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*Part I: Politics*



## *Politics: introduction*

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The politics section in this volume moves away from the party-political focus of the first two *State of the Nation* volumes to concentrate on some of the political issues and institutions which have dominated the political landscape of the last 12 months. We open with the issue which more than any other concerns the Mbeki government, namely, improving the quality of life of those located in what it terms ‘the second economy’ and examine how well or otherwise the ambitious service-delivery targets identified in the President’s May 2004 ‘State of the Nation’ address are being reached. Our second article follows on from this by looking critically at the conceptualisation of the notion of poverty in the post-apartheid era. We then turn to one of the more contentious of current issues, that of land restitution as a means of redressing the inequities of the past. This flows into an examination of the promotion of human rights post-1994 and, in particular, how the Constitutional Court is interpreting the Constitutional Bill of Rights. We then look at the national Parliament and how it is exercising its watchdog role over the executive and the public purse. Finally, we examine how women’s interests are being served by the network of institutions and bodies that make up what is known as the national gender machinery (NGM).

David Hemson and Michael O’Donovan assess how close government has come to accomplishing the delivery targets defined in the May 2004 speech. They suggest that such a public enunciation of its goals signals not only an official commitment by government to new forms of public accountability and open government, but demonstrates a ‘rational model’ of government. They echo a theme developed by Roger Southall in the introduction to this volume when they suggest that there seems to be a new ‘form of presidential rule’ emerging as ‘the Presidency itself takes on the responsibility of setting targets and ensuring that they are carried out’ – a function more usually undertaken by national departments and local government structures. This, they argue, as does Southall, is characteristic of the interventionist and centralising characteristics of the ‘development-state’ model.

With regard to the targets set out by the President in 2004, the authors make the point that few of these were new; instead, what was presented was largely a new packaging of old promises. The authors point out that assessing the delivery of these ‘old promises’ has not been easy for a number of reasons. One has been the problem of acquiring relevant data against which to verify the effectiveness and efficiency of government in service delivery. In part, they argue, this is due to the fact that the necessary data are not always provided by national departments and when provided, they are not always reliable or easily checked. They also point to a difficulty caused by what could be termed fancy methodological footwork, particularly in regard to the more ambitious or difficult of the goals or ones in which the government is clearly falling short. In these circumstances, the authors note that the attainment of targets tends to be measured in terms of inputs (how much is to be, or is being, spent) rather than results (reduction in backlogs, improved health and well-being).

Nonetheless, utilising the available data, the authors conclude that although some significant progress has been made in the areas of public housing, water, electricity, sanitation, social security, health and education, the progress has been insufficient to offset the sizeable backlogs in most of these areas. The two exceptions, they note, are the provision of electricity and social security services such as the child-support grant and pensions. There, quotas have been exceeded. They conclude that there is a continuing need for academics and civil society to develop and keep ongoing scorecards of government’s performance and/or underperformance in this huge task it has set itself. The Human Sciences Research Council will certainly continue to be part of that process and future editions of this volume will report their findings.

One of the youngest contributors to this volume, Oxford doctoral student Wiseman Magasela, takes a fresh look at an old issue, that of poverty in South Africa. He argues that researching poverty in South Africa is still ‘in its formative stages when considering developments and advances at the international level’. He suggests that this is an opportune time to question the ‘conceptualisation and measurement’ of poverty, the more so because South Africa does not have a reliable or recent ‘official definition of poverty or a poverty line’ and, more often than not, most poverty-related studies in South Africa have ‘relied uncritically on income and absolute definitions and measures of poverty’. The first official review of poverty after 1994,

'Key indicators of poverty in South Africa', undertaken by the World Bank, was based on 'income poverty' alone and failed to take into account socio-economic perspectives. He also suggests that South Africa's most widely used poverty surveys – the household subsistence and minimum living level – were both constructed during the apartheid era and remain unchanged.

This, he argues, is problematic as the post-apartheid period in South Africa is fundamentally different from that which preceded it. Therefore, to conceptualise poverty solely on the basis of quantitative analysis (narrow income measures) is unwise as the results produced tend to be distorted. The author concludes that a strongly qualitative perspective (for example, socio-economic rights enshrined in the Constitution) should be adopted in future poverty research in South Africa. Poverty is multidimensional in nature; it is not merely about 'income-related measures' but also about 'access to infrastructure' and 'a quality of life' to which every South African is entitled. If the South African government is to create effective anti-poverty policies, Magasela concludes, a better conceptualisation of poverty in the post-apartheid period is required.

In her article, Cheryl Walker (KwaZulu-Natal's Land Claims Commissioner between 1994 and 1999) takes stock of the land restitution process and assesses the extent to which the programme has contributed to the goals of redress and redistributive justice. Despite the rhetorical importance government assigns to land reform and redress, Walker argues that since 1994 the budget for land restitution and the restitution process itself have fallen far short of what is required. She suggests that in actuality restitution has not been a top government priority and has ranked below that of other African National Congress development goals. However, an increased budget in 2005/06 and a reference to restitution in the 2005 'State of the Nation' address signal the state's determination to wind up the process by the new deadline of March 2008.

