proportions and to intervene where necessary through the Ministerial appointment of independent assessors and administrators. In response to the growing financial crisis at certain institutions, the Office of the Auditor-General was commissioned to undertake audits. Independent assessors were also appointed to investigate the crisis at other institutions where management and governance functions had all but collapsed. The future sustainability of these institutions depends directly on resolving these leadership and management crises. The Department, in conjunction with several donor and development agencies, has instituted capacity building programmes to address these concerns.

The National Plan for Higher Education

In March 2001, the Ministry released the National Plan for Higher Education which provides the implementation framework and mechanisms for higher education transformation as articulated in the vision, goals and principles of the White Paper.

The importance of this document is two-fold. First, it draws to a close the long period of consultation which began with the National Commission on Higher Education. Second, it sets out government's firm policy intentions in a format which identifies strategic objectives and targets, and the mechanisms and timeframes for achieving these. Linked to the regulatory mechanisms of funding and quality assurance, the procedure for systemic planning is now set in motion. The Plan also takes forward, as we outline below, the new national Human Resources Development Strategy. This will allow higher education planning to articulate with the broader national human resource and skills development strategy and in this way contribute directly to national development priorities.

The key points of the National Plan for Higher Education are:

- The establishment of indicative targets for the size and shape of the higher education system. These include: a long-term increase in the participation rate from 15% to 20%; graduation rate benchmarks to ensure greater access and success; shifting enrolments between the humanities, business and commerce, engineering and technology from the current ratio of 49:26:26 to 40:30:30 respectively; and student and staff equity targets.
- Various steps will be taken to ensure diversity of institutional mission and programme differentiation. Institutional programme mixes will be determined on the basis of current and proposed new programme profiles, including their relevance to regional and national development priorities. The existing differentiation between universities and technikons will be maintained for at least the next five years.
- The restructuring of the institutional landscape will occur through the reduction of the number of institutions but not in the number of delivery sites. Various mergers have been identified for implementation. Further institutional restructuring will be guided by a National Working Group, which has already begun its work. National Institutes for Higher Education will be established in Mpumalanga and the Northern Cape.

The plan signals a discernible shift towards stronger steering of systemic change. This reflects the Ministry's determination to proceed decisively with the implementation of the policy framework for transformation.

Social and institutional redress

The approach of the National Plan for Higher Education to redress incorporates both institutional and social redress. However, the Plan signals a move away from the notion of automatic expectation of redress based on historic entitlement and without reference to the current redefinition of institutional mission within the new institutional landscape. Government's position is that the redress component of earmarked funds will be allocated according to clearly demonstrated needs and accountability mechanisms as part of the three-year rolling planning process. This will enable historically disadvantaged institutions to discharge their approved institutional plans in the context of institutional restructuring.

In the absence of this planning procedure, institutional redress allocations have thus far been relatively small, with R27-m being allocated in FY1998/9 on a pro-rata basis. In the following FY1999/2000, R60-m was allocated to three institutions – Fort Hare, Transkei and Medunsa – to ensure their future viability. In FY2000/2001, redress funding was targeted at academic development.

Ensuring that access is maintained and enhanced for financially disadvantaged black students remains a central goal in achieving both equity and the required participation rates. The main focus of redress funding has therefore been on student financial aid. The National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) was established in 1996 and converted into a statutory agency in 2000. Since 1994, government has allocated in excess of R2 billion to student financial aid through this mechanism. Government is justifiably proud of the success of this redress initiative. 80 000 students from poor families are receiving bursaries or loans at extremely favourable rates. Allocation in the current year amounts to R600-m, which comprises a budgeted amount of R440-m and a further R160-m in loan recovery – a very encouraging development. This will have a huge impact on enabling larger number of financially disadvantaged students access into the system. However, finance still remains an obstacle to student access and success and to institutional sustainability. The fee debt continues to rise in many institutions despite concerted efforts to contain this. While considerable progress has been made, the challenge is to expand the scheme to meet the needs of those still outside its ambit.

