

# **SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT: A SOUTH AFRICAN PERSPECTIVE**

*Y Dixon (Ms)*

*JG Pretorius*

## **ABSTRACT**

Africa - a continent rich in a diversity of people, cultures, religions, history, heritage and nature that has intrigued explorers, historians, scientists and nature conservationists for centuries. Despite the dark history of slavery, colonialism and apartheid, the people of Africa have a dream to develop its hidden potential as a united continent. This implies the transformation of this continent in its own unique way, a renaissance in the 21<sup>st</sup> century - an African Renaissance.

Although the origin of the African Renaissance can be traced back to the early years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, it is only in the last few years, in the current era of increased globalisation, that Africa has been aiming to unite. This paper looks at this dream of transformation and what it holds for the countries of Africa and its people. Areas of possible transformation are looked at, such as politics, development and trade, as well as some of the larger hurdles in the race for transformation: poverty and health.

The continent is endowed with an abundance of natural resources and energy, which could be exploited to their full potential. Africa, however, lacks capacity, but realises that investing in its people is one of the most important building blocks in achieving sustainable development. With a Renaissance dream for the whole of Africa, the responsibility for making this dream a reality is still in the hands of each the government of every individual country.

Since 1994, the new South African government has taken giant leaps on the path of sustainable development, focusing mainly on correcting the disparities of the apartheid era and building a better future for all the people of South Africa. Social services - education, health and welfare – take up the largest part of the national budget - this is unmistakable proof that South Africa is investing in its people. The paper concludes by focusing on education, and, especially, higher education, and its important present and future role in the sustainable development of South Africa.

## ***Introduction***

Sustainable development is a worldwide aim and on the agenda of many countries; especially the developing and least developed, such as most countries in Africa. After dark eras of slavery and colonialism, Africa is on the road to recovery, with a dream for a future of peace and prosperity – the African Renaissance. It is a philosophy of hope and optimism for the people in Africa, initiated by the people of Africa. The African Renaissance recognises the constraints, such as debt crises, underdevelopment and untenable political relations. It proposes principles such as good governance, eradication of poverty, economic recovery, accountability, transparency and adequate attention to social services, with education the highest on the agenda, followed by health services, shelter, water and the provision of electricity.

One of the main aims of the African Renaissance is to mobilise the people of Africa. Over the years, Africa has received foreign assistance, but the Renaissance inspires all Africans to take their destiny into their own hands.

## ***Sustainable development***

One of the most influential definitions of the term "sustainable development" is that of the World Commission on Environment and Development. In its 1987 report, entitled *Our Common Future* ("The Brundtland Report"), sustainable development is defined as development that – "... meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs." (Beckenstein et al, 1996:9.)

The International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives (ICLEI) emphasises environmental, social and economic concerns as three distinct, but interrelated, components of sustainable development: "Sustainable development is a programme to change the process of economic development so that it ensures a basic quality of life for all people, and protects the ecosystems and community systems that make life possible and worthwhile." (Van der Merwe & Van der Merwe, 1999:5.) There are three interrelated elements in most definitions. Firstly, the core objective of sustainable development is optimising human welfare. Welfare includes income and material consumption, along with education, health, equality of opportunity and human rights. The second objective is that all physical and economic activity should be compatible with the surrounding biosphere. This element focuses on non-renewable resources, and emphasises that these resources should not be used at a rate that exceeds the rate at which they can be substituted by sustainable renewable resources. Thus, there should be no net degradation of the wide range of indispensable services provided by the natural environment. The third element is the equitable distribution of biospherically compatible improvements in human well-being, both today and tomorrow. Sustainability, in this context, implies both intergenerational equity and intragenerational equity. Human betterment on the part of any group should not come at the expense of other groups today or generations in the future (Beckenstein et al, 1996:10).

Sustainable development is, however, a concept that could be abstract and hard to relate to the priorities and problems of people in places where the environment, economy and community have all suffered from neglect, poverty, industrial decline, unemployment – summarised in the policy-makers' jargon as "social exclusion". According to Groundwork, a British action network that connects environmental management and regeneration to economic and social renewal at local level, sustainable development should not only address new technologies, reform in affluent economies, and the protection of natural environments; it should also address social equity, and it should include activities to improve the prospects and quality of life for the worst off communities, un-down industrial economies and urban environments (Carley & Christie, 2000:197).

Keeping in mind all these views on sustainable development, it is probable that sustainable development is on the agenda of every country in the world. The priority and intensity are likely to depend on the state of the development of a country. Countries are ranked according to development and are usually labelled as developed or developing. The United Nations' classification system subdivides the Third World into three major groups, the "least developed", the non-oil-exporting "developing nations" and the petroleum-rich members of the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) (Todaro, 2000:30). In Africa, most of the countries fall in the developing or least developed category. It is, however, necessary to be wary of overgeneralisation and to keep in mind that there are vast differences between countries and subregions in Africa – in terms of population density, natural resources and the availability of technology. Thus, when looking at the development of a country such as South Africa, it is necessary to look at aspects such as its geographical location, the continent it is part of, its government, and its people (Steward et al, 1992:54).

## ***Some history of Africa***

Africa has a history of slavery, colonialism and apartheid, but it has a dream for the future: the African Renaissance. It is mainly focused on the renewal of economic, political, social, religious and cultural norms and values in the African people (SADC, 2000). The drive towards African renewal and pride has its roots in the Negritude and independence movements. As early as 1937, a Nigerian, Nnamdi Azikiwe, whose *Renascent Africa* distinguished between the "Old" Africa which, according to him, was characterised by stagnation and tribalism, and the "New" Africa, based on spiritual balance, social and economic regeneration, mental emancipation and national selfdetermination (Maloka, E & le Roux, E, 2000: ii).

Some of the most significant antecedents for the African Renaissance are the Final Act of Lagos (1980), which visualised the phased economic integration of Africa; the African Alternative Framework to Structural Adjustment for Socio-Economic Recovery and Transformation (1989) and the Organisation for African Unity's Declaration on Political and Socio-Economic Situation in Africa and the Fundamental Changes taking place in the World (1991). Most of these declarations have never been implemented, mainly because of a lack of political will on the side of Africa's leaders. The most comprehensive antecedent to the African Renaissance concept can be found in the final statement of the Conference on Security, Stability, Development and Cooperation in Africa (CSSDCA), published in May 1991 as the Kampala Document. The idea of holding a CSSDCA originated at a meeting at the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) offices in Paris in April 1990, to consider the economic impact of the end of the Cold War on the potential flow of resources from the G7 countries to the developing countries (Maloka, E & le Roux, E 2000: 15).

The Millennium African Renaissance Programme (MAP) was developed, and is spearheaded by South African President Thabo Mbeki, Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo and Algeria's President Abdelaziz Bouteflika. It is aimed at achieving strong sustainable economic growth, boosting Africa's share in world exports over the next five years and accelerating the achievement of various development goals. This programme, although still in its infancy, demonstrates a concerted collective effort on the part of African leaders to overcome the continent's poverty and to drive it forward to become a significant role-player, to be reckoned with in the global arena. The success of this programme also relies on the goodwill, cooperation (the G7, in particular) and willingness of our industrialised counterparts to join us (Mboweni, 2001).

The African Renaissance Charter was adopted in August 1998 and commits the African people to build lasting foundations for real peace, security and prosperity through noble, productive and uplifting deeds for the glory, honour and dignity of the people of Africa. The following are some of the aims of the Renaissance:

- The fight for alleviation and elimination of poverty.
- The economic recovery of the African continent.
- Political stability and accountability of the political systems in Africa.
- Protection of the national sovereignty of African countries.
- The scientific and technological transformation of Africa as a basis for sustainable development.
- Integrated economic development in the regions, with a fostering of interdependence between countries.
- The facilitation of dialogue between communities, nations and social forces for peace.
- Adequate attention to be given to education, health services, provision of clean water and sanitation, energy and shelter.

- The enhancement of human dignity by promoting the participatory role of all its citizens in the political, economic and social life of their countries  
(FISCU, 2000:17).

In July 2001, at the final summit of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) the African Union (AU) was born. Unlike the OAU, which was merely a loose collection of states, the African Union will essentially be a trade block modelled along the lines of the European Union, and will have much more say over the affairs of sovereign countries. At this historic event, two impressive plans, namely, the MAP and Senegalese President Abdoulaye Wade's plan, Omega, were merged into what is known as "a New African Initiative". The new plan combines the comprehensive, well-considered strategies of both plans and is a fitting tribute to a new band of African leaders determined to break with the past. It was decided at the summit that this new plan should be presented to Africans to ensure their involvement in determining the future of the continent (Munusamy, 2001:19).