In evaluating the implementation of the restitution process, Walker suggests that the programme of land restitution has suffered from what she calls 'misplaced agrarianisation'. What this refers to is the fact that, in her view, land restitution is firstly conceptualised as primarily a rural phenomenon, while the urban dimension is often underestimated; secondly, she argues that the success of restitution is primarily assessed in terms of land-based development rather than financial compensation; and finally, she sees this

reflected in a developmental moralism which insists that claimants should choose land restoration instead of financial compensation. Most land activists see taking money as a 'betrayal of restitution principles'.

Walker concludes by arguing that, despite the positive ambitions of land restitution in the early 1990s, 'achievements have been modest' thus far and the programme has fallen short in terms of 'historical reach, developmental impact and overall contribution to land reform'. To date, 'the goals of social justice, redress and rebuilding communities have turned out to be more elusive than previously imagined' and she suggests that a 'reassessment of the criteria by which the programme is judged' needs to be developed.

Karthy Govender, a legal academic and member of the national South African Human Rights Commission, tracks the progress made in the past decade in regard to the acceptance and implementation of the fundamental rights and freedoms enshrined in South Africa's Constitution. He concentrates on the Bill of Rights, crafted to safeguard not only first generation (civil and political) rights, but also second (economic, social and cultural) and third (collective or societal rights, such as the right to a clean environment) generation rights. As Govender explains, the vision behind the Bill of Rights was not only that of constraining the exercise of state power, but also an egalitarian vision requiring the state to take positive measures to promote a better life for all. This extensive protection of rights, at least in theory, has led to South Africa's Constitution being once memorably described as a 'Rolls Royce' among constitutions. The problem remains the translation of theory into practice, in a country facing massive challenges with limited resources. Many of the constitutional rights, Govender shows, have been tested at the level of the Constitutional Court as individuals have sought a better quality of life by challenging state conduct and lower-court interpretations of various statutes. Govender reviews and assesses Constitutional Court judgements relating to equality and dignity, democracy, and socio-economic rights, including the rights to health and shelter.

On the whole, Govender argues, the Constitutional Court has done well in upholding the constitutional rights protected by the Constitution, whilst at the same time not second-guessing the actions of the executive to an unacceptable degree. The judges' determinations on government policies have at times, perhaps inevitably, been the source of tension between the executive

and judiciary, as in the Constitutional Court ruling on the Treatment Action Campaign's case in which the Court concluded that the policy of the state to restrict the supply of Nevirapine to the limited test or pilot sites and not to extend it to all state hospitals was a violation of section 27 (the right to access healthcare services) of the Constitution and the state was thus ordered to supply the drug to all public hospitals. He predicts, however, that in the decade ahead this tension could rise. After an era characterised by law-making, the years immediately ahead will largely be ones of implementation and it is at this stage that vested rights and interests 'are most likely to be adversely affected'. He cites dispensing doctors and pharmacists as groups which have been affected by the re-regulation of democratic South Africa. There will be others. Simultaneously, Govender foresees that there are likely to be further challenges in the years ahead, made by or on behalf of the marginalised, for speedier and more decisive delivery, and this will strain the resources of the state. In the conflicts that await, it will be the courts – and the Constitutional Court in particular – which will be called upon to determine whether the state is living up to its constitutional obligations. The litmus test of our maturing democracy will, in this view, 'be the response of the executive to unfavoured decisions. Any response which has the effect of devaluing the institution of the courts...will...subvert much of the gains made in the first decade of democracy'. Watch this space.

In contrast to Govender's generally positive assessment of the work of the Constitutional Court, which he feels 'has crafted a solid foundation upon which the future development of constitutional law and human rights law can be based', Judith February's portrait of the legislative end of South Africa's democratic framework in the same period is unflattering. 'As an institution', she argues, Parliament 'has played its role patchily, unevenly, and sometimes hesitantly', especially when it has been at loggerheads with the executive. This less than flattering view she particularly applies to the legislature's constitutionally assigned oversight role. The result, she shows, is a generally negative public perception of Parliament, citing some recent survey data to support her view.

February constructs her argument around three case studies, from which in only one instance does Parliament emerge with any credit. That was the Protection of Constitutional Democracy against Terrorism Bill, in regard to which the relevant portfolio committee and special interest groups joined

together effectively to force the executive to backtrack and rewrite key clauses before it was enacted. This was a rare instance where Parliament displayed the will to face off with the executive. This did not happen in the other two cases, the National Conventional Arms Control Act and the Strategic Defence Procurement Package (or so-called ‘arms deal’). Here, she argues, Parliament displayed both ineptitude and a craven lack of political independence, succumbing meekly to the crippling of the legislature’s most important oversight body, the Select Committee on Public Accounts. Of course, given recent developments relating to former Deputy President Zuma and the arms deal, and calls from the opposition for the investigation to be reopened, the Select Committee on Public Accounts (and Parliament in general) has an ideal opportunity to redeem itself. However, given the almost casual response of the Portfolio Committee on Minerals and Energy to the ‘Oilgate’ revelations, it seems no lessons have been drawn from the whole saga.

