

To the Minister in the  
Office of the Presidency  
Dr Essop Pahad

I have the honour of presenting  
the 1999 Annual Report of the  
Government Communication  
and Information System

The GCIS grew from strength to strength during 1999, both in staff numbers and in the quality of its contribution to government communication. This year, it should be remembered, was the first full calendar year of the existence of the GCIS and, as such, the organisation began to tackle some of the key strategic issues arising from its mandate.

Central here is the concept of development communication and information, and the decision to recast the nine regional offices of the GCIS into Government Information Centres (GICs) located at district level. These will, in turn, ground their work in a partnership approach at local level, within the context of Multi-purpose Community Centres (MPCCs).

Another important area in which work has developed over the last year is the Cabinet mandate to set up a Media Development Agency (MDA) - an independent agency which will enhance media development and diversity in South Africa. Of course, this is a process which requires extensive research and wide consultation on its terms of reference, legal status, sources of funding and criteria for support, amongst other things. A number of key stakeholders have been engaged around these issues and research has been commissioned to investigate a possible funding model.

Although South Africa has, since 1994, made enormous strides in overcoming the adversities of its past as well as positioning itself as a global player of repute, as a country and a government we have not paid focused attention to promoting ourselves abroad. Our image has been one gained by default. As such, the GCIS has, over the past year, engaged widely with sister departments such as Foreign Affairs, Environmental Affairs and Tourism,

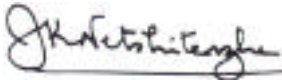
Trade and Industry, and Finance - towards a more vigorous and coordinated approach to this matter. The year 2000 should see important developments in this regard, with the launch of an International Marketing Council and a dedicated Project Manager, based at the GCIS, to spearhead the initiative.

As you will see from this Report, the GCIS has made substantial progress in redefining itself from the old South African Communication Service. During 1999, a Transformation Council was established, under whose guidance a Climate Study was undertaken into the culture and perceptions of the organisation, a Corporate Strategy was developed, and a Project Desk was set up in order more professionally to manage our relationship with clients in government and to introduce into the organisation project management theory and practice.

It has been a busy year, on the whole, with a major investment of GCIS resources in the inauguration of the new President in June and communicating the change of government and its programmatic approach.

This year should witness further qualitative growth of our young organisation.

Thank you, as always, to Minister Essop Pahad and President Thabo Mbeki for their leadership and support, as well as to the Portfolio Committee on Communication for its guidance and scrutiny.



JOEL NETSHITENZHE  
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER