

SOUTH AFRICA YEARBOOK

2020



government
communications

Department:
Government Communication and Information System
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA





2019/20 SOUTH AFRICA YEARBOOK

Foreword

The *South Africa Yearbook (SAYB) 2019/20*, documents a year of progress across society. At the same time, the year will forever be defined by the severe disruption to lives and livelihoods caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

This edition of our annual SAYB is published amid the global struggle against COVID-19. In South Africa, the last few months of the financial year centred on the management of the pandemic in partnership with civil society and with our partners in Africa and across the globe.

Until the identification of the first COVID-19 case in South Africa in March 2020, government was making steady progress in concerted efforts to tackle the triple challenge of poverty, unemployment and inequality.

The pandemic has affected our growth trajectory and implementation of far-reaching programmes to improve the lives of South Africans. In its wake, the virus has left a damaged economy, a sudden loss of income for individuals and businesses and a country that has to engage with the world outside in new and different ways.

However, as with all crises, COVID-19 has compelled us to revisit our plans for revitalising the economy and making our economy more inclusive and equitable.

This crisis has also sparked innovation and adaptation in many areas, and the adaptability and flexibility demonstrated by our nation during this time bodes well for the tasks that we must now undertake.

One of the key developments in our quest for inclusive growth was the appointment of the Presidential Economic Advisory Council in October 2019, tasked with ensuring greater coherence and consistency in the implementation of economic policies that spur inclusive growth.

The expertise of the council members is an even more critical asset to our country in the midst of COVID-19.

This SAYB reminds us of the vital interventions we took in the year under review to support Early Childhood Development, which is globally recognised as the most powerful investment in human capital that a country can make.

To strengthen the ongoing fight against gender-based violence (GBV) and femicide, women's rights and gender power relations will be part of Life Orientation in the school

curriculum. Necessary amendments are being made to laws and policies to ensure that perpetrators of GBV are brought to book.

During South Africa's Chairship of the African Union in 2020, we have prioritised gender empowerment, and protecting and promoting the rights of adolescent girls and young women on the African continent.

Back home, the District Development Model (DDM) was introduced to build a coherent and coordinated state, and improve integrated planning across government. In each of the 44 districts and eight metropolitan areas, the DDM involves all social partners, including business, civil society, faith-based communities and traditional leaders, in the approach of One District, One Plan.

Government recognises the important role played by traditional leadership in mobilising our people behind a common vision of freedom, equality and justice. As part of efforts to address the challenges of landlessness, poverty and inequality, we are fast-tracking the process of land reform.

The Coronavirus pandemic may have cast a heavy shadow over our efforts to grow South Africa, but this crisis has changed the way we approach the health and well-being of our nation, the way we treat our environment, and how we relate to one another.

Our continued fight against the virus, South Africa's own contribution to the global search for a vaccine, the solidarity and cooperation we have deepened with states across our continent and the regard the world has expressed for our efforts to fight the virus, will ensure that the new normal will also be a better normal.

That requires us to build on the many achievements recorded in this publication, which I am proud to commend to you.



His Excellency Cyril M. Ramaphosa
President of the Republic of South Africa
October 2020



South Africa Yearbook 2019/20

Twenty-seventh (27th) edition
(Originally published as *South Africa Official Yearbook*)

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ISBN: 978-0-620-87169-3

The *South Africa Yearbook* (SAYB) is compiled and edited by the GCIS. The editorial staff has taken all reasonable care to ensure correctness of facts and statistics. However, any person requiring formal confirmation of any data in the SAYB, or more detailed specific information, should consult the sources as indicated. The information is also available on Government Online (www.gov.za).

Unless otherwise specified, the information contained in this book was the latest available in September 2020.

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