February also looks at two other parliamentary functions designed to promote oversight and finds that both fail to deliver the goods. The one is in respect of public participation in the committee process of the legislature through lobbying and other forms of input and representation. Where it has occurred to good effect, February suggests it has been by entities favouring the ‘wealthy or better-resourced special interest groups representing the worlds of big business and finance’. But the lack of input from more marginal and less-resourced non-governmental organisations is not the only problem; another relates to the committees themselves, which lack expertise and are often badly run. Frequently, too little notice is given to the public to make representations and then not enough time is given over to hearing and interrogating submissions. The other mechanism is the twice-weekly question-time sessions, where Members of Parliament (MPs) can probe and challenge the actions of government departments through probing and information-gathering questions. This too, she suggests, has been largely ineffective for a range of reasons: most importantly, MPs do not ask enough of the right questions, answers are often delayed for months or even years, and in any case, when they come, are often inadequate, all of which means that the media tends to ignore them. This tendency has been dubbed ‘question dodging’ and February suggests it is becoming more and more frequent.

In her chapter, Amanda Gouws assesses the work of a network of gender institutions – some linked to Parliament – collectively referred to as the

NGM. Crafted in the wake of the 1994 democratic election, the NGM carried the 'hope and expectation' that it would 'influence policy-making from a gender perspective and put women's interests on the political agenda'. Gouws concentrates on three structures within the machinery, namely, the Office of the Status of Women located within the Presidency, Parliament's Joint Monitoring Committee on the Improvement of the Quality of Life and the Status of Women, and the Commission on Gender Equality, one of the so-called 'Chapter 9 (constitutionally-required) institutions'. Gouws's argument is that despite the state having created an enabling environment for gender equality, the NGM cannot be said to fall into a category of bodies with 'high influence and high access'. Even so, it has not been devoid of achievement, for it has made a number of successful inputs in regard to pending legislation; it has facilitated access of gender groups to the legislature's committee processes; and, in general, she suggests it has contributed to a greater degree of gender consciousness in South Africa.

Nonetheless, Gouws suggests that these advances could have been greater had it not been for problems of institutional design and what she calls 'personal politics'. The overlapping of mandates between structures, the lack of co-ordination between and within structures, the lack of communication with the wider public, the inability of a strong women's movement to hold the NGM accountable, overwhelming workloads and the lack of strategic leadership have all worked to blunt the success of South Africa's post-apartheid gender machinery.

With the exception of Govender, it would seem from this introduction that each of the contributors to this section is negative – or at least somewhat disappointed – at government's post-1994 performance in the areas of land, gender, delivery and so on. While this would not be a wholly unfounded view, it would not be a fair depiction either of their thinking. Each article is set against a backdrop in which the enormity of the challenge is acknowledged – as is the fact that South Africa has made huge strides forward since it embarked upon democratic politics in 1994. The essential point each of these studies is making, however, is that much still remains to be done if the aspirations of the Constitution are to be realised.



# 1 *Putting numbers to the scorecard: presidential targets and the state of delivery*

David Hemson and Michael O'Donovan

In his 'State of the Nation' address in 2004, President Mbeki outlined the achievements of the past ten years and the challenges to be met.<sup>1</sup> He spelt out several dozen long-term objectives to guide his administration, on the basis of clear targets, promises of open government, and a concern for efficient public administration. This initiative won general approval (Habib 2004): here was a president determined to set out concrete objectives in the language of commitment and statercraft.

Mbeki's address offers an insightful yardstick for gauging how much has changed since 1994. But it also raises questions of a review along a range of policy prescriptions that have become part of the broad objectives of South African government and society over the past decade. This chapter assesses shifts in policy instruments ranging from the classical declarations of the Freedom Charter, to the broad programmatic Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP), to White Papers and sectoral policies readily crystallised in statutes and to current presidential pronouncements and strategies. These commitments will be reviewed against shifts in priorities: the changing, raising, lowering or even dropping of targets and benchmarks over time, and problems of verifying claims and commitments will be examined. Finally, a broad appraisal will be made of the achievements of delivery over the past ten years.

## *New objectives, new promises*

This review comes at a time when the African National Congress (ANC) is planning celebrations of the fiftieth anniversary of the Freedom Charter and has stated that, 'We must base our vision, programmes and actions on that historic manifesto of the people of South Africa, the Freedom Charter' (ANC 2005). The Freedom Charter set out in broad brushstrokes the hopes of the

oppressed and impoverished: ‘The people shall share in the country’s wealth; There shall be work and security; The doors of learning and culture shall be opened; There shall be houses, security and comfort!’ Within these bold statements, the objectives for the ANC were defined as restoring the national wealth of the country to the people, transferring ownership of key sectors to the people ‘as a whole’, recognising the right to work and ‘full unemployment benefits’, free education for all children, decent housing for all, an end to hunger, a preventive health scheme and free medical care and hospitalisation, and the abolition of slums (ANC 1955).

Aspects of the visionary declarations of the Freedom Charter were, with significant modifications, carried over into the celebrated RDP, which put forward definite targets and set standards by which these could be measured. That programme of ten years ago has been adjusted over time and modified by sectoral White Papers and budgetary shifts. Many of its champions have moved to the business sector and its responsibilities to line departments. This organisational reshuffle was associated with a shift in economic policy from a relatively expansionist policy aiming at redistribution to the successor Growth, Employment and Redistribution strategy (GEAR), which prioritised financial stability. GEAR has been criticised for producing negative consequences for poor people and for compromising the outcome of social programmes, particularly in relation to sustained access to basic services (Habib 2004: 2). Although some of the conservatism of budgetary policy has now ebbed, in the crucial years of delivery there were impacts on the budgets for key social objectives. Undoubtedly, also, the emphasis on efficiency and effectiveness is derived from the struggle to do more with the limited resources available.

