Education

Education is not only pivotal to economic prosperity but it also plays a crucial role in enabling South Africans to improve the quality of their lives and contribute to a peaceful, productive and democratic nation. These sentiments are captured in the Vision Statement of the Department of Education, which states: 'Our vision is of a South Africa in which all our people have access to lifelong education and training opportunities, which will in turn contribute towards improving the quality of life and building a peaceful, prosperous and democratic society'.

According to the Bill of Rights contained in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 (Act 108 of 1996), everyone has the right to a basic education, including adult basic education and further education, which the State, through reasonable measures, must make progressively available and accessible.

Education is one of the most important long-term investments a country can make. There has been a significant increase in the education budget allocation under the post-apartheid democratic Government, from R31,8 billion in 1994 to R59,8 billion in 2002. At almost 6% of gross domestic product, South Africa has one of the highest rates of government investment in education in the world.

◀ There has been a significant increase in the education budget allocation under the post-apartheid democratic Government. In the 2002/03 financial year, the budget allocation to education totalled R59,669 billion. This amount included R7,469 billion for universities and technikons and R50,865 billion for college and school education.

Formal education in South Africa is categorised according to three levels. The General Education and Training (GET) band consists of the Reception Year (Grade R) and learners up to Grade 9, as well as an equivalent adult basic education and training (ABET) qualification. The Further Education and Training (FET) band consists of all education and training from the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) levels two to four (equivalent to grades 10 – 12 in schools) and the National Technical Certificate one to three in FET colleges. The Higher Education (HE) band consists of a range of degrees, diplomas and certificates up to and including post-doctoral degrees. These levels are integrated within the NQF provided for by the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) Act, 1995 (Act 58 of 1995).

The South African public education system accommodates more than 11,6 million school learners, 407 401 university students, 202 730 technikon students, and 125 000 technical college students. There are 26 789 primary and secondary schools with 348 362 educators.

Universities, technikons and technical colleges are presently undergoing rationalisation, which will reduce the overall number of institutions through mergers.

Education structures

South Africa has a single national education system, which is organised and managed by

the national Department of Education and the nine provincial departments.

Ministry of Education

The National Education Policy Act, 1996 (Act 27 of 1996), gives the Minister of Education the power to determine national norms and standards for education planning, provision, governance, monitoring and evaluation. The principle of democratic decision-making must be exercised within the context of the overall policy goals. 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.

National and provincial departments of education

The Constitution has vested substantial powers in the provincial legislatures and governments to run educational affairs (other than universities and technikons), subject to a national policy framework. In terms of the Constitution, the national Department of Education is responsible for matters that cannot be regulated effectively by provincial legislation, as well as for matters that need to be co-ordinated in terms of norms and standards at national level. Relations with provincial departments of education are guided by national policy, within which the provincial departments have to set their own priorities and implementation programmes.

The role of the national Department is to translate the education and training policies of government and the provisions of the Constitution into a national education policy and legislative framework.

It is the responsibility of the Department to ensure that:
- all levels of the system adhere to these policies and laws
- mechanisms are in place to monitor and enhance quality in the system

- the system keeps in step with international developments.

The core activities of the Department are to provide:
- research and policy review
- planning and policy development
- support to the provinces and HE institutions in their implementation of national policy, norms and standards
- monitoring the implementation of policy, norms and standards to assess their impact on the quality of the educational process, and to identify policy gaps.

The South African Schools Act, 1996 (Act 84 of 1996), further devolves responsibility to the school level by delegating the governance of public schools to democratically elected school governing bodies consisting of parents, educators, non-educator staff, and (in secondary schools) learners.

Statutory bodies

Council of Education Ministers (CEM)

The CEM, consisting of the Minister of Education, the Deputy Minister of Education and the nine provincial executive council members (MECs) for education, meets regularly to discuss the promotion of national education policy, share information and views on all aspects of education in South Africa and co-ordinate action on matters of mutual interest.

Heads of Education Departments Committee (HEDCOM)

HEDCOM consists of the Director-General of the Department of Education, the Deputy Directors-general of the Department, and the heads of provincial education departments. The functions of the Committee include facilitating the development of a national education system, sharing information and views on

national education, co-ordinating administrative action on matters of mutual interest and advising the Department on a range of specified matters relating to the proper functioning of the national education system.

Council for Quality Assurance in General and Further Education and Training (UMALUSI)

UMALUSI is a statutory council which reports to the Minister of Education. This Council replaced the South African Certification Council in June 2002.

The Council is responsible for monitoring and auditing achievements in terms of national qualifications and norms and standards of curriculum and assessment in all public and independent schools, academic and technical colleges, ABET institutions and private providers in these fields and for issuing certificates to candidates at exit points.

South African Qualifications Authority

The integration of a seamless system, encompassing early childhood development (ECD), GET, ABET, FET, and HE is achieved through the development of the NQF, which is overseen by SAQA, a statutory body. It was established in 1995 and is answerable to the Ministers of Education and of Labour.

SAQA, via the NQF, ensures that South African qualifications are of the highest quality and internationally comparable.

The functions of the Authority are to oversee the:

• development of the NQF, by formulating and publishing policies and criteria for the registration of bodies responsible for establishing education and training standards or qualifications and for the accreditation of bodies responsible for monitoring and auditing achievements in terms of such standards and qualifications

• implementation of the NQF, by ensuring the registration, accreditation and assignment of functions to the referred bodies as well as the registration of national standards and qualifications on the Framework.

The NQF is a set of principles and guidelines in which records of learner achievement are registered to enable national recognition of acquired skills and knowledge, thereby ensuring an integrated system that encourages lifelong learning. The NQF also attempts to move the measurement of achievement in education and training away from input towards outcomes.

SAQA's Centre for the Evaluation of Educational Qualifications determines the equivalence between foreign and South African qualifications and recommends possible levels of recognition of foreign qualifications in the South African context. The service is rendered on an ongoing basis.