## **African cooperation**

After becoming independent of colonial masters, African states have tried, in no less than 200 cases, to establish regional and institutional cooperation or integration, but these attempts usually failed. For instance, the East African Community (EAC), consisting of Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania, was seen as a model of successful cooperation. It functioned on an exceptional level of integration, even more than the EU today. The EAC collapsed in 1970. The main reason was that Uganda and Tanzania felt that the exports of the partially industrialised Kenya to their own less developed economies were detrimental to their economic growth. Other reasons for failure in the past were a lack of exchange goods, no trans-national communication links and difficulty with the convertibility of national currencies. In their attempts to integrate, some of the countries were not prepared to go for a partial transfer of national sovereignty of member countries to supranational institutions, as was done in the case of the European Commission and European Parliament (von der Ropp, 2000:27).

Alongside the growing consensus on key areas of policy reform, African countries have implemented actions to make regional integration the centrepiece of their development strategy. There are currently major free trade areas or regional integration initiatives which emerged or were revitalised during the 1990s, such as the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), the Southern African Development Community (SADC), and the Economic and Monetary Union of West Africa (UEMOA). The treaty establishing the African Economic Community (the Abuja Treaty), which contains a new and realistic approach to regional integration, was signed by Organisation of African Unity member states in June 1991. By May 1994, thirty-four African countries had ratified the treaty, thus paving the way for its commencement. The treaty enabled African countries to embark on a three-decade journey to create a continental economic space and common market, by using the existing cooperation communities as important building blocks (Maloka, E & le Roux, E 2000: 83).

On the environmental side, there are also examples of inter-country cooperation in Africa. Africa is endowed with abundant energy resources, including the potential of renewable energy in a wealth of biomass, solar and wind resources, and considerable unexploited hydro, geothermal and fossil fuel reserves. The region's deep-seated economic problems have made it difficult to develop a modern energy sector. Population growth and the fact that most communities are poor strain the traditional energy sector. These communities tend to be overly reliant on wood fuel, which gives rise to environmental problems, such as deforestation, which, in turn, retard development. To link energy, environment and sustainable development issues for sub-Saharan Africa, the African Energy Policy Research Network (AFREPEN) was launched in 1989. AFREPEN is supported by the Norwegian and Swedish development agencies, and links academic and agency researchers, NGO representatives and energy policy-makers in eighteen countries in Eastern and Southern Africa,

while it has less formal collaborative arrangements with five additional countries in West Africa. The purpose of AFREPEN is to assist energy policy-makers to realise the short term and long-term performance and sustainability of the region's energy sector (Carley & Christie, 2000:278).

The Nile Basin Initiative, launched in February 1999, is a regional partnership within which countries of the Nile basin have united in common pursuit of the long-term development and management of Nile waters. For the first time in history, all ten Nile basin countries - Burundi, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Sudan, Tanzania and Uganda - expressed a serious concern about the need to work together to fight poverty. The Initiative is developing a basin-wide framework, as mutually agreed on, and is guided by the shared vision of the countries "to achieve sustainable socio-economic development through the equitable utilization of, and benefit from, the common Nile Basin water resources" (World Bank, 2000).

One of Africa's best future tourist attractions and good examples of crosscountry partnerships is the new transfrontier park. The park is scheduled to open in November 2001 and still has to be officially named. It is widely referred to as "GKG", and incorporates parts of the Gaza Province in Mozambique, the Kruger National Park in South Africa and the Gonarezhou National Park in Zimbabwe. The 95 000 km<sup>2</sup> GKG Transfrontier Conservation Area incorporates a 35 000 km<sup>2</sup> game reserve (the GKG Transfrontier Park), which is expected to fund the greater area through tourism. March Turnbull points out that it is fantastic to see the politicians of these three countries sticking their necks out for Africa's wildlife (Turnbull: 2001).