This review will focus on a dozen or so of the 80-odd objectives cited in the address which are directly related to the delivery of services to the poor. These read, in the direct language of the address (Mbeki 2004), as follows:

#### *Household services*

1. ‘To intensify the housing programme...in the next three years we will spend R14.2 billion to help our people to have access to basic shelter.’
2. ‘Within the next five years all households will have access to clean running water.’

3. 'During the current year more than 300 000 households will be provided with basic sanitation.'
4. 'Within the next eight years ensure that each household has access to electricity.'

#### *Social security*

5. 'Ensure social grants reach all 7.7 million beneficiaries...within two years add about 3.2 million children who will be eligible for child-support grant.'

#### *Health*

6. 'Reduce malaria cases by ten per cent each year.'
7. 'Implementation of our Comprehensive Plan on HIV and AIDS: 113 health facilities will be fully operational by March 2005 and 53 000 people will be on treatment at that time.'

#### *Education*

8. 'By the end of this financial year we shall ensure that there is no learner or student learning under a tree, mud school or any dangerous conditions that expose learners or teachers to the elements.'
9. 'By the end of the current financial year we expect all schools to have access to clean water and sanitation.'

#### *Security*

10. 'By 2006 there will be 152 000 officers on active duty in the South African Police Services (SAPS).'
11. 'In the current year establish at least two community courts in each province.'
12. 'In the next three months we will set up special joint teams to target and focus on serious crime with an immediate objective of apprehending the top 200 criminals in the country.'

This review will set out a scorecard for these specific objectives and explore how these commitments are being monitored. Is there effective parliamentary and public oversight, with readily available reliable statistics, which can put these goals to the test?

### *Presidential rule and ministerial delivery*

The spelling out of goals with definite targets has been welcomed as a form of more open government with a heightened emphasis on delivery. At one level the turn to explicit objectives reflects on executive ability as the Presidency itself takes on the responsibility for setting targets and ensuring they are carried out. The emphasis in management is shifting from ministerial government to the Presidency itself, particularly as local government increasingly has the responsibility of ensuring the constitutional guarantees (in housing, water and energy) to its citizens.

Presidentialism, the location of power within the executive, is being fleshed out in both political direction and a growing staff, and combined with the drive for business efficiency in government.<sup>2</sup> Although there are notions of equity in policy (notably concerning poverty alleviation), the focus is on effectiveness, ensuring the task is done, and efficiency, working to ensure resources are not wasted. In many ways the turn in objectives takes the form of the model of new public administration first presented by Osborne and Gaebler (1983) and extolled as a new way of ‘reinventing government’ to get efficiency and effectiveness around the notion of value for public money in a period of neoliberalism.

Changed administrative mechanisms are regarded internationally as providing the most striking trends in government over the past period. They are made up of the following elements:

- A focus on management, performance appraisal and efficiency rather than policy;
- The disaggregation of public bureaucracies into agencies which deal with each other on a user pay basis;
- Cost cutting;
- A style of management which emphasises, *inter alia*, output targets, limited term contracts, monetary incentives and freedom to manage (Hood, quoted in Chandler 1996).

It is also widely regarded as involving a transition from a ‘bureaucratic model’ to public administration organised around the ‘goal-oriented fulfilment of public tasks’ (Bauer 2004). Increasingly, strategies provide for further advancement of public mandates, although these may be broken up through deregulation and rebuilt around new funding structures. All of this involves

the application of management principles to public institutions to allow forms of regulation and control.

Most importantly for this discussion are the strategies and tools which provide for increased decentralisation. This is achieved not by replicating bureaucracies at different levels but through increasing responsibility of executives at all levels by focusing on results or *outputs* and the necessary effects or *outcomes*, controlled through performance reports, cost accounting, competition, and finally through impact analysis or *evaluation* (Bauer 2004). Overall there is not a loss of control by national government as goals are set from the centre, new controlling strategies are put in place to control from a distance, and there is continuous benchmarking. The emphasis is on improving services to 'customers' rather than 'citizens' with the greatest public efficiency for the least cost.

The change in management appears to offer an authoritative control over the affairs of public servants; checking on the administration, providing overall direction, and exercising overall supervision. The commitments of the 'State of the Nation' speech place the President in the role of giving direction, guidance and leadership on all the issues of the time. This style is reinforced by the *izimbizo* held shortly before the 2004 election in which ordinary people voiced their frustration with water, housing and other basic services. This seemed to be a level of democracy in action, with citizens able to place their demands directly to government and getting some immediate response. In the election campaign, delivery was presented as the key to political advance and the targets announced in the 2004 'State of the Nation' speech were a way of driving ministers to meet public expectations.