Conclusion

To achieve the various goals outlined above for the transformation of higher education, government and higher education institutions are faced with a number of formidable implementation challenges. Central among these is generating the required capacities and resources at the national, regional and institutional levels to implement the planning and manage the change process. Both the government and institutional leaders currently face a formidable array of simultaneous challenges in the context of a rapidly changing global and higher educational environment. Without multiple initiatives to build the required capacity, implementation will remain patchy.

Through the planning process, an ongoing challenge will be to ensure that the diverse range of relevant programmes and knowledge are provided to cater for labour market and development needs. Within this, the role of the Higher Education Quality Committee is significant in developing a quality assurance system appropriate to our needs and conditions.

Reducing the deeply embedded race, gender, class and institutional inequities which still characterise our higher education system remains a constant challenge. Here, we will need to go beyond the 'numbers game' of merely opening formal access for disadvantaged groups into a static system and set of institutional cultures. This only sets people up for failure. We will have to ensure that their successful advancement in the system is ensured through institutional transformation to accommodate and adapt to different identities, needs and experiences in the academy. Likewise, as institutions reposition themselves within the new landscape and the differentiated range of missions and functions, they will need to transform the restrictive aspects of their historical institutional cultures to meet the challenges of effectively and efficiently fulfilling their stated purposes.

We are confident that, given the comprehensiveness of the National Plan for Higher Education and the generally high levels of consensual response to it among role-players, that its stated goals, strategic

objectives and outcomes can be reached within the specified timeframes and these various challenges can be met.

5. Innovation and change in education: implementing the Human Resources Development Strategy of South Africa

"Our people, with their aspirations and collective determination, are our most important resources. The Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) is focused on our people's most immediate needs, and it relies, in turn, on their energies to drive the process of meeting these needs. Development is not about the delivery of goods to a passive citizenry. It is about active involvement and growing empowerment." (Reconstruction and Development Programme)

In April this year, the Ministries of Education and of Labour jointly launched the *Human Resource Development Strategy for South Africa: A Nation at Work for a Better Life for All*. The strategy is underpinned by a set of institutional arrangements, including Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs), and the general reshaping of further and higher education to meet our human resources development goals.

Since 1994, the government has done a tremendous amount to alleviate poverty and promote growth in the economy. Over 1 million houses have been built, clean water has been supplied to 6.5 million people, and nearly 400 000 electricity connections were made in 2000 alone. Yet, there is still an enormous amount of work to do. If we are to ensure that the basic needs of our citizens can be met, we need a more robust social and physical infrastructure. The capabilities of our people are a limiting factor in the attainment of socio-economic development. To realise their potential, citizens need knowledge, skills and democratic values, and they also need opportunities in which to apply them. Millions of South Africans have skilled labour to sell, but they are unemployed because there are not enough jobs, and their skills do not match the demands of the labour market or the new economy.

Our national Human Resources Development (HRD) strategy provides the framework within various levels of government, local, provincial and national, will work together with education institutions, business and organised labour to provide opportunities for human development. It also provides the basis for ensuring that our people who were disadvantaged in the past are put at the front of the queue in terms of the identified national priorities. The scale of our task is daunting. South Africa's life expectancy is currently 54.7 years, but this is expected to drop to 47 years because of poverty and disease, particularly AIDS. Poverty-related health issues have a negative effect on education and on the workforce and population in general. Another issue that severely limits our HRD efforts is income inequality. Between 1975 and 1991, the income of the poorest 60% of the population dropped by about 35%. By 1996, the gulf between rich and poor had grown even larger. Extreme income inequality limits the ability of individuals, households and the government to finance education and training and the development of skills that are critical to improved participation in the labour market and, consequently, to improved income. Social equity is also an HRD indicator. Blacks and women are still under-represented in the top occupations in this country and over-represented in the low-level occupations. An especially worrying concern to the Education Ministry is to redress the inequalities in the composition of staff and students in education and training institutions.

Vision, mission and objectives of the strategy

The overall vision of the HRD strategy is "A nation at work for a better life for all." Its key mission is: "To maximise the potential of people in South Africa, through the acquisition of knowledge and skills, to work productively and competitively in order to achieve a rising quality of life for all, and to set in place an operational plan, together with the necessary institutional arrangements, to achieve this."

