





FOREWORD

I am proud to present to you the *South Africa Yearbook 2008/09*. As the official resource on the work of government, this publication provides a comprehensive account of the programmes and policies of our government and highlights the areas of progress we have made, particularly during 2008.

I believe that this publication plays an important role in capturing the evolution of our government and our country. It is updated every year to record as accurately as possible the countless efforts of all government departments that give life to our Programme of Action, shape the lives of millions of South Africans and influence our standing in the international community.

In 2008, government undertook a *15 Year Review* to take stock of the progress it had made in improving the quality of life of all South Africans. The review, based on both external and government-based research, indicated that overall, government has made definite strides towards meeting its broad development objectives. Major progress was noted in key areas such as access to basic services like water, electricity, housing, social support and healthcare. At the same time, the review also indicated areas that require further intervention. Government acknowledges that much more can and must be done, and that new challenges have arisen that our country needs to respond to from 2009 onward.

The experiences of 2008, specifically the demands placed on us by challenges in both the local and international environment and our resilience in responding to them, attest to the fact that we have laid solid foundations for our democracy since 1994. We have also continued to show our consistency and commitment to making real the aspirations of our country and our continent to host a successful Soccer World Cup in 2010, ensuring that the various projects of government in this regard are on track.

In this edition of the *South Africa Yearbook*, not only do we offer the scope of government's implementation but also a reflection on the progress we have made in creating a better life for our people. On the eve of our country's fourth general election — and halfway through the Second Decade of Freedom — the content of this edition of the *South Africa Yearbook* therefore takes on even greater significance. It is an account of the journey we have travelled over the past 14 years of democracy. In this sense, it is both a beacon of hope, a testimony of the change we have created together, as much as it is a barometer that reminds us that much more remains to be done.



President Kgalema Motlanthe
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