What is also emerging is a new form of presidential direction. The government's plan of action is now to be co-ordinated by the Cabinet office, which is to triple its income from R6.9 million in 2004/05 to R21.8 million in 2005/06, while the Presidency itself is being allocated R240 million, an increase of R100 million (some 70 per cent) on the previous year (*Mail & Guardian* 25.02–03.03.05). In funding and in personnel the Presidency is gaining ascendancy within the state, and filling the Union Building, which once housed the entire national government. There is undoubtedly increased capacity in the presidential purview of ministerial and local government policies, implementation and impact and this is often welcomed.

The Presidency has been characterised also by adaptation of public management, in particular the setting of public targets and the channelling of funds through new agencies and mechanisms. The projection of targets of delivery has a purpose of disciplining ministers to keep their eyes on the overall political aspects of delivery and ensuring that government is seen to have its focus on social goals. The emphasis is on managing resources efficiently to ensure that there is an easing of the social burden of the poor while clearing the way for capital accumulation.

Working on this basis, the President finds it possible to reflect on weaknesses in government. In the ‘State of the Nation’ address of 2005, the President identified the following problem areas in delivery:

- Weaknesses in the governance system which mean that plans to build school infrastructure ‘are unfolding at a much slower pace than envisaged’;
- The misapplication of the policies of free basic electricity which ‘are accruing mainly to those who are relatively well-off’;
- Slow transfers of the Municipal Infrastructure Grant to municipalities reflecting a ‘lack of all-round capacity particularly in technical areas with regard to water, sanitation and public works projects’. (Mbeki 2005)

There are three points to be made in relation to presidential oversight. The first is that the turn towards public statement of goals and objectives of government is in line with the precepts of new public management and a formally rational model of government. The second is that the key aspects of assessment, ‘customer’ empowerment and targets are being ordered carefully to achieve political effect. Finally, the trend in policy towards decentralisation is also, and contradictorily, reinforcing the power of the political centre.

### *Managing backlogs and information*

There are a number of problems in making an objective assessment of progress on goals, two of which warrant particular attention here. The first is the basis on which backlogs are measured and the second is the availability and reliability of data to estimate progress to achieving targets and ending backlogs.

The problem with all estimates of backlogs in any service, is that politicians and planners often operate with a view of a static population. At the inception

of the community water programme of the Department of Water Affairs and Forestry (DWAF) in 1994, for instance, it was mentioned that there were 12 million people without water and 21 million without sanitation (DWAF 2003). The celebration of delivery of water to ten million people after ten years creates the impression that government is rapidly ending the backlog. Departmentally approved statistics, however, show that the problem remains. A recent review of the entire water sector concluded that five million people had no access to safe water and a further 6.5 million did not have access to 'defined basic service levels' and that 18.1 million did not have adequate sanitation (DWAF 2003: iii). In other words, about 11.5 million people still lacked a basic access service to safe water in 2003. This is just short of the figure in 1994; the *proportion* of total population is, of course, much smaller.

These figures are not symptoms of statistical tricks or oddities; and there is little perception generally of the effects that changes in population have on backlogs. Since services are generally to *households* rather than individuals or 'population', it is at this level that the growth in demand for services is faced. While population growth has been increasing at a rate of approximately 2.25 per cent per annum (although it is now reported to be easing), the rate of increase in households has been increasing at a level of five per cent. Significantly, the rapid increase in households is concentrated among the majority of poor most dependent on public services: of the increase in households from 1996–2001, 93 per cent were among African people. This is associated with sharp decline in the average size of families among Africans over the same period from 4.8 to 3.9.<sup>3</sup> These population shifts, including migration into growth areas such as Gauteng, warp a linear conception of delivery, one which starts with a conception of a definite population, registers delivery and, over a few years, measures the reduced backlog. With low levels of delivery, the backlogs may be growing even as delivery increases. Such are the dimensions of the problem that backlogs among the dispossessed tend to grow faster than delivery in many sectors. Unfortunately the assessment of the targets and benchmarks set out by government often does not take these considerations into account.

A rational model of public administration is also undermined by the growing tendency for government to evince an attitude of scepticism, doubt, or rejection of statistical trends which do not reflect progress in the past decade. Defensive attitudes and scepticism are particularly marked, not only

in relation to HIV/AIDS but also to other aspects of government policy and evaluation. Statistics South Africa (Stats SA) is formally independent, yet reports to the Minister of Finance. Nonetheless, the government tends to disregard or ridicule statistical conclusions from this body which show different trends from those anticipated by public policy. There are trends which government holds as inherently invalid or impossible, for instance, that poor black people are poorer (in terms of income poverty) than they were in 1994 or that unemployment has increased dramatically over the past ten years. Hence, in a recent interview, Minister of Finance Trevor Manuel stated that there would be a ‘revolution’ if the unemployment rate was 40 per cent, and thus the figure could not be true (*Business Report* 28.02.05). This rejection of unemployment statistics has been repeated by the President who wrote recently that millions walking the streets in search of work are not visible (*Sunday Times* 22.05.05). In short, the current mood in government is to strongly criticise studies which show growing or continued impoverishment or backlogs, even if these make reasoned use of official statistics. Hence, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) national *Human Development Report* (2004), which relied on such a method, was construed as out of sympathy with the attempt to achieve transformation in South Africa, and as making ‘little acknowledgement of progress’ (GCIS 2004).

The doubts about statistics expressed by ministers make it difficult to assess social progress against basic indicators. But they can also have something of a positive or democratic side if they lead to reasoned discussion. It is therefore encouraging that the scepticism about statistics is increasingly also expressed by professionals and local government in relation to official delivery figures. These doubts appear to be derived from different perspectives. Nationally there is pressure to show achievements, but often locally, municipal officials are not unhappy to disclose a poor record of delivery as, ironically, a larger backlog would attract increased funding.<sup>4</sup> Even senior officials express reservations (normally privately) about the internal statistical records of departments and state that authoritative statistics require independent surveys. Scepticism arises even with reports from authoritative scientific bodies in relation to such issues as the quality of water discharge as they are seen to work on a contractual basis with government bodies and do not release their studies for public scrutiny. There is greater public concern, too, that statistics should be ‘believable’ and authoritative in the sense of

being independently verified. These points are made by civil society from one perspective, insisting statistics should be publicly available, and also by defensive civil servants from another.

### *Assessing progress through the RDP*

When compared to the ambitious aspirations of the RDP, South Africa's second decade is marked by a far more modest set of objectives and by the lowering of the improved standards which were to be applied.<sup>5</sup> Indeed, the goals set out to be achieved and exceeded in the past decade in areas such as housing, land, water, and sanitation are repeated to be achieved in the present. In 1994 the RDP programme envisaged, *inter alia*, universal access to water and sanitation facilities as well as the elimination of hunger and malnutrition, all to be achieved on the basis of people's participation in development and within the coming decade – 1994 to 2004.

Table 1.1 offers a brief synopsis of the major objectives of the RDP programme and the backlog in 2002.

Table 1.1 *Scorecard on the RDP*

Sector	Short-term RDP objective	Medium-term RDP objective	Situation in 2002
Housing		At least one million houses within five years (1994–99)	Long-term RDP objective: Shelter for all by 2003. The one-millionth house was delivered in 2003. The number of households living in shacks doubled between 1994 and 2002 to reach 1.8 million.
Water	20–30 litres per person per day within 200m of residence	50–60 litres per person per day within 200m	Households with access to piped water within 200m increased by 2m after 1994. Prevalence of the service at this level, however, remained unchanged at 73% in 2001. In that year approx. 2.9 million households were still unserved.*

Sector	Short-term RDP objective	Medium-term RDP objective	Situation in 2002
Tele-communication	Universal access to 'affordable' telecommunications for schools and clinics within two years	Provide universal affordable access for all as rapidly as possible	Between 1994 and 2002 the prevalence of fixed line telephone facilities dropped from 31% to 24%. In 2002, 9 million households were unserved.**
Sanitation facilities	Adequate facilities should be provided to at least 75% of rural households	Provide adequate sanitation facilities to all within five years (1994–99)	Between 1994 and 2002 an additional 1.3 million households obtained ventilated improved privy toilet facilities or better. However, this was insufficient to change coverage at the basic level which has declined from 67% to 62%. In 2002, 4.6 million households were unserved with basic sanitation.
Refuse removal	All homes serviced		Between 1994 and 2002 the rate of refuse removal improved by 2% to reach 55% of households. In 2002, 5.2 million households were still not serviced.
Electricity		By 2000, 2.5 million homes connected; Universal access for schools and clinics	Over 4 million households electrified by 2000. In 2002, 2.8 million households were still unserved.
Nutrition	Eliminate malnutrition and fear of hunger within three years		In 2002, 31% percent of households with children reported being unable to feed them at some stage in the last year. In 1994 the figure was 41%.

Source: Estimates of backlogs are own calculations derived from Stats SA's LFS 2002<sup>6</sup>

Notes:

\* The figure for water services establishes delivery as piped water to the dwelling, yard, or within 200m of a communal tap and uses the 1994 October Household Survey (OHS) as the benchmark compared to a similar question in the Labour Force Survey (LFS) of March 2001 (the most recent source), which provides a calculation of the 200m standard in a question which asks whether households can access piped water within three minutes.

\*\* During this period there was a dramatic uptake in the use of cellular phones. However, as the objective was described in terms of 'affordable' services this component has not been factored in. In addition, landline connections provide the basic infrastructure for easing the digital gap between urban and rural areas.

A scan of Table 1.1 shows that while progress was generally made on all fronts (with the notable and important exception of telecommunications), and in one instance there was advance greater than the promise (electricity),

few of the *objectives* were met. A number of targets were not met in the time period and others were quietly dropped. The one million houses which were to be achieved in five years eventually took just under ten years to build, the backlog in water and sanitation was far from met and the increase to 50 litres per person per day in 1999 was not mentioned, while refuse removal only increased marginally. On the other hand, there has been a significant decline in the number of householders reporting that they were unable to feed their children.

Despite progress, a thorough review of the targeting, planning, and funding of delivery was not made after the RDP office was closed. Nor was there an open review and assessment by Parliament of the precise targets, budgetary allocations, and institutional capacity, which would have shown the basis on which progress was achieved or delivery held up. The assignment of the RDP's objectives to line departments prior to their apportionment to local government appears to have left an assessment of its crucial social objectives to internal mechanisms rather than to an open debate involving all levels of government and civil society. Instead, a quiet conclusion seems to have been drawn that targets should be modest, that open review was not suitable, and that specific mechanisms (such as the RDP office) were not necessary. Instead of a thorough appraisal, broad statements of progress were made rather than a careful appraisal in cost-benefit analysis, parliamentary examination, or democratic review at the local level.

Undoubtedly, however, lessons were also drawn within government about the intractability of interdepartmental co-ordination, and one of the innovations of this period was the grouping of government departments into economic, social, governance, security and international 'clusters' in order to achieve better integration of delivery.

### *Does the RDP live on?*

The objectives set out in the 'State of the Nation' speech in 2004 in a sense replaced the established RDP social objectives with a series of commitments which go well beyond service delivery to the poor to involve, among other issues, international relations, economic policy and security issues. This marks, in part, the inevitable expansion of government objectives with South Africa's advent as a power within the continent, but also indicates the displacement of

old priorities by the new. Social delivery is marked by an attitude which could be summarised as follows: ‘The RDP is dead, long live the RDP!’ The slogan could be interpreted as follows: the RDP lives on in popular imagination, and its promises cannot be jettisoned and, indeed, should have been achieved with its expiration after a decade. However, its goals are now part of a much larger schema.

Yet to what extent, in practice, have the various delivery pledges made in the ‘State of the Nation’ addresses carried forward the original objectives of the RDP? Do these objectives live on (though without the original timelines) and/or are they being re-interpreted and repackaged? An answer to these questions is offered by the review of the six most substantive sectors (housing, water and sanitation, electricity, social security, education, and security).

### *Housing*

#### *Objective 1: Intensification of the housing programme*

One of the most important considerations in service delivery is that basic services like potable water, refuse removal and electricity are provided to households. They are best analysed at that level but, unfortunately, many assessments are made in terms of population covered.

Currently the South African population is increasing at less than 2.5 per cent each year.<sup>7</sup> However, recent censuses and large-scale household surveys reveal that the total number of households in the country is increasing at approximately twice this rate.<sup>8</sup> In particular the number of African households increased by 32 per cent from 6 533 977 to 8 625 030 over the period, an increase of over two million households.

As households ‘unbundle’ into smaller (more nuclear?) units they create demand for services and housing over and above that created by population growth and immigration. The extent of household unbundling has therefore somewhat unexpectedly exacerbated service demands (particularly for housing subsidies) placed on the state.

Household services are directly influenced by housing developments (which largely reflect the situation of households) and thus by the state’s housing subsidy scheme. Between 1994 and 2003 approximately one million houses were completed under the subsidy scheme and this had a strong bearing on

service levels in general.<sup>9</sup> These 'RDP' houses are typically serviced with on-site running water, sanitation and sewerage services as well as electricity. The housing subsidy scheme thus adds a substantial fillip to the prevalence of these ancillary services which are usually built in as construction proceeds. Of course, the level of these ancillary services is further supplemented by direct provision to existing (unserviced) housing stock.

The earliest estimates of housing and household services backlogs were given by Stats SA's 1994 October Household Survey (OHS). Since earlier censuses had systematically excluded the four formally independent homelands (Transkei, Bophuthatswana, Venda and Ciskei), this survey offered the first reliable estimate of service backlogs for the country as a whole. The general trends portrayed by the 1994 OHS were subsequently confirmed by the 1996 census. By comparing changes in housing profiles between 1996 and the most recent census of 2001, it is possible to see the impact of the new regime's tenure on service provision.

A comparison of these two censuses shows an increase in the number of people living in all major housing types. By 2001 the number of households living in shacks had increased to 26 per cent more than the 1996 figure. The number of households living in formal dwellings had increased more dramatically to 7.7 million, which is 32 per cent more than the 1996 figure. By contrast there was only a marginal increase in the number of households living in traditional dwellings.

Housing backlogs – the number of households located in 'informal' or similarly inadequate housing and also those households which are living in single rooms who qualify for a housing subsidy – are thus important in understanding how and where service backlogs are being rolled back. The backlogs strongly express the impact of the growth in the number of households.

The 'unbundling' of households greatly exacerbated the housing challenge facing the state. For example, the initial RDP target of one million houses would have been sufficient to eliminate the shacks that were then in place. However, the growth in households has been such that, despite state initiatives, the total number of households living in shacks continued to increase after 1996. Perversely, as the *rate* of delivery was half of that anticipated (the RDP set out a target of one million over five years, a target which was slightly

exceeded only after ten years), the challenge facing the state in housing all citizens is now larger than it was in 1994.

In his ‘State of the Nation’ address in 2004, the President committed the government to spending R14.2 billion over the next three years to ‘help our people to have access to basic shelter’. The promise has been supplemented by an additional R3.2 billion to make a new commitment of R17.4 billion (Social Sector Cluster, June 2005).