### ***Politics in Africa***

The dominant political trend in Africa between 1960 and 1989 was mostly single-party states and military rule. When the Cold War ended, at the end of 1989, there were 52 independent states in Africa, nine African states tolerated the opposition parties, another nine were under military rule, and 34 had single-party systems or "no-party" systems. Between 1990 and 1997 some 25 sub-Saharan African countries held democratic elections, for example, the democratisation of Nigeria, which gives new hope to sub-Saharan Africa's most populous nation (Schwab et al, 2000:16). By the end of 1999, forty-one African countries already had multi-party systems. This is proof, as stated by Thabo Mbeki, the South African President, that there is an indigenous and sustained movement on the continent towards the elimination of the nondemocratic systems and violent conflicts which gave Africa a negative image in the past (Maloka, E & le Roux, E, 2000: 19, 31).

There still is, however, the war in Angola that has escalated even after a Government of Unity and National Reconciliation had been established. The Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) is also still entangled in a civil war, with similar hostile situations in Ethiopia, Somalia, Liberia, Mozambique and Chad (Maloka, E & le Roux, E, 2000: 19, 31).

### ***The development of Africa***

Various attempts have been made worldwide to generate social indicators, such as gains in literacy, schooling, health conditions and services, and the provision of housing. The United Nations Development Program (UNDP), in its annual series of Human Development Reports, has undertaken the latest and most ambitious attempt. Part of these reports is the construction and refinement of the Human Development Index (HDI). The HDI attempts to rank all countries on a scale of 0 (lowest human development) to 1 (highest human development), based on three goals or end products of development: longevity, as measured by life expectancy at birth; knowledge, as measured by a weighted average of adult literacy (two-thirds) and mean years of schooling (one-third); and standard of living, as measured by real per capita income adjusted for the differing purchasing

power parity (PPP) of each country's currency to reflect cost of living and for the assumption of rapidly diminishing marginal utility of income above average world income levels. The HDI ranks 175 countries into low human development (0.0 to 0.50) to medium human development (0.50 to 0.79), and high human development (0.80 to 1.0) (Todaro, 2000: 72).

In 1999, the HDI had 34 countries in the low human development category. Sub-Saharan Africa dominated the lowest category, with 29 out of the 34 countries being from this subcontinent (Botha, 2000: 19, 34). It should be remembered that there are also development differences within countries. South Africa falls in the medium human development with a HDI of 0.650, but the HDI for whites is 0.876 (high) while for blacks it is 0.462 (low). Nigeria has an HDI of 0.348. Its richest state, Bendel, has an HDI of 0.666, while the poorest, Borno, has a value of only 0.156 (Todaro, 2000: 74).

In the development of Africa, poverty remains the largest constraint. The World Bank's African Development Indicators for 2000 show that growth on the continent slowed significantly after 1998. Average per capita GDP fell by almost 1 per cent from 1998 to 1999, resulting in more than 40% of the African population living on only one United States dollar a day (FISCU, 2000: 15). This occurred despite the improvements in the social and economic policies of some of these countries. The reason given by the World Bank is that the slowdown in growth was the result of regional and civil wars, poor governance in some countries, and serious external shocks, such as the rapid hike in oil prices at the same time that export earnings from primary commodities collapsed. The report cautions that growth needs to be above an annualised rate of 5 per cent to prevent an increase in the number of poor people on the continent. There is, however, progress in some of the countries. Fourteen African countries have grown by an average of 4 per cent a year during the 1990s with a further ten countries growing at rates above 3 per cent a year (Mboweni 2000). In the period 1998 to 1999, Africa as a whole was estimated to have grown at a rate of 4.2 per cent.

Life expectancy at birth is 48 years in Africa, the lowest in the world, and AIDS-related deaths are causing this figure to drop. The World Bank's report also points out that 17 developing countries managed to reduce their mortality rates of children under the age of five between 1990 and 1998. But in 13 countries the mortality rates worsened. Many of these are African countries where armed conflict and the spread of HIV/AIDS have compounded the evils of poverty (Mboweni, 2000). Africa accounts for more than two-thirds of the world total of those infected by HIV. Africa values its children and it is alarming that 70 per cent of the 16 million AIDS orphans in the world are in Southern Africa. These orphans face unmitigated disaster as they drop out of school and social networks. The United States Census Bureau estimates that by 2010, 35 per cent of children under the age of 15 in eleven Eastern and Southern African countries will have lost one or both parents. This could be a large impediment to the development of these children and Africa as a whole (Smith, 2001:5).

