

**SOUTH
AFRICA
YEARBOOK
2003/04**

Foreword

In this 10th anniversary year since we achieved democracy, we can, as South Africans, take pride in the progress that freedom has brought. We can be confident of our ability as a nation, working together, to meet the enormous challenges of fully achieving our goal of a better life for all.

The pages of this *South Africa Yearbook* attest to the progress and the challenges, the difficulties and opportunities.

It has been the historic mission of this generation of South Africans to confront and overcome apartheid's pervasive legacy. The transformation of our society, and the reconstruction and development of our country have been and remain our strategic goals. Central to the realisation of these goals is the restoration of the dignity of all South Africans and the eradication of poverty.

As we approach the end of the First Decade of Freedom, we can assert with confidence that social, political and economic stability prevails in our country, previously divided and torn by conflict; that many millions have gained access to basic services and benefits once denied them; and that the culture of human rights and democracy has taken root. South Africa, once isolated from the international community by the inhumanity of apartheid, now plays its part in Africa and the world, contributing to the collective effort to promote peace, development and human rights. The tide has turned.

Government's partnership with the people of South Africa, in a national effort to build a better life for all, has been critical to the progress made. The people's contract for a better tomorrow is taking shape.



While we take pride in the progress that has been made, we are acutely aware of the massive challenges that remain before the accumulated legacy of poverty and underdevelopment can be eradicated. We are learning the lessons of our experience and resolve to build on what has been achieved.

The *South Africa Yearbook 2003/04* reflects that experience and that determination. As we celebrate 10 years of freedom in South Africa, we do so as a people united for a better South Africa and a better world.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Thabo Mbeki". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a period at the end.

President Thabo Mbeki
November 2003

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Editor Delien Burger

Assistant editors Anri Cronjé and Elias Tibane

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Proofreader Kathleen Bartels for Wordsmiths

Design and layout Thabo Matlejoane of STE Publishers

Indexer Mirié van Rooyen

Suggested reading lists Prof Reuben Musiker

Compiled, edited and published by Government Communications (GCIS),
Private Bag X745, Pretoria, 0001
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