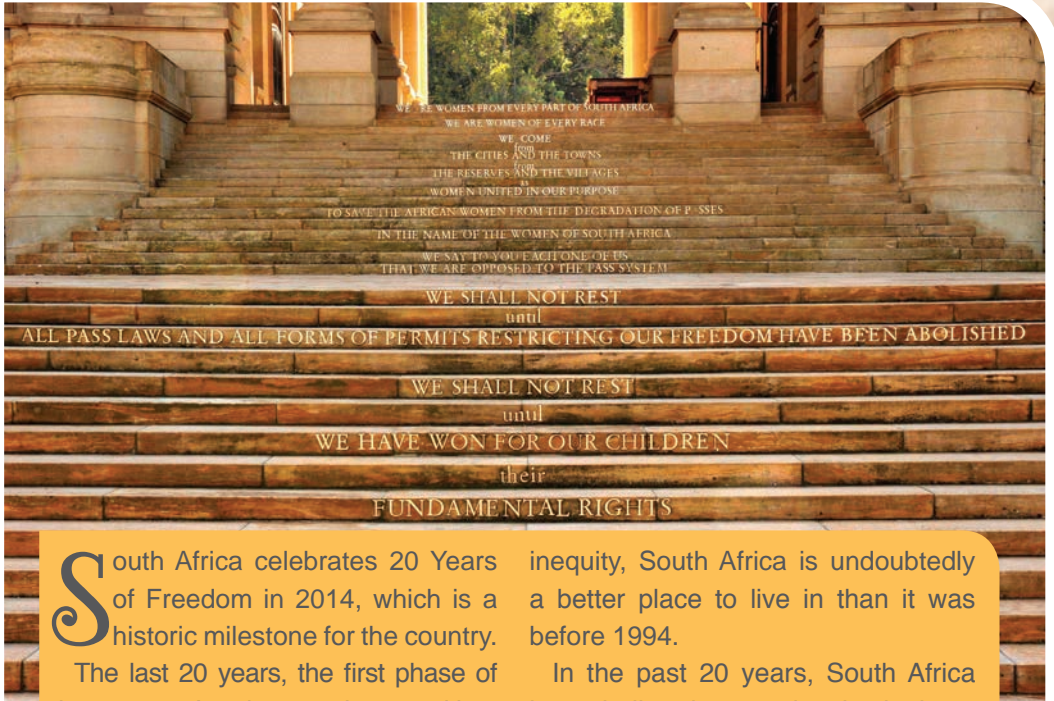


South Africa
20
Years
of
Freedom





South Africa celebrates 20 Years of Freedom in 2014, which is a historic milestone for the country.

The last 20 years, the first phase of the country's democratic transition, laid the foundations for a non-racial, non-sexist, united and prosperous South Africa, and a society based on fundamental human rights, equality and unity in diversity.

Non-racial majority rule based on one-person, one-vote has brought about government based on the will of the people. Despite some remaining challenges such as the triple challenge of poverty, unemployment and

inequity, South Africa is undoubtedly a better place to live in than it was before 1994.

In the past 20 years, South Africa has built democratic institutions, transformed the Public Service, extended basic services, stabilised the economy and taken its rightful place in the family of nations.

The *Twenty Year Review*, which was released in 2013, and the National Planning Commission's 2011 Diagnostic Report, highlight that poverty, inequality and unemployment continue to negatively affect the lives of many people.



However, there had been a significant improvement in people's lives since 1994. Compared to the apartheid era, where the majority had no political rights and parties opposed to apartheid were banned, all South Africans now have the right to freedom of association and are free to make political choices and campaign for any political party or cause.

Whereas the majority of South Africans were denied the right to vote during the apartheid era, every adult citizen now has the right to participate in free, fair and regular elections, the right to vote and to stand for public office and, if elected, to hold office.

All South Africans have the right to assemble, to demonstrate, to picket and to present petitions, provided this is done peacefully and unarmed.

South Africans now have the right to freedom of expression. The press and other media can express themselves freely and there is academic freedom and freedom of scientific research.

The Bill of Rights also makes provision for the right to access any information that is required for the exercise or protection of any rights. The freedom of expression does not extend to propaganda of war, incitement of imminent violence or advocacy of hatred based on race, ethnicity, gender or religion.

Compared to the apartheid era, all South Africans are now equal before the law and have the right to equal protection and benefit of the law. Whereas during apartheid people were detained without trial, mainly for their political beliefs, all citizens now have the right to freedom and security of the person, which includes the right not to be detained without trial and not to be treated or punished in a cruel, inhuman or degrading way.

Everyone who is detained has the right to be informed of the reason for being detained and to legal representation. Everyone who is arrested for allegedly committing an offence has the right to remain silent and to a fair trial or hearing before a court.



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... every adult citizen now has the right to participate in free, fair and regular elections ...





While the apartheid state sought to deprive the majority of South Africans of their citizenship and controlled their movement through oppressive pass laws and other means, no citizen may be deprived of citizenship and everyone has the right to freely move through the Republic, reside anywhere and hold a passport.

Whereas the apartheid state reserved skilled jobs for white South Africans, all citizens now have the right to choose their trade, occupation or profession.

All citizens have the right to fair labour practices, to form and join a trade union and participate in its activities and programmes and the right to engage in collective bargaining.

No one may be subjected to slavery, servitude and forced labour. While access to education was racially determined during apartheid, all South Africans now have the right to basic education (including adult basic education) and to further education, which the state has sought to progressively make available and accessible, through reasonable measures.

All South Africans now have the right to access healthcare services, water and social security and appropriate social assistance if they are unable to support themselves and their dependants. No one may be refused emergency medical treatment.

Every child, regardless of race, has a right to basic nutrition, shelter, basic health services and social services. Every child also has the right to family care or parental care and to be protected from maltreatment, neglect, abuse or degradation and exploitative labour practices.

Compared to the apartheid era, all citizens have the right to freedom of sexual orientation, conscience, religion, thought, belief and opinion. All marriages concluded under any tradition, or a system of religious, person or family law are now recognised.

Compared to the further oppression and discrimination they experienced during the apartheid era, women have equal rights before the law, including the right to make decisions regarding reproduction.



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National Development Plan (NDP)

The NDP, also known as Vision 2030 and adopted by Cabinet in 2012, is the country's blueprint to reduce poverty, unemployment and inequality.

In the words of President Jacob Zuma: "The plan has been adopted as a national plan for the whole country. It is our roadmap for the next 20 years. All the work we do in government is now part of the comprehensive National Development Plan, including all operational plans, be they social, economic or political."

Since 2012, the focus has been on implementing the parts of the NDP that did not require long lead times and additional funding. For example, the NDP proposal to establish an Office of the Chief Procurement Officer in National Treasury, in order to ensure value for money and reduce corruption,

has been implemented.

Legislation to prevent public servants from doing business with the State was introduced in Parliament in 2013, as proposed in the NDP. Implementation of the Employment Tax Incentive Act, 2013 (Act 26 of 2013), aimed at helping young people enter the labour market, began in 2014.

Despite progress in reducing rural poverty and increasing access to basic services in rural areas over the past 20 years, rural areas are still characterised by great poverty and inequality. As stated in the NDP, by 2030, South Africa's rural communities must have better opportunities to participate fully in the economic, social and political life of the country.



Government's programme of radical economic transformation is about placing the economy on a qualitatively different path that ensures more rapid, sustainable growth, higher investment, increased employment, reduced inequality and deracialisation of the economy. The NDP sets a growth target of at least 5% a year, and emphasises measures to ensure that the benefits of growth are equitably shared.

Source: *Twenty Year Review*