According to the World Bank's World Development Report of 1997, the adult illiteracy rate was 28.27 per cent in 1995. Africa also lacks certain skills, such as the skills needed to identify and evaluate projects and to select, buy and transfer the right technology. There is a need for the efficient implementation of industrial investments, which requires a broad spread of technical, design, organisational and construction skills (Steward et al, 1992:115). A large portion of the skills in entrepreneurial, technical and managerial fields arises from previous experience, especially in the fields of commerce and industry. Africa has, in comparison with other developing regions, been particularly unfortunate in this respect. There is little traditional experience of modern commerce or manufacturing. However, there is no shortage of entrepreneurial drive. The informal sector in Africa is as active and vibrant as in other developing regions. The development of such small enterprises is the answer to many problems, but there is still a need for experience in formal, modern commerce and manufacturing (Steward et al 1992:116,7).

One of the strategies of the African Renaissance is that the continent must continuously search for ways in which it can translate the concepts of a people-centred society and of people-driven processes of development into practice. The Renaissance is promoting homegrown African agendas for development, and is also asserting Africa's role in world affairs for global interdependency (FISCU, 2000:18). There has thus been a turning point in the theory and practice of African development. There has been a shift in development paradigms based on the north-south transfer of capital, technology, technical assistance and food aid, to a paradigm based on the development of human capacity and institution building. It has been identified that Africa needs an African initiative to strengthen indigenous training, research and institutional capacity, and that it needs a commitment to make this development sustainable (Steward et al, 1992:80). As summed up by Joseph Kezerbo:

"Something has broken down in Africa – Throwing billions of dollars at us will not change anything. Africa must learn to become whole again ... We must build our self from the ground up ... infrastructure, logistics and superstructure, including the brain." Joseph Kezerbo, 1989.

## **South Africa**

After more than a decade of being the outcast of the world, South Africa has taken its rightful place in the past few years. This is evident in our participation in the community of nations, the United Nations, the African Union, the British Commonwealth of Nations, and in many other multilateral and global organisations. South Africa is also playing a mayor role in Africa, and is seen as one of the leaders in many cases. The development of, and cooperation with, the region are high on South Africa's agenda, and therefore also its membership of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and many other cross-country partnerships. The new democratic South Africa led to the withdrawal of international sanctions, and the termination of boycotts and disinvestment campaigns, and opened up the way for South Africa to be reintegrated in the world's financial and other economic markets. As South Africa's former Governor of the Reserve Bank, Dr Chris Stals, rightly stated, the removal of the "Berlin Wall" around South Africa not only opened up the way for South Africans to move out, but also for outsiders to move in, in the form of industries, investments, sport and tourism (Stals, 1997).

South Africa has one of the largest economies in Africa, and one of the highest GDPs in Southern Africa. Most of the economic activities of the country are concentrated in mining and energy. The service sector forms the largest and most rapidly growing part of the country's output. Notwithstanding these encouraging indications, the economy still faces a challenging task in translating these changes into sustained growth. GDP growth has declined from 3.2 per cent in 1994 to 0.5 per cent in 1998. There was a small, but definite, turnaround in 1999 when the growth rate increased to 1.2 per cent. GDP growth is expected to average in the order of 3,5 per cent over the next three years, as private and public sector investment and household consumption continue to strengthen.

### ***The new South African government***

Since 1994 there have been major changes in South Africa, and, especially, in terms of budget allocations. Looking at the spending of a government is looking at its priorities. From the 2001 spending plans of the South African government, four broad policy objectives are clear:

- Economic growth
- Job creation
- Equity and social development
- Strengthening the safety and justice sectors

Social services – education, health and welfare – take up about 58 per cent of the consolidated national and provincial non-interest allocations. Government offers social grants such as old age, disability and child support grants, and provides support to more than three million South Africans every month. This is the largest single redistributive programme of the South African government (Manuel, 2001:20).

The South African budget also sets aside substantial supplementary resources for infrastructure investment and maintenance. By doing this, the government seeks to broaden access to opportunities, lower the costs of transport and communication and improve standards of living in poor communities. By implementing this investment programme, the government also aims to contribute directly to the creation of jobs.