Council on Higher Education (CHE)

The CHE was established by the HE Act, 1997 (Act 101 of 1997), and is responsible for advising the Minister on all aspects of HE, in particular funding arrangements, language policy and the appropriate shape and size of the system.

It is also responsible for designing and implementing a system for quality assurance in HE. It promotes student access to HE, publishes an annual report on the state thereof and convenes an annual summit for stakeholders. The Council also holds executive responsibility for quality assurance through its permanent subcommittee, the Higher Education Quality Committee (HEQC).

The HEQC was awarded Education and Training Quality Assurer status by SAQA in 2001.

South African Council for Educators (SACE)

SACE is responsible for the registration, pro-

motion and professional development of educators and setting, maintaining and protecting their ethical and professional standards. The Council relies on membership fees as its source of revenue.

The Code of Conduct of SACE took effect on 1 January 2000. The Code determines the ethical rules of the profession that teachers must adhere to. Serious offenders can lose the right to teach.

SACE has more than 350 000 registered educators and is dedicated to ensuring adherence to the Code, which includes dealing with complaints.

The National Board for Further Education and Training (NBFET)

The NBFET was launched in June 1999 in terms of the National Education Policy Act, 1996. It provides the Minister with independent and strategic advice on matters relating to the transformation of FET. The Board may advise the Minister on any aspect of FET on its own initiative and also on:
• national FET policy, goals and priorities
• norms and standards, including funding
• norms and the terms, purposes and conditions of earmarked grants
• reports on FET from provincial advisory bodies.
The Board also monitors and reports annually to the Minister on the goals and performance of the national FET system, analyses and disseminates information about FET and performs any function assigned or delegated to it in terms of any applicable law.

Education Labour Relations Council (ELRC)

The ELRC is a bargaining council for the education sector. The Council consists of equal representation of the employer (the national and provincial departments of education) and the employees (trade unions representing educators and other employees in the sector). The ELRC aims to create effective and constructive labour relations in the education sector and to ensure the promotion and transformation of education at all levels within society.

National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS)

The NSFAS is responsible for:
• allocating loans and bursaries to eligible students in public HE
• developing criteria and conditions for the granting of loans and bursaries to eligible students in consultation with the Minister of Education
• raising funds, recovering loans, maintaining and analysing a database and undertaking research for the better utilisation of financial resources
• advising the Minister on related matters.
An amount of R500 million will be transferred to the Scheme in 2002/03, R470 million in 2003/04 and R498 million in 2004/05. This transfer fluctuates as it takes into account other revenue available to the Scheme, including donor funds received, money repayable on study loans and interest on investments.

Financing education

In the 2002/03 financial year, the budget allocation to education totalled R59,669 billion. This amount included R7,469 billion for universities and technikons and R50,865 billion for college and school education.

Financial planning in the Department occurs within the Government's Medium-term Expenditure Framework, which, through its three-year budgeting horizon, facilitates sustainable and properly-planned financing. Financial analysis and management capacity in the national and provincial education departments is being improved through a project to which an average of about

R200 million per year has been allocated in the medium term.

Conditional grants to provinces

A Conditional Grant for improved financial management and education quality in provincial education systems was established in 1999.

Provincial education departments formulated projects to be funded through this Conditional Grant, based on the framework of priorities established by the Minister of Education, after consultation with provincial MECs. The priority areas for this Grant include:

- whole-school evaluation, school record-keeping, quarterly reports on school attendance and school supervision
- regular assessment of learner performance
- school safety
- improvement in the quality of Senior Certificate examinations
- professional development of principals, with an emphasis on the induction of new appointees
- developing functional and effective school-governing bodies
- orientation and ongoing professional development of educators for Curriculum 2005
- provincial strategic planning and the availability of credible and reliable data for planning and budgeting
- working systems and processes, including financial systems, procurement procedures and personnel practices.

Equity in education expenditure

Equity between and within provinces is achieved through three mechanisms, namely the equitable division of national revenue between provinces, making use of the Equitable Shares Formula (ESF), the National Norms and Standards for School Funding and the National Post Provisioning Norms.

The Government's ESF promotes financial equity between provinces through the distribution of national revenue to provinces on the basis of relative need and backlogs. In the area of education, the size of the school-age population and the number of learners enrolled in public ordinary schools are taken into account, as well as capital investment needs.

The National Norms and Standards for School Funding, which became national policy in 1999, are aimed at achieving equality and poverty redress at schools in terms of non-personnel expenditure within a province. The Norms are clearly progressive, with 60% of a province's non-personnel expenditure going to the poorest 40% of learners. The poorest 20% of learners receives 35% of non-personnel resources, while the richest 20% receives 5%.

Considering that about 90% of provincial education expenditure goes towards personnel costs, the distribution of personnel, in particular teachers, is a key driver of equity within provinces. Equity in this regard is promoted by the National Post Provisioning Norms. These Norms have contributed to the narrowing of inequalities with regard to educator: learner ratios and the availability of more educator posts in historically disadvantaged areas.

Education policy

Legislative framework

Education policy is informed by the following legislation:

- The National Education Policy Act, 1996 is designed to identify the policy, legislative and monitoring responsibilities of the Minister of Education, and to formalise relations between national and provincial authorities. It established the CEM and HEDCOM as intergovernmental 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 other things, curriculum, assessment, language policy and quality assurance. The Act embodies the

principle of co-operative governance, as elaborated in the Constitution.