In the national strategy, we set very ambitious goals for ourselves, which include improving the social infrastructure of the country, reducing disparities in wealth and poverty, developing a more inclusive society, and improving our position on the international competitiveness table.

To accomplish these goals, we have to have effective co-ordination between key HRD pillars:

- A solid basic foundation, which includes Early Childhood Development (ECD), general education, and adult education and training, all of which are key priorities of the Education Ministry.
- A supply of skills from the further and higher education bands of the NQF which anticipate and respond to specific skills needs in society, through state and private sector participation in lifelong learning.
- An articulated demand for skills, generated by the needs of the public and private sectors, and the development of small business; and
- A research and innovation sector which supports industrial and employment growth policies.

The strategy will ensure integrated HRD planning and implementation, monitored on a national, regional and sectoral level, with progress measured against approved indicators.

Some of the key challenges that we address in this strategy are to improve the foundations for life and work, namely early childhood development, general school education and adult literacy and skills development. The transition from school to work is made extremely difficult by our poor matric results. Only 14% of those who wrote the Senior Certificate Examination (SCE) in 2000 passed with an exemption making them eligible for entry into higher learning. In addition, of the 12.5% who received an exemption in 1998/99, only 61% entered higher education institutions immediately after matriculating. There is no data on where the remaining students went, something that we will study further. The most devastating impact of the matric system is that approximately 250 000 students annually are considered failures because they failed to pass matric, even though they have completed 12 years of continuous schooling. The labour market currently places no value on these learning achievements. It is this dysfunctionality that our national HRD and FET continue to seek to remedy.

Another of the strategy's objectives is improving the supply of high-quality skills, particularly scarce skills. There has been a gradual shift in enrolments in higher education institutions away from the humanities to business/commerce and, to a much lesser extent, to science, engineering and technology (SET). These moves are in the right direction, but we still need to increase the number of SET graduates significantly to meet national priorities. Another challenge for us is to get more older working students to come back to higher education institutions to update their skills. We have to expand our post-school education and training system, if we are to adapt successfully to the needs of adult and lifelong education. We also have to improve our higher education and training participation, success and retention rates. The rapid rate of growth in enrolments in the early 1990s began to level off by the late 1990s. Another major challenge for us is how to stem the migration of skilled labour. The loss of skilled labour between 1991 and 1997 resulted in a shift from a net gain of economically active persons to a net loss.

A target area of the strategy is to increase employer participation in lifelong learning. According to the 1995 October Household Survey, a total of 1.7 million economically active people were employed in productive activities in the informal sector in 1995. The Reserve Bank estimates that the informal sector accounts for 7% of South Africa's gross domestic product and 18% of employment. 80% of the informal sector workers are Africans and 60% are women. There are over 300 000 formal and informal SMMEs in South Africa. Our key challenge, therefore, is to enhance the employment-creating potential of SMMEs, through the development of skills. In this regard, SETAs will play a key role in assisting with the provision of training, accreditation and the quality assurance of skills.

In conclusion, the HRD strategy is a joint and co-operative strategy, which involves Cabinet, the Departments of Labour, Education, Public Service and Administration and Arts, Culture, Science and Technology. In addition, we have commissioned the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) to collect data on all the approved indicators at least annually, including the development of synopses and analysis of the data.

The benefits to the country from the successful implementation of this strategy over the next 5 to 10 years will be significant. Primarily, the integration of different government policies (which would be implemented separately in the absence of a joint HRD strategy), will help us to increase economic growth and employment, improve the standard of living for all, broaden participation in the labour market, and produce a more educated and trained citizenry.

6. HIV/AIDS

We must deal urgently and purposefully with the HIV/AIDS emergency in and through the education and training system. This is the priority that underlies all priorities, for unless we succeed, we face a future full of suffering and loss, with untold consequences for our communities and the education institutions that serve them. The Ministry of Education will work alongside the Ministry of Health to ensure that the national education system plays its part to stem the epidemic, and to ensure that the rights of all persons infected with the HIV/AIDS virus are fully protected (Minister of Education Kader Asmal, July, 1999).