### ***South African development***

The government's contribution to sustainable development:

- More than one million housing opportunities have been created, providing more than five million poor people with secure tenure and safe homes.
- The Department of Labour has played a significant role in reducing unemployment, poverty and inequality. In February 2000, the following legislative amendments, amongst others, were tabled in Parliament:
  - The Employment Equity Act, which prohibits all forms of unfair discrimination and promotes employment equity in the workplace.
  - The Skills Development Act, which aims to increase investment in education and training in the labour market and to improve the skills of South African workers.
  - The Skills Development Levies Act, which provides for the financing of the National Skills Fund and sectoral education and training authorities through a levy-grant system.<sup>15</sup>
- The Department of Health also contributes to the development of South Africa by promoting the health of all people in South Africa, and, especially, with strategies such as international health liaisons, health monitoring through a national information system and medicine regulations. HIV/AIDS remains the most serious challenge facing the country and the health services. Therefore, the HIV/AIDS and Sexually Transmitted Diseases Strategic Plan for South Africa 2000 to 2005 was launched in June 2000. South Africa also successfully hosted the 13<sup>th</sup> International Aids Conference, which focused attention on the disease and addressed critical issues such as availability of, and access to, anti-retroviral drugs.
- The Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism promotes growth in ecotourism, which allows South Africa to make the most of its unique environmental heritage. South Africa's three declared World Heritage Sites are major tourist attractions that benefit local communities who participate in the resulting economic expansion. Tourism has the greatest potential to create jobs in the South African economy.
- The Department of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology promotes life-long learning for all South Africans by –
  - supporting arts, culture and heritage while promoting cultural diversity;
  - equitable development and preservation of the country's history;
  - developing the linguistic diversity; and
  - supporting the development of science and technology, primarily through the National System of Innovation.
- The Department of Education contributes significantly to the development of South Africa. Education and training are seen as longterm investments that form the foundation for an improved quality of life through increased skills and capabilities. The Department outlines

nine key priorities in the Tirisano ("working together") strategic plan of action, inter alia, eliminating illiteracy among adults and youth, making schools the centre of community life and implementing a rational higher education system that takes into account the professional challenges facing South Africa in the 21<sup>st</sup> century (Anon (1) 2001: 273, 310, 327).

The South African government's focus on the three-pronged scourge of low education, poor health and welfare services appears to be paying off to some extent. The rate of illiteracy has shown a downward trend since 1985. From an illiteracy rate of 21 per cent among people 15 years and older in 1985, South Africa's illiteracy fell to 16 per cent in 1997, according to the World Bank's African Development Indicators for 2000. In line with this, the number of pupils enrolling in primary schools has been on an upward slope. The life expectancy of South Africans at birth has also increased from 58 years in 1982 to 65 years in 1997. Infant mortality has dropped from 6,3 per cent in 1982 to 4,8 per cent in 1997 (Mboweni, 2001).

### ***Education in South Africa***

Manpower, being a nation's most valuable asset, makes education thus crucial to a nation's social and economic development. The chronic problem of low economic growth in the developing countries, particularly in subSaharan Africa, is directly related to a higher rate of illiteracy and paucity of educational opportunities.

These are the words of Professor R.K. Watts of the University of Science and Technology of Zimbabwe. He also states that it is education in general, and professional and technological education in particular, designed and developed to impart specific knowledge and skills, that is crucial to a nation's economic and social development. According to research done by the SADC Finance and Investment Sector, the failure to expand secondary education and to devote resources to tertiary education may be one of the most fundamental indicators of structural weakness in the economies of its members, because of the accelerating importance of skills in the new globalised world economy, with knowledge intensity also enhancing the competitiveness of these countries.

All these reasons, and a few others unique to South Africa, have placed education high on South Africa's agenda. Education accounts for a larger share of the national budget than anything else. It will be taking 21 per cent of government spending in 2000/01, or 5.7 per cent of GDP (The Economist, 2001:1).

The Department of Education has initiated a Human Resource Development Strategy that has its origins in the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) of South Africa, which declared: Our people, with their aspirations and collective determination, are our most important resources. The RDP is focused on our people's most immediate needs, and it relies, in turn, on their energies to drive the process of meeting these needs. Development is not about the delivery of goods to a passive citizenry. It is about active involvement and growing empowerment.