- The South African Schools Act, 1996 promotes access, quality and democratic governance in the schooling system. It ensures that all learners have access to quality education without discrimination, and makes schooling compulsory for children aged seven to 15 or learners reaching the ninth grade, whichever occurs first. It also provides for two types of schools – independent schools and public schools. The Act's provision for democratic school governance through school-governing bodies is in place in public schools country-wide. The school-funding norms outlined in the Act prioritise redress and target poverty in funding allocations to the public schooling system.
- The FET Act, 1998 and the *Education White Paper 4 on FET* (1998), provide the basis for developing a nationally co-ordinated system, comprising the senior secondary component of schooling and technical colleges. It requires that FET institutions, created in terms of the new legislation, develop institutional plans, and provides for programme-based funding and a national curriculum for learning and teaching.
- The HE Act, 1997 makes provision for a unified and nationally planned system of HE and creates the statutory CHE, which advises the Minister and is responsible for quality assurance and promotion. The HE Act, 1997, *Education White Paper 3 on HE* (1997) and the National Plan for HE form the basis for the transformation of the HE sector.
- The Employment of Educators Act, 1998 (Act 76 of 1998), regulates the professional, moral and ethical responsibilities and competencies of teachers. The historically divided teaching corps is now governed by one Act of Parliament and one professional council, SACE.
- The ABET Act, 2000 (Act 52 of 2000), 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 SAQA Act, 1995 provides for the creation of the NQF, which establishes the framework for a national learning system that integrates education and training at all levels.
- The SACE Act, 2000 (Act 31 of 2000), provides for the establishment of the Council to undertake the registration of educators, promote the professional development of educators and set, maintain and protect ethical and professional standards for educators.

Tirisano

In January 2000, the *Tirisano* plan (meaning working together) was operationalised. Through it, the Department has achieved greater stability in the system, enhanced basic school functionality, improved the ability of provincial education systems to manage human and financial resources and ensured a clear focus on delivery.

Since 2001, the Department has been able to shift its focus from creating an integrated education framework and providing basic systemic functionality to institutional renewal and enhanced effectiveness focusing on teaching; learning; curriculum and whole-school development; learner performance; increased participation in further and higher education; mathematics, science and technology; building good citizenship through the promotion of values; and targeting those communities that are part of government-wide programmes for rural and urban development.

The strategic goals of *Tirisano* are to:
- deal urgently and purposefully with HIV/AIDS by utilising the education and training system
- ensure the successful running of provincial systems through successful co-operative governance
- triumph over illiteracy among adults and youths over the next five years

- develop schools as centres of community life
- end conditions of physical degradation in South African schools
- develop the professional abilities of the teaching force
- ensure the success of active learning through outcomes-based education (OBE)
- create a vibrant FET system, which will equip youths and adults to face social goals
- build a rational and seamless HE system that will embrace the intellectual and professional challenges facing South Africans in the 21st century.

Priority areas in the 2002/03 *Tirisano* plan include:

- working with provinces to improve the physical conditions of schools
- preparing for the implementation of the revised National Curriculum Statement
- putting in place a viable, vibrant and dynamic teacher-development programme, with particular emphasis on adequate and appropriate training to prepare teachers for the implementation of the revised curriculum in 2004
- improving performance in mathematics and science
- restructuring HE and the further implementation of the National Plan for HE
- strengthening the capacity to implement HIV/AIDS strategies and policies

- implementing the ABET Act, 2000
- increasing the capacity of the South African National Literacy Initiative (SANLI)
- establishing a nationally accredited Grade R Programme for six-year olds and expanding provision of ECD to children from birth to five years
- enhancing learner achievement both qualitatively and quantitatively
- introducing the use of the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) system in FET and ensuring that the FET sector is ready and able to deliver learnerships
- promoting school safety by creating a safe and disciplined learning environment that values human dignity
- promoting good citizenship and combating racism in schools
- reviving an interest in the study of history among learners and teachers
- promoting the role of music, the arts and sport in schools.

General education and training

General school education is structured according to three phases, namely the Foundation Phase, Intermediate Phase and Senior Phase and constitutes the compulsory component of the education system. The progressive provision of a Grade R prior to Grade One started in 2002.

Currently, the Foundation Phase lasts three years. Basic learning activities during this Phase centre around three learning programmes, namely literacy, numeracy and life skills. A start is made with learning one additional language in Grade 3.

During the three-year Intermediate Phase, learning activities centre on five learning programmes, namely language literacy and communication; mathematical literacy, mathematics and mathematical sciences; arts and culture; life orientation, human, social, environmental and management sciences; and natural sciences and technology.

The Senior Phase accounts for grades 7 to 9. During these years, learners have to master

Education

the following learning programmes: language literacy and communication; mathematical literacy, mathematics and mathematical sciences; arts and culture; life orientation; human and social sciences; economic management sciences; natural sciences; and technology. Grade 9 signals the end of compulsory schooling and ends with a GET certificate, which is Level 1 on the NQF.

Curriculum 2005

Curriculum 2005 is the brand name of the National Curriculum Framework introduced into schools in 1998, based on the concept of OBE.

OBE regards learning as an interactive process between and among educators and learners. The focus is on what learners should know and be able to do (knowledge, skills, attitudes and values). It places strong emphasis on co-operative learning, especially group work involving common tasks. The goal is to produce active and lifelong learners with a thirst for knowledge and a love for learning.

The Curriculum and its implementation were reviewed in 2000. The recommendations of the Curriculum 2005 Review Committee were released at the end of May 2000. The Committee recommended that the Department should revise and streamline the existing Curriculum framework in such a way that the Curriculum can be implemented and

Information

In February 2002, the Council of Education Ministers approved a policy on the management of substance abuse by learners in schools. The policy makes a very clear statement about the unacceptability of drugs and other illegal substances in schools, and proposes firm action, including suspension and expulsion, where necessary.