In this section of the paper, we briefly consider the size of the HIV/AIDS pandemic in our country, and its specific impact on the educational sector. We then consider our efforts, at national and departmental levels, to address the pandemic.

A recent report released by UNAIDS (2000) suggests that South Africa has the fastest growing HIV/AIDS epidemic in the world, with more people infected than in any other country in the world. The report estimates that over four million South Africans (about one in every eight adults) are HIV positive. Prevalence rates are highest among young people, especially teenage girls. While the methodology of these estimates is still being scrutinised, there is no question that HIV/AIDS represents a massive pandemic in our country.

Several agencies have used current estimates on prevalence and disease progression to make future projections about HIV/AIDS. While these projections should be treated with some caution, they paint a devastating picture, and draw attention to critical challenges facing us in education such as child morbidity and mortality rates, orphanhood rates and the level of children in distress as a result of HIV/AIDS, and the different stages of development of the disease.

Recent studies by the Department of Health indicates that between 1998 and 1999, for the first time, the estimated increase in HIV prevalence was not exponential as it was between 1990 and 1998. This pattern suggests that the pandemic has reached some kind of plateau and has entered a period of stabilisation after a decade of rapid spread, reflecting an epidemiological profile similar to those of Uganda and Thailand. But, let us turn specifically to the impact of the pandemic on education.

Enrolments: declining and changing demand for education

Currently, no statistics are available with which to accurately estimate the direct and indirect consequences of HIV/AIDS on school attendance. However, we know that drop-out rates due to poverty, illness, lack of motivation and trauma are likely to increase. Absenteeism among children who are care-givers or heads of households, those who help to supplement family income, and those who are ill, is bound to rise.

HIV/AIDS is likely to slow population growth rates and alter the structure of the population. As the proportion of potential parents (20-40 years) declines, numbers of orphaned children increase and poverty deepens, school enrolment rates will decline and drop-out rates will rise. There may be negative school population growth in places.

There may be an increased demand among sick parents for early childhood education, and an increase in pre-school intake. There may be greater demand for second-chance education by learners returning to education after an absence from the system, or for more flexible learning opportunities for those who are ill, care-givers, or wage-earners. On the other hand, these demands may be offset by fewer births and more deaths of under-fives, and the fact that families will have less disposable income for school fees, voluntary

funds, transport costs and uniforms. We are currently undertaking an impact study to better anticipate the supply and demand implications of the pandemic.

Educators: reducing supply and quality of education

Available figures suggest that of all educators, teachers are the most at risk, since they are educated, mobile and relatively affluent. The impact of HIV/AIDS on all educators is profound. Some will be ill, absent, and dying. Many others will be preoccupied with family crises. As professionals, educators will often be required to take on responsibility for orphans within the extended family.

Job mobility among educators is likely to increase as a result of the pandemic. Analysts suggest that for every teacher leaving education (due to mortality, morbidity, better job opportunities), approximately 2.6 educators would have to be trained to keep up with demand. Even then, educator:pupil ratios are expected to reach 1:50 by 2006. This would threaten the gains made in terms of educator: pupil ratios since 1994.

However, the supply-demand equation is complicated. Teacher recruitment targets may be lower than at present if enrolments decline or do not grow as expected. Given the uncertainty about likely levels of chronic morbidity, mortality and other types of 'wastage', it is very difficult to make teacher requirement projections with any degree of confidence on the basis of current data.

Educational management capacity is fragile at national, provincial and district levels. Provincial and district administrations find it difficult to attract skilled personnel. At school level, many principals have not yet received sufficient support or training to enable them to be creative about local management of education. The situation will only become worse as the pandemic takes hold.

As well as managers, the system will lose experienced teacher mentors and teacher educators in universities and colleges whose career experience cannot be replaced. Younger and less-experienced educators will invariably take their place, but this may impact on the quality of teacher education.

The role of the education sector

In the early days of the epidemic, the issues associated with HIV/AIDS were discussed largely in health terms. This has shifted dramatically over the past several years as the pandemic is framed in the context of its holistic social impact. Our growing understanding of the complex social drivers of the spread of the disease has increasingly placed the Department of Education as a central player in addressing the pandemic. In July 1999, the Minister of Education identified nine strategic priorities for educational development. One of the nine was the HIV/AIDS pandemic.