The human resource development strategy is innovative, and attempts to ensure that we meet the needs of the South African economy and the democratic order. This strategy entails that the people of South Africa will be provided with a solid educational foundation for social participation, and it empowers them to develop relevant and marketable skills at further and higher education levels.

## Conclusion

South Africa is transforming, and so is the rest of Africa. It is an African Renaissance to which most of the countries have committed themselves in order to build a new continent of democracy, peace and economic stability. The Renaissance takes into consideration environmental, social and economic concerns and therefore has sustainable development at heart. For this transformation to be a success, every African country should have a vision similar to that of President Thabo Mbeki's vision for South Africa: "To be a nation at work for a better life for all".

South Africa – some statistics

VARIABLE	DESCRIPTION
Location	The Republic of South Africa is situated at the southern tip of the African continent
Land Surface	1,219 090 km <sup>2</sup>
Population	44.5 million (1999)
Capitals	Cape Town & Pretoria
Languages	There are eleven official languages. Sepedi, Sesotho, Setswana, siSwati, Tshivenda, Xitsonga, Afrikaans, English, isiNdebele, sisXhosa and isiZulu. English is the national language of politics, record-keeping, diplomacy and international commerce
Literacy rate	84% (1997)
Real GDP/capita	\$3 167 (1998)
Human Development Index ranking	101 out of 174 countries
Head of state	President
Political system	Multiparty democracy
Source	: FISCU 2000

## Bibliography

Anon. 2001. Estimates of National Expenditure 2001. National Treasury. Republic of South Africa. February 2001

Beckenstein, A.R., Long, F.J., Arnold, M.B. & Gladwin, T.N. 1996. Stakeholder Negotiations: Exercises in Sustainable Development. Irwin. United States of America.

Carley, M. and Christie, I. 2000. Managing Sustainable Development. Second Edition. Earthscan Publications Ltd. London.

FISCU, 2000. Regional Economic Review - Southern Africa Economic Summit 2000. Prepared by the SADC Finance & Investment Sector Co-ordinating Unit (Fiscu). Department of Finance. South Africa.

Maloka, E. & le Roux, E. 2000. Problematising the African Renaissance. The Challenges of an African Renaissance in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century - Botha, P. Africa Institute Research Paper No. 62. Africa Institute of South Africa. South Africa. Pretoria

Manuel, T.A. 2001. Budget Speech. Minister of Finance, T.A. Manuel. Republic of South Africa. National Treasury. 21 February 2001.

Mboweni, T.T. 2000. Building Africa's Future. Keynote address by Professor T.T. Mboweni, Governor of the South African Reserve Bank at the 6<sup>th</sup> Africa Regional Girl Guides Conference. 2 July 2001. Cape Town. <http://www.resbank.co.za/Address/2001/02072001.html>

Munusamy, R. 2001. Rescue plan hinges on a reality check. Sunday Times. July 15. 2001.

Schwab, K. et al. The Africa Competitiveness Report 2000/2001. World Economic Forum. Geneva. Switzerland

Smith, C. 2001. Orphaned by Aids. The Teacher. February.

Stals, C. 1997. Old Friends of a New South Africa. Address by Dr Chris Stals, Governor of the South African Reserve Bank at a Dinner of the Friends of South Africa. London. 10 July 1997. <http://www.resbank.co.za/address/1997/ad110797.html>

Stewart, F. Lall, S. Wangwe, S. 1992. Alternative Development Strategies in Sub-Saharan Africa. African Agricultural Development Strategies - Eicher, CK. The Macmillan Press Ltd. London.

Grimond, J. 2001. Africa's great black hope: A Survey of South Africa. The Economist. 24 February.

Todaro, M.P. 2000. Economic Development. Seventh Edition. AddisonWessley Longman. England.

Turnbull, M. 2001. Breaking Boundaries. Africa – Environment & Wildlife. May. Volume 9. Number 4.

Van der Merwe, I. & Van der Merwe, J. 1999. Sustainable Development at the local level: An Introduction to Local Agenda 21 – A South African version. Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism. South Africa.

Von der Ropp, K.B. 2000. The challenge of change: Comparative lessons from the experiences of the EU and SADC. African Security Review. Volume 9. Number 2. World Bank. 1997.

World Development Report, 1997: The state in a changing world. Oxford University Press. New York. World bank. 2000. The Nile Basin Initiative. <http://www.worldbank.org/afr/nilebasin/>