The policy also recognises that substance abuse is a complex problem and that interventions must be relevant to the particular context. In all cases, a supportive response, aimed at correcting the problem is encouraged. Random drug testing and searches are prohibited, and should only be conducted where a reasonable suspicion exists. In all cases, parents must be involved as soon as possible.

understood by all teachers. It further recommended that the Revised National Curriculum Statement should reduce the Curriculum design features from eight to three, namely critical and developmental outcomes, learning outcomes and assessment standards. With a view to minimising disruption and confusion in schools where implementation had already begun, the Committee proposed that the Department continued with the implementation of Curriculum 2005 in grades 4 and 8 in 2001, but that unnecessary and difficult-to-implement elements of the Curriculum should be phased out. The Committee also recommended that implementation of the Curriculum be strengthened by improving teacher orientation and training, learning support material and provincial support. The Minister established a project committee to lead the process of developing the Revised National Curriculum Statement, which was released in April 2002.

The Revised National Curriculum Statement maintains the fundamental values and principles of Curriculum 2005 and OBE. It is different from the previous Statement in a number of key respects, including its clarity and simplicity. It clarifies issues around curriculum and assessment. It embodies a broad sense of ownership and commitment to OBE. The Statement adopts a more gradual and carefully planned approach to implementation. It focuses on those with least resources and most in need. It also provides an implementation framework for the development of learning support material, and improved orientation and professional development of teachers, principals and district officials.

The Revised National Curriculum Statement aims to develop the full potential of each learner as a citizen of a democratic South Africa. The principles that underlie the Statement are social justice, OBE, a high level of skills and knowledge-for-all, clarity and accessibility, and progression and integration.

The revised Curriculum will be phased in starting with grades R to 3 in 2004, grades 4 to 6 in 2005, Grade 7 in 2006, Grade 8 in

2007 and Grade 9 in 2008. This will be preceded by field-testing of the Curriculum in classrooms, teacher orientation and development and the development of learning support materials and learning programmes at school level during 2002/03.

The revised Curriculum Statement is available in all 11 official languages as well as in Braille.

School admission policy

Pupils normally enrol for Grade 1 education at the beginning of the year in which they turn seven years of age although earlier entry at the age of six is allowed if the child meets specified criteria indicating that he/she has reached a stage of school readiness.

When applying for admission, parents must present the school with an official birth certificate and proof that the child has been immunised against communicable diseases.

For non-South African citizens, a study permit, temporary or permanent residence permit or evidence of application for permission to stay in South Africa is also required.

Parents who cannot afford to pay school fees, or who cannot pay the full amount, may be granted an exemption from paying school fees. Public schools are not allowed to refuse admission, suspend pupils from classes, deny them access to cultural, sporting or social activities, or refuse to issue school reports if parents are unable to pay school fees.

Further education and training

FET consists of all learning and training from NQF levels 2 to 4, or the equivalent of grades 10 to 12 in the school system and National Technical Certificate 1 to 3 in FET colleges. Learners enter FET after the completion of the compulsory phase of education at Grade 9 or via the ABET route. The long-term vision of this sector includes the development of a co-ordinated FET system, providing high-quality, flexible and responsive programmes and opportunities for a learning society. The short-to-medium-term focus is on addressing the weaknesses and deficiencies of the current system, while simultaneously laying the foundations for the kind of system to be built over the next 20 years.

Curriculum development in FET

The FET Curriculum is shifting from the traditional divides between academic and applied learning, theory and practice, and knowledge and skills. The new Curriculum moves towards a balanced learning experience that provides flexible access to lifelong learning and higher education and training, and productive employment in a range of occupational contexts.

FET comprises three different pathways, namely academic, vocationally-oriented and occupation-specific. The Curriculum consists of three components of learning: fundamental, core and elective. Curriculum development in FET regards the 12 learning fields of the NQF as its point of departure.

At school level, a National Curriculum Statement specifically for FET was launched in June 2002. The Grade 10 class of 2004 will be the first to follow the new FET Curriculum and will thus also be the first to be eligible for the new FET Certificate when they successfully complete Grade 12 in 2006.

FET colleges

South African learners need a range of skills and knowledge that keep up with modern technology. Remote rural areas need to be reached and adult learners need the opportunity to retrain for a second or third career. Small-business entrepreneurs also need courses catering to their needs, and industry and the community need to be provided with productive people who see learning as a lifelong occupation within an economy that is restructuring to meet the demands of globalisation.

In this context, the creation of a dynamic, responsive and high-quality FET system to promote wider access and social inclusion, encourage lifelong learning, meet the human

resource development needs of the country, contribute towards urban renewal and rural development, and develop an entirely new citizenry in the country, became imperative.

As a result, a major transformation of the FET sector took place during 2002 in which the existing 152 technical colleges were merged to form 50 multicampus FET colleges.

This reform of the FET sector is intended to establish a new college system that produces skills that are needed by the community and which are relevant to the job market.

The colleges provide:
• high-level skills training
• a balanced training programme emphasising both theoretical and practical skills linked to specific industry requirements
• vocational training, which continually exposes students to the demands of the work environment.

The new system operates under a single governing council appointed to oversee effective and accountable management across and within the various FET college campuses and sites.

Higher education

Universities and technikons in South Africa are autonomous institutions, meaning that their respective councils are fully responsible for their management. The Government does not prescribe the conditions of service for educators at universities or technikons.

Private Acts of Parliament, controlled by their respective councils, establish universities, which administer their own affairs. Early in 2002, South Africa had 21 fully-fledged universities, two of which were mainly non-residential institutions offering distance tuition.

The CHE advises the Minister of Education on matters relating to the structure, planning and governance of the sector, funding formulas, student financial aid and support services, quality promotion and control, as well as language policies. The Minister must provide reasons in writing if the advice and recommendations of the Council are not accepted.

The HE Act, 1997 enables private tertiary institutions to register as private technikons or universities.

Technikons provide vocation-orientated education at a tertiary level to supply the labour market with people who have particular skills, adequate technological and prac-tical knowledge, and the necessary personal qualities to play a leading role in the working community.