This priority has been operationalised into three programmatic objectives in the *Tirisano* implementation plan. Each is linked to anticipated outcomes and performance indicators. The three programmes outlined are:

- Awareness, information and advocacy,
- HIV/AIDS within the curriculum, and
- Planning for HIV/AIDS and the education system.

Specific activities include:

- The Ministry's policy on HIV/AIDS for learners and educators has been converted into an accessible booklet aimed at educators, school governing bodies and district officials. One million copies in a variety of official languages were distributed nation-wide in February 2000, with a back-up communication campaign on radio and in print media.
- A large part of the special allocation set aside by Cabinet for the prevention of the spread of the disease, providing treatment, care and support, supporting research, monitoring and surveillance, and protecting human and legal rights, will be utilised by the Department of Education to rapidly expand the reach of its Life Skills/HIV/AIDS programme to at least one third of all primary and high schools. Some of these funds have been allocated to provincial departments of education to each appoint two HIV/AIDS contract officials – posts which have been filled –for three years. Each provincial department is required to designate an HIV/AIDS programme manager, as well as a working group to implement, monitor and evaluate the programme and to advise management regarding programme implementation and progress.
- The completion of a collaborative HIV/AIDS impact assessment study on the education sector, with support from USAID, under an agreement with the Department of Health. In this study the effects of the epidemic on morbidity and mortality among learners and educators are assessed, and the implications for the demand, supply and quality of education, management, teaching and social support services. Learner projections have been completed and work is now underway on staff projections.

Conclusion

Beyond the enormous suffering of individuals and families, South Africans are beginning to understand the cost in every sphere of society, observing with growing dismay the impact [of HIV] on the efforts of our new democracy to achieve the goals of reconstruction and development... All sectors and all spheres of society have to be involved as equal partners. We have to join hands to develop programmes and share information and research that will halt the spread of this disease and help develop support networks for those that are affected...

(Nelson Mandela, addressing the World Economic Forum, 1997).

The fight against HIV/AIDS cannot be separated from our larger reconstruction and development project. Over the past decade we have come increasingly to understand the magnitude and nature of the HIV/AIDS pandemic in our country. The implications of the pandemic are overwhelming. However, we remain committed to addressing the impact of HIV/AIDS with both determination and compassion. We remain committed to learning about the pandemic, and finding strategies to address its impact and spread. The

'HIV/AIDS/STD Strategic Plan for South Africa, 2000-2005', and the 'National Integrated Plan for Children Infected and Affected by HIV/AIDS' provide the basis for an integrated national approach to the pandemic. The focus on HIV/AIDS in the *Tirisano* Implementation Plan, including a focus on awareness, information, life-skills, and support, represents the effort on the part of the Department of Education to respond purposefully to the crisis. The success of our reconstruction and development project largely depends upon our continued innovation and determination in this area.

The implementation of an AIDS strategy in education continues to face specific challenges. Amongst these are that cultural and religious communities are still against the teaching of sex education in schools. Provincial education authorities have cited the very specific problems which relate to planning when accurate statistical projections are not available, and the need to expand guidance and special education services so that, when the need arises, relevant counselling and education support may be provided to both infected and affected teachers and learners. In all the provinces, there is a shortage of trained personnel to handle the teaching of life-skills; moreover, only learners who are following C2005 receive life-skills training. While enormous strides have been made in awareness of AIDS, there have been little evidence of concomitant behavioural changes, and this continues to constitute a major challenge. Moreover, counselling and training directed to educators as AIDS carriers is receiving urgent attention.

7. Partnerships and international relations

Central to our policy framework is the contention that a high quality education sector cannot be built by government alone, but depends upon creative and dynamic partnerships between the public sector, civil society and international partners. Several working partnerships have been consolidated; many more continue to be built, as the capacities of various sectors to contribute to educational development are better understood.

- Our most important social partners are the teacher unions. The majority of educators are organised into three teacher unions. A labour-relations framework has been jointly agreed to by the Education Ministry and the teacher unions. This encompasses both traditional areas of negotiation and issues of professional concern, including pedagogy and quality improvement strategies.
- NGOs in the field of education and training provision are extremely heterogeneous. Historically organised largely within the broader social movements, they played an important role in challenging the apartheid state around issues of transformation, including in the field of education. Many have operated most effectively at the community level. The NGO sector has undergone a massive process of reorganisation since 1994, when many of its leaders moved into the public sector and funds were increasingly channelled away from NGO's to support government more directly. The current NGO sector is emerging as an important partner in educational transformation, and is often a source of creativity and innovation. We are working with NGOs and the private sector to expand working relationships, particularly in the areas of educator training, school improvement, ABET, ECD and FET, as well as evaluation, research, and monitoring. The private sector in particular is increasingly engaging in the provision of basic education by funding FET initiatives, building schools in needy communities, and supporting the provision of teaching and learning equipment.
- Several partnerships have been consolidated, providing working models of educational transformation through public-private partnerships. The Business Trust, a partnership between business and government, implemented in education through three NGOs over five years, namely READ in 1 200 primary schools, the Joint Education Trust in 600 high schools, and the National Business Initiative-

Colleges Collaboration Fund in all 152 technical colleges is a significant example of important working partnerships. More and more commonly, committed private sector entities will provide financial support to NGO projects prioritised by the public sector. The success of key national initiatives (including the National Literacy Initiative) will largely rely on the partnerships of the private and NGO sectors.

The international community has played an important role in working with the Department of Education to contribute to education transformation. The Department of Education co-operates with the United Nations system and with numerous donors to improve access to basic, further and higher education. Development co-operation partners such as DANIDA, USAID, SIDA, CIDA, DfID (UK), the Netherlands, Belgium, IrishAid, the Finnish government, and the European Union, have been instrumental in the provision of technical and financial assistance to the national and provincial departments of education. The Ministry has also played a leading role in the development of a Southern African Development co-operation protocol, and participates in the Education for All (EFA) initiative. It has a strong collaborative relationship with the UNESCO office. A key initiative in this regard was the undertaking from the UNESCO Conference of African Ministers of Education (MINEDAF) (in 1998) to open access to South Africa's higher education institutions to exchange scholars and postgraduate students from the African Continent.

8. Building an education and training system for the 21st century: Future challenges

Many of South Africa's challenges are rooted in our troubled past. Since 1994, the provision of a single, equitable system of quality education within a system of lifelong learning has been a central priority for the government. The nature of this provision, in the context of wider demands on the fiscus, the situation we inherited and practical requirements of implementation, continues to demand debate and innovation. Between 1994 to 2001, our education transformation strategy has evolved and matured, from an initial focus on policy development, to systemic and now institutional reform and implementation.

The fierce racism and inequities of our past remain deep in the minds of our people, and our educational institutions. President Mbeki recently articulated the issue. While we celebrate the miracles of reconciliation that characterised the close of the century, the fight against racism – intellectual as well as structural – must continue. We live in one nation, but still occupy parallel worlds. Rebuilding our sense of history and developing local languages and multi-lingualism are necessary to reclaim our identity and create a social context for celebrating the values in our Constitution. The challenge is complex, shaping and shaped by education.

Creation of a high quality education system, characterised by accountability, transparency, and efficiency, continues to be a major focus. We will continue to strengthen national and provincial systems on the basis of outcomes, performance and professionalism. We are building a culture and ethos in which passivity gives way to active engagement and a sense of purpose, empathy, pride, and achievement. Our approach is framed by both accountability and support. The Batho-Pele Strategy, the Public Finance Management Act and the Public Service Act and its associated regulations, have been important guides. The development of knowledge, information, planning and monitoring systems, including the education management information system, is also important. We will extend and build on progress already made.

The manifold demands for resources, each with proper claims for priority, continue to challenge us, in the context of affordability. Budgets must be credible, valid, and reliable, directed towards redress and equity. Our discussions will continue with the National Treasury and the Financial and Fiscal Commission about how to achieve greater poverty targeting in future budgets to schools. As will our discussions on allocations to early childhood education, special needs and adult education. We are targeting our spending to particular programmes and the most marginalised and poor sections of our community, seeking to use resources wisely and efficiently. We are deeply aware of our responsibilities in building an education and training system for the 21st century that helps break the cycle of poverty that continues to trap many in our nation. We have laid a foundation, and will build on it.