The role of HE in the South African education system is three-fold:
• Human resource development: the mobilisation of human talent and potential through lifelong learning to contribute to the social, economic, cultural and intellectual life of a rapidly-changing society.
• High-level skills training: the training and provision of person power to strengthen the country's enterprises, services and infrastructure. This requires the development of professionals with globally equivalent skills, but who are socially responsible and conscious of their role in contributing to the national development effort and social transformation.
• Production, acquisition and application of new knowledge: national growth and competitiveness are dependent on continuous technological improvement and innovation, driven by a well-organised, vibrant research and development system, which integrates the research and training capacity of HE with the needs of industry and of social reconstruction.

Transformation and reconstruction of the HE system
The *Education White Paper 3: A Programme for the Transformation of HE* and the HE Act, 1997 provide the policy and legislative framework for the transformation of the HE system.

National Plan for HE
The National Plan for HE was released in March 2001.

The National Plan establishes indicative targets for the size and shape of the HE system, including overall growth and participation

rates, institutional and programme mixes and equity and efficiency goals.

It provides a framework and outlines the process for the restructuring of the system. It also provides signposts for the development of institutional plans.

The key proposals of the Plan are that:

- the participation rate in HE will be increased from 15% to 20% in the long term, i.e. 10 to 15 years
- there will be a shift in the balance of enrolments over the next five to 10 years between the humanities, business and commerce and science, engineering and technology from the current ratio of 49:26:25 to 40:30:30 respectively
- institutions will establish student equity targets with the emphasis on programmes in which black and female students are underrepresented, and to develop strategies to ensure equity of outcomes
- institutions will develop employment equity plans with clear targets for rectifying race and gender inequities
- institutional diversity will be achieved through the approval of a distinct mission and academic programme profile for each university and technikon
- the academic programme mix at each institution will be determined on the basis of its current programme profile, as well as its demonstrated capacity to add new programmes
- the existing mission and programme differentiation between technikons and universities will be loosely maintained for at least the next five years
- redress for historically black institutions will be linked to agreed missions and programme profiles, including developmental strategies to build capacity
- a single dedicated distance education institution will be established through the merger of the University of South Africa (UNISA) and Technikon South Africa, and the incorporation of the distance education campus of Vista University into the merged institution

- research will be funded through a separate formula based on research output, including, at a minimum, master's and doctoral graduates and research publications
- earmarked funds will be allocated to build research capacity, including scholarships to promote postgraduate enrolments
- the institutional landscape will be restructured through collaboration at the regional level in programme development, delivery and rationalisation, in particular of small and costly programmes.

As part of the process of implementing the National Plan, the Minister of Education appointed a National Working Group to advise him on the restructuring of the institutional landscape of the HE system. The Working Group investigated the feasibility of consolidating HE provision through reducing the number of institutions but not the number of regional delivery sites.

The report of the Working Group was released in February 2002. In May 2002, Cabinet approved the ground-breaking proposals for the transformation and reconstruction of HE.

Institutional restructuring

The restructuring of HE will allow for expansion of the system and turn it around to face the challenges of the African century. It will allow for an increase in the participation rate (the percentage of 20 to 24-year-olds enrolled in HE) to increase from 15% to 20% over the next 10 years. This will require that an additional 200 000 students be recruited into the system.

The proposed institutional landscape also establishes a new institutional and organisational form, namely comprehensive institutions through merging universities and technikons. This will strengthen the provision of technikon programmes by ensuring that they are available throughout the country, in particular in rural areas, which are currently inadequately serviced in terms of technikon provision.

In addition, the National Plan requires HE institutions to:

- produce graduates with the skills and

competencies necessary to meet the human resource needs of the country, including increased access of workers, mature learners, women and the disabled to education
- redress past inequalities by ensuring that students and staff profiles reflect the demographic composition of South African society
- promote institutional diversity to meet national and regional skills and knowledge needs
- build research capacity, including maintaining existing research strengths and ensuring that research contributes to national development needs.

The proposed new institutional landscape for HE

Government's proposals for the consolidation of the number of institutions will result in an institutional landscape consisting of:
- 11 universities, two of which will be expected to develop career-focused technikon-type programmes to address regional needs
- six technikons
- four comprehensive institutions, three of which will be established through the merger of a technikon and a university and one through the redevelopment and refocusing of an existing university
- two National Institutes for HE.

In terms of implementation, the following mergers have already been finalised or are in the process of being finalised:
- ML Sultan Technikon and Technikon Natal, which came into effect on 1 April 2002 and is now known as the Durban Institute of Technology
- the merger of Technikon SA, UNISA and the distance education campus of Vista University
- the incorporation of the Qwa Qwa Campus of the University of the North into the University of the Free State.

The detailed proposals for regional rationalisation are as follows:

Eastern Cape
- Port Elizabeth Technikon and the University of Port Elizabeth will be merged, with the Port Elizabeth Campus of Vista University incorporated into the merged institution.
- Border Technikon, Eastern Cape Technikon and University of Transkei will be merged.
- The University of Fort Hare will be retained as a separate institution, incorporating the East London Campus of Rhodes University.
- Rhodes University will be retained as a separate institution.

Free State
- Technikon Free State will be retained as a separate institution, incorporating the Welkom Campus of Vista University.
- The University of the Free State will be retained as a separate institution, incorporating the Bloemfontein Campus of Vista University and the Qwa Qwa Campus of the University of the North.

Gauteng
- The Rand Afrikaans University and Technikon Witwatersrand will be merged, incorporating the East Rand and Soweto campuses of Vista University.
- The University of the Witwatersrand will be retained as a separate institution.
- The University of Pretoria will be retained as a separate institution, incorporating the Mamelodi Campus of Vista University.
- Technikon Northern Gauteng, Technikon North West and Technikon Pretoria will be merged.
- The Vaal Triangle Technikon will be retained as a separate institution, incorporating the infrastructure and facilities of the Sebokeng Campus of Vista University.
- The students and staff of the Sebokeng Campus of Vista University will be incorporated into the Vaal Triangle Campus of the merged Potchefstroom University for Christian Higher Education and the University of the North West.

KwaZulu-Natal

- Mangosuthu Technikon was merged with the new Durban Institute of Technology in April 2002.
- The Umlazi Campus of the University of Zululand will be transferred to the merged Technikon.
- The University of Durban-Westville and the University of Natal (including the Pietermaritzburg Campus) will be merged.
- The University of Zululand will refocus its mission and become a comprehensive institution offering technikon-type programmes as well as a limited number of relevant university-type programmes, with its future growth linked to the Richards Bay region.

Limpopo

- The University of the North and Medical University of Southern Africa will be merged. The new institution will extend the range of offerings available in the province by developing and introdu-cing technikon-type vocational program-mes and qualifications.

North West

- The Potchefstroom University for Christian Higher Education and the University of the North West will be merged.

Western Cape

- The University of the Western Cape will be retained as a separate institution.
- The University of Cape Town will be retained as a separate institution.
- The University of Stellenbosch will be retained as a separate institution.
- The dentistry schools of the universities of the Western Cape and Stellenbosch will be merged into a single school, to be located at the University of the Western Cape.
- The Cape Technikon and Peninsula Technikon will be merged.
- The University of Cape Town and the University of Stellenbosch will discontinue offering undergraduate programmes in nursing education. These programmes will be offered by the University of the Western Cape and the merged technikon.

Mpumalanga and Northern Cape

- National institutes for HE will be established in Mpumalanga and the Northern Cape to serve as the administrative and governance hub for ensuring the provision of HE programmes, largely through programme collaboration between the HE institutions currently operating in the two provinces.

Adult basic education and training

The ABET Act, 2000 and the regulations for a National ABET Board provide a legislative framework for the establishment, governance and funding of ABET centres. Through the Adult Education and Training Multi-year Implementation Plan (MYIP), the quality of both ABET provisioning and delivery is increasing.

The National ABET Board, an advisory body to the Minister, which receives reports from all sectors on the progress of the MYIP, replaced the interim ABET advisory body in 2002.

In 2000, the Department launched SANLI, which oversees the establishment of a voluntary service to reach the estimated 3,3 million illiterate adults.

The Department also established the South African Literacy Agency to significantly reduce adult illiteracy through:

- mobilising voluntary services in support of a nation-wide literacy initiative
- developing training programmes for volunteer educators
- designing, developing and procuring reading and resource materials
- setting up local literacy units
- establishing and maintaining a database of learners and providers
- servicing the needs of learners and educators.

As part of the Literacy Strategy, the Department is also ensuring the development of frame-

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works for the provision of ABET in line with the NQF.

As part of the advocacy campaign to mobilise learners, National Adult Learners' Week was launched as an annual event on 1 September 2000 and award ceremonies are held on International Literacy Day (September 8) to honour and applaud the courage and achievements of adult learners and their educators.

Education of learners with special education needs

The Ministry appointed the National Commission on Special Needs in Education and Training (NCSNET) and the National Committee on Education Support Services (NCESS) in October 1996 to investigate and make recommendations on all aspects of special needs and support services in education and training in South Africa. A joint report of the findings of these two bodies was presented to the Minister in November 1997, and the final report was published in February 1998.

The NCSNET/NCESS recommended that the education and training system developed inclusive and supportive centres of learning that would enable all learners to participate actively in the education process. They can then develop and extend their potential and participate as equal members of society.

The report suggested that the key strategies required to achieve this, include:
- transforming all aspects of the education system
- developing an integrated system of education
- infusing special needs and support services throughout the system
- pursuing the holistic development of centres of learning to ensure a barrier-free physical environment and a supportive and inclusive psychosocial learning environment, and developing a flexible curriculum, which can be accessed by all learners.
- promoting the rights and responsibilities of parents, teachers and learners
- providing effective development programmes for educators, support personnel and other relevant human resources
- fostering holistic and integrated support (intersectoral collaboration) by developing a community-based support system. This includes a preventative and developmental approach to support
- developing funding strategies that will ensure redress, sustainability and, ultimately, access to education for all learners.

The Ministry released a Consultative Paper based on these recommendations in 1999. The submissions and feedback of social partners, role-players and the wider public were collated and informed the writing of the *Education White Paper 6 on Special Needs Education: Building an Inclusive Education and Training System*, released in July 2001. The White Paper outlines a 20-year plan for an inclusive education and training system across all bands of education.

The Directorate: Inclusive Education was established in April 2001 to implement inclusive education in classrooms and education institutions across the country. One of their main tasks is to remove barriers to learning experienced by learners with disabilities and to integrate learners with special needs into mainstream schools.

On a broader level, the Directorate considers ways of creating conditions for success of all learners and ensuring that all learners have the same opportunities to learn while allowing for individuality and individual needs. In this process, conditions will eventually be created in the schooling system to promote a non-sexist, non-racist, non-disabilist and non-classist society.

Early childhood development

In July 2000, the final report on the National ECD Pilot Project was released. The Project tested the interim ECD policy, particularly as it is related to Grade R. The report presented some evidence that the existing norms and

standards were appropriate for the practitioners but that it needed to be refined to eliminate vagueness.

An audit of over 23 000 ECD sites was conducted in 2001, which revealed that the ECD field is dominated by the non-governmental sector. Where departmental provision exists, it usually caters for children from the age of three years to school-going age. It is estimated that about 90% of children under the age of nine in South Africa do not have access to ECD prior to attending school. The conclusion of the Pilot Project has prepared the ground for the development of an ECD policy, which was expected to be considered in 2002.

ECD centres must be registered with municipalities, and their activities are controlled by the provincial education departments. These regulations are applicable to public as well as private pre-primary schools.

The SACE Act, 2000 provides for the registration of ECD practitioners. In terms of the Act, all educators must be registered before they can be responsible for the care and education of children. When ECD practitioners are registered, they undergo professional development sponsored by the Council and are subjected to the Code of Ethics.