Effective government spending must be complimented by innovative partnerships with NGOs, the private sector and the international community, harnessing the potential for complementary actions. A closely related challenge is to mobilise an active citizenry and widen the participation of civil society. We are actively taking on this challenge through school governing bodies and governing councils of colleges, universities and technikons, and through school learner representative councils and student representative councils of colleges, universities and technikons. Social mobilisation and participation are areas requiring more effort. At the government level, strengthening co-operation between and across national and provincial departments, is vital. Significant strides have been made through shifts from legislative prescription to greater institutional co-ordination.

Functional and high performing schools and colleges are pivotal in providing high quality education for all. We continue to face severe challenges in the area of basic school performance, especially in schools and institutions serving our nation's poor. We have taken major steps in the in-service education of school management teams, including pilot approaches to school evaluation and quality assurance.

We will therefore:

- Focus our energies on equitable provision of textbooks, stationery, electricity, running water, buildings and staff.
- Target specific inequities, focusing on the poor, adult learners without functional literacy and numeracy skills, women and girls, and those who have special needs.
- Continue to develop programmes in areas of national need, such as science, maths and technology. Given the profound relationships between poverty and educational outcomes, our challenge will continue to be to understand and address the specific contexts of rural and urban poverty.

Effective education requires a dedicated professional community of educators. This entails a re-conception of what it means to be an educator and a massive investment in teacher development. As we outlined earlier, this is already underway through the National Professional Diploma in Education, focusing on under-qualified educators, and the upgrading of maths and science educators. Educators must be developed as facilitators of knowledge, as managers of innovation and group engagement, as community leaders, and as lifelong learners. Other initiatives in this area have begun, including developmental appraisals, and a programme of national teacher recognition awards. Together with teacher organisations, we are in the process of building a labour relations framework that encompasses the professional issues of pedagogy and quality outcomes.

Our commitment to enhancing life opportunities for our people requires the strengthening of the further education and the training sector. We are in a position to intensify our efforts in the further education and

adult education bands. We will continue to approach in innovative ways the development of vocational and technical skills, service and managerial skills and entrepreneurial skills. We will also continue to bring to life a system of flexible and lifelong learning. We will find ways of merging the goals of social development and South African identity with those of economic competitiveness in the global context. The solution is not simply one of knowledge and skills, but of values, attitudes and our vision of South Africa as a nation.

Higher Education is critical in this development. Its role is to strengthen the intellectual fibre of our nation, in relation to economic development, and in relation to social, political and cultural life. The domains are critical, and they are not mutually exclusive. Together they imply a special character of intellectuals, linking theory to practice and context, engaged rather than isolated from the outside world, and committed to building a humane society based on compassion and quality of life.

In all parts of the education system, we will continue developing robust quality assurance systems, including systemic evaluation against national benchmarks, and regular whole school evaluations. Our commitment to outcomes-based approaches within the context of guiding frameworks for processes and inputs, is already established. We have also recognised the importance of linking accountability measures to formative development, organisational improvement, leadership and learning. These systems will continue to require focused efforts. The increased financial allocation to planning, monitoring and evaluation systems is but one example of our seriousness in this regard.

We have come a long way since 1994. Our achievements are the more remarkable given our inherited financial, structural and human capacities. We began by creating policy frameworks, and regulatory and procedural mechanisms to realise the educational ideals we imagined in the dark days of apartheid. From 1999, we began a conscious process of targeted actions focused on the implementation. This is an ongoing and recursive process. The challenge that we face is to deepen our efforts at the levels that matter most, in educational institutions and amongst learners. We have the courage to review and strengthen our policy frameworks as necessary. We will continue to institutionalise our gains whilst ensuring that they remain flexible and functional. We set an ambitious task, have made significant progress, learnt a great deal, and remain committed to and optimistic about the goals we have set.

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