The *White Paper 5 on ECD*, which establishes a national system of provision of Grade R for children aged five, was launched in May 2001. The medium-term goal is for all children entering Grade 1 to have participated in an accredited Grade R programme by 2010.

The White Paper also focuses on expanding ECD provision, correcting imbalances, ensuring equitable access and improving the quality and delivery of ECD programmes. These interventions aim to break the cycle of poverty by increasing access to ECD programmes, particularly of poor children.

The ECD policy focuses on the phasing-in of a nationally-accredited Grade R Programme for five-year-olds, collaboration with other government departments in making provision for children from birth to five-year-old, as well as special programmes for five-year-olds.

Key areas in special needs education include expanding access and provision to the out-of-school population, developing human resource plans for 30 districts, transforming existing special schools into resource centres, developing district support teams and revising the assessment and placement system.

The School Register of Needs

The School Register of Needs provides an important benchmark for addressing historical inequities.

Considerable progress has been made since 1994 in decreasing these inequities. The School Register of Needs 2000 Survey recorded significant improvements in school infrastructure and access to basic services country-wide.

The Register reported less overcrowding in institutions overall, with a decline in the average number of learners in a classroom from 43 (in 1996) to 35 (in 2000). Except for Mpumalanga, learner:classroom ratios also decreased. Classroom shortages decreased from 49% (1996) to 40% (2000). In 1996, 40% of all schools nation-wide had no access to water. By 2000, this was reduced to 34%. There was a 68% improvement in the provision of sanitation, although 16,6% of learners continued to be without toilet facilities. Fifty-nine percent of schools had no telephones in 1996. This was reduced to 34% in 2000.

On the other hand, the biggest decline was in the number of schools in excellent and good condition, indicating that investment in infrastructure had not been adequately maintained. The number of buildings in good condition declined from 9 000 to 4 000, with at least 12 000 buildings in need of repair.

Government has committed itself to an additional R1,5 billion over three years for infrastructural development in key rural and urban nodal points.

Human Resource Development Strategy

In April 2001, the Ministries of Education and of Labour jointly launched the Human Resource Development Strategy for South Africa entitled *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, and the general reshaping of further and higher education to meet the human resource development needs of the country.

The Strategy will ensure integrated human research development planning and implementation, monitored on a national, regional and sectoral level. Progress will be measured against approved indicators.

The key mission of the Strategy is to maximise the potential of people in South Africa, through the acquisition of knowledge and skills, to set in place an operational plan and the necessary arrangements to ensure that everyone reaches productivity and works competitively to achieve a rise in the quality of life.

The goals of the Strategy include improving the social infrastructure of the country, reducing disparities in wealth and poverty, developing a more inclusive society and improving South Africa's position on the international competitiveness table.

The benefits to the country from the successful implementation of this Strategy over the next five to 10 years will be significant. Primarily, the integration of different government policies will help 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.

HIV/AIDS

The Ministry of Education works alongside the Ministry of Health to ensure that the national education system plays its part to stem the disease, and to ensure that the rights of all persons infected with HIV/AIDS are fully protected.

This priority has been operationalised into three objectives of 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
• planning for HIV/AIDS and the education system.

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 were distributed nation-wide, coinciding with a communication media campaign.

A historic national conference on HIV/AIDS and Education was held from 31 May – 2 June 2002, the outcome of which was the development of a strategic plan focusing on how the education sector can limit the spread of HIV; what the education sector can do to demonstrate care and support for those infected with HIV or suffering from AIDS; how to ensure that the education sector maintains its productivity in the context of AIDS-related illness and death among learners and teachers; and what implications the pandemic has for the planning processes, regulatory frameworks and procedures of the education system.

Partnerships and international relations

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

Teacher unions

The majority of educators are organised into

three teacher unions, namely the National Professional Teachers' Organisation of South Africa, the South African Teachers' Union and the South African Democratic Teachers' Union. A labour-relations framework has been jointly agreed to by the Ministry of Education and the unions. This encompasses both traditional areas of negotiation and issues of professional concern, including pedagogy and quality improvement strategies.

Non-governmental organisations (NGOs)

NGOs are emerging as important partners in educational transformation and are often a source of creativity and innovation. The Department of Education is working with NGOs and the private sector to expand 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 pro-vision of teaching and learning equipment.

Public-private partnerships

The success of key national initiatives (including SANLI) will largely rely on partnerships with the private and NGO sectors.

Several partnerships have been consolidated, providing working models of educational transformation through public-private partnerships. The Business Trust, a partnership between business and government, works in education through three NGOs, namely the READ Educational Trust, Joint Education Trust and the National Business Initiative Colleges Collaboration.

The international community

The international community's contribution to education transformation is important. The Department co-operates with United Nations' agencies and with numerous donors to improve access to basic, further and higher education. Development co-operation partners such as the Australian Agency for International Development, Flanders, France, Germany, Italy, Japan International Co-operation Agency, the Swiss Agency for Development and Co-operation, the Danish Agency for Development Assistance, the United States Agency for International Development, Swedish International Development Agency, the Canadian International Development Agency, Department of International Development (United Kingdom), the Netherlands, the Irish Agency for International Development, 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 the Southern African Development Co-operation Protocol on Education and Training, which aims to achieve equivalence, harmonisation and standardisation in the region. International partnerships and South–South exchanges are fostered particularly within the African continent.

The Department has a strong collaborative relationship with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation. A key initiative of the collaboration is the development of National Education For All (EFA) action plans. As part of regional consultations on the implementation, the Department participates in assessing progress in the elaboration of the EFA plans of countries in sub-Saharan Africa and exchanges information and best practice on the development of these plans. South Africa has reaffirmed its commitment to the Ministers of Education of African Member States to make the experience, expertise and existing infrastructure of South African HE available to the rest of Africa.

Library and information services sector

South Africa's growing library and information services sector includes a national library and hundreds of public (municipal) libraries (most of which are affiliated to provincial services), special libraries, government libraries, and university and college libraries. There are an estimated 1 249 libraries in the country.

The Subdirectorate: Meta-information of the Department of Arts and Culture is responsible for macro-policy on meta-information (information about information).

The Legal Deposit Act, 1997 (Act 54 of 1997), regulates legal deposit matters in South Africa. The legal deposit libraries are the National Library of South Africa, the Library of Parliament, the Bloemfontein Public Library, the Natal Society Library and the National Film, Video and Sound Archives. One copy of every document published must be deposited by publishers.

Documents encompass not only print media but also electronic publications, films and videos. Official publication depositories are depots where members of the public can obtain access to government publications, supporting the ideal of an open and transparent democracy. They are being established in each province, and will ensure that government information is much more widely available.

The National Library of South Africa Act, 1998 (Act 92 of 1998), came into effect on 1 November 1999 and created the National Library of South Africa by amalgamating the State Library in Pretoria and the South African Library in Cape Town.

They are now respectively the Cape Town and Pretoria campuses of the National Library. The objectives of the National Library are to contribute to socio-economic, cultural, educational, scientific and innovative development by collecting, recording, preserving and making available the national documentary heritage and promoting an awareness and appreciation thereof. It seeks to foster information literacy and facilitate access to the world's information resources. These objectives have been expanded into four strategic directions, which will determine the National Library's course for the new millennium. The strategic directions are: holding a mirror to the nation, building a bridge to the information society, levelling the playing fields for access to information, and building a united and transformed organisation.

The National Library is the custodian of the national information resource contained in material published in South Africa. It has built up comprehensive collections of material from and about southern Africa.

The legal deposit collection consists of published South African materials in all formats, ranging from books and journals to CD-ROM, video, microfilm and digital formats. Over many years, the Library's sources have also been enriched by priceless donations from benefactors such as the former colonial governors and others, reflecting both the colonial and indigenous heritage of the nation. The special collections include photographs and newspaper clippings, Africana, manuscripts, rare maps and atlases, and a considerable art collection.

All materials at the Library are available for consultation and research. Apart from the thousands of users who visit the campuses in Cape Town and Pretoria daily, many others direct their enquiries by telephone, fax, e-mail and via the National Library website (*http://www.nlsa.ac.za*).

The National Library is active in preserving older and fragile material such as newspapers in microfilm format. It also co-operates closely with the National Digital Imaging Project of South Africa, which is compiling *A Guide to South Africa's Struggle for Democracy: Anti-Apartheid periodicals, 1960 – 90*. More information can be found on the website *http://disa.nu.ac.za/*.

Making the information resources at the National Library accessible to users is a

primary responsibility. Apart from the user services offered at the reference and information sections, the Library also compiles bibliographies of publications produced in the country. A specialised and valuable activity is the compilation of bibliographies of publications in the indigenous official languages. These, at present, include Northern Sotho, isiZulu, and isiXhosa, while the biblio-graphy of the Setswana language is being revised and updated. Other bibliographies will be added to the series as funds become available. Publications such as these present a window to the diverse cultural heritage of the rainbow nation. In respect of journals, the National Library compiles the *Index to South African Periodicals Database*, which is a comprehensive index covering articles in more than 680 South African periodicals and journals. Topics range from the highly specialised and scientific to general popular, and articles are specifically selected for their research value.

Although publications from the stock of the National Library cannot be borrowed directly by individuals, it maintains the country-wide interlibrary loan scheme, which provides for book loans or the supply of copies of journal articles to users via their local libraries. The Library is the hub of the resource-sharing network known as the Southern African Interlending Scheme (SAIS). Libraries and other information-related organisations as well as individuals who are members of SAIS can borrow sources from one another.

The nine provincial library authorities provide, in partnership with local governments, extensive public library services. Apart from their traditional lending services, public libraries are increasingly rendering community and general information services and providing study materials and facilities for students.

A ground-breaking project undertaken in 2001/02 is PaClisa – the Public and Community Library Inventory of South Africa. It is a project of the Print Industries Cluster Council Libraries Working Group and the Foundation for Library and Information

Service Development, in association with the National Library of South Africa. PaClisa was made possible by a grant from the Carnegie Corporation of New York. The Inventory contains information about libraries in South Africa, based on extensive research by the Libraries Working Group on matters such as the numbers, distribution, conditions, impact and spending power of libraries. This information may form the basis of plans for the development of libraries as channels for the dissemination of books and other printed material. In turn, this should promote literacy and a culture of reading and learning.

The Inventory concentrates on public/community libraries and includes three databases:
- library database containing the identification and descriptive data about the libraries
- demographic database containing relevant demographic data
- geographic database containing geometric data describing the boundaries of the municipalities and wards and the locality of the libraries. For orientation purposes, roads are also included in the database.

PaClisa continues and all information will be updated as new information becomes available.

Resource centres provide information resources in a variety of media, arranged to facilitate information production and distribution and the development of information skills. They are mostly funded by NGOs.

Special libraries include the libraries of government departments and private organisations.

The South African Library for the Blind (Blindlib) is located in Grahamstown in the Eastern Cape. It was founded in 1919 and is today administered under the South African Library for the Blind Act, 1998 (Act 91 of 1998). Its mission is to provide a national library and information service of audio and Braille books to blind and visually impaired readers. The service is provided in seven South African languages. Books and magazines are circulated post-free to readers all over the country. Correspondence courses are also offered to

anyone needing to learn Braille and who is not able to attend formal education institutions for the blind.

The National Occupational Safety Association has the largest privately owned video and publication library in South Africa, with video titles on all aspects of occupational safety and health.

Sabinet Online has established itself over the last 19 years by serving the needs of South African libraries. The services used by over 650 libraries include shared cataloguing, an integrated interlibrary loan system and reference services spanning over 29 reference databases.

Acknowledgements

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