**Table 1.2** *Anticipated housing delivery and backlog*

	Actual		Projected	
	1996	2001	2004	2008
House, flat, semi-detached, etc.	5 834 819	7 680 421	9 059 874	11 289 299
Traditional dwelling	1 644 386	1 654 787	1 661 659	1 670 322
Slum or other	1 580 364	1 870 498	2 066 911	2 363 764
Total households	9 059 569	11 205 706	12 788 444	15 323 384

Source: Census of 1996 and 2001 with figures for 2004 and 2008 based on a forward extrapolation on the basis of inter-censal trends

From Table 1.2 the 1996 and 2001 census housing data are brought into three basic sectors: formal housing, traditional dwellings, and slum dwellings. However, it must be borne in mind that government subsidies are not the sole source of housing. Between 1994 and 2003 it appears that less than half of all new housing stock could, to some extent, be attributed to the subsidy scheme and the remaining formal housing units were furnished by commercial developers or by households themselves.

From the changes between the censuses, the anticipated future figures are then extrapolated forward on the basis of an exponential trendline. On this basis it is anticipated that formal housing will increase to 11.3 million units, the number of traditional dwellings will remain stagnant, and slum housing will increase from 1.8 million in 2001 to 2.4 million in 2008.

At current subsidy levels the R17.4 billion would result in a total of 621 400 subsidies and, thus, anticipated additional houses. On this basis the state seemingly intends to provide an average of 207 142 dwellings each year for the next three years. This is well below what is required to eliminate the current

backlog, which was estimated to include 2.1 million households in 2004. From the figures presented, the backlog could be in the order of 1.8 million in 2008/09 (that is, an anticipated 2.4 million in slums less 621 400 houses delivered). The forward extrapolation does take into account that there has been delivery which has diminished slum dwellings and that this will continue into the future. Nonetheless, if the recent trends are maintained, the numbers living in slums – a crucial target for elimination set by the Minister of Housing in a ‘war on shacks’<sup>10</sup> – will not be reduced although the *proportion* of the population living in slums will.

Moreover, if the number of households continues to increase at the current rate (and there are indications that population growth is abating) then the increase in the number of households will rise to 630 000 each year. In terms of income criteria, almost 80 per cent of all households qualify for a housing subsidy,<sup>11</sup> although many are already housed. This indicates that housing allocations are woefully insufficient to meet the projected demand, and at current expenditure levels, less than a third of ‘new’ households will be catered for.

Government is anticipating that through negotiations, the financial sector will become committed to providing R42 billion for low-cost housing for households with incomes between R1 500 – R7 000 (Sisulu 2005). The history of housing loans to poor communities, which was full with promise in the early post-liberation period, has, however, become marked with conflict and it is uncertain whether the very large sums will be released for construction of new houses.

Although housing strategy is publicly expressed less in terms of the elimination of inadequate housing than in the upgrading of all informal settlements, it does appear that without massive growth in employment opportunities or a marked increase in state subsidies, shacks will continue to be a feature of the South African landscape for some time.

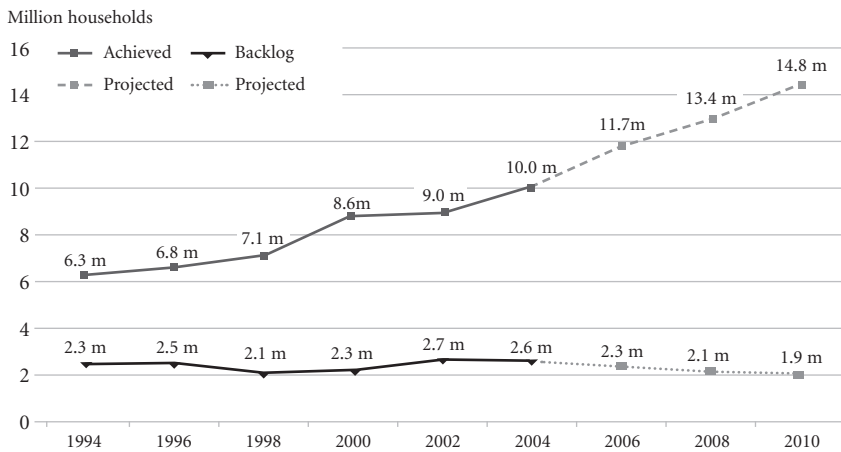
### *Water for all*

*Objective 2: Within the next five years all households will have access to clean running water*

Clean drinking water for all has been a key objective of the RDP and remains so today. As mentioned earlier, despite considerable effort the backlog has

been declining unevenly over the past decade and there are fresh challenges in this sector as a number of studies have shown that there are difficulties in sustaining delivery in remote poor communities.<sup>12</sup> The transfer of water projects to local authorities is advancing but it is very far from being complete. When this is achieved there should be more dedicated funding for operations and maintenance.

**Figure 1.1** *The line of delivery in basic water*



Source: Stats SA Surveys 1995 to 2003 with forward extrapolation beyond 2003 based on trend with the number of households modelled on 1996 and 2001 Census data

Figure 1.1 shows the statistics of delivery at the level of basic service (piped water within 200 metres of the household) or better. The largest part of delivery is connection to the dwelling or yard, the latter having shown the greatest expansion over the entire period and communal taps (though preferred in policy) considerably less. Somewhat surprisingly, given the high level of publicity given to water delivery, forward projections show that the backlog in water services is persistent, tending to decline slowly as a proportion of all households while delivery rises.<sup>13</sup> The rising line of delivery largely reflects additional houses built in urban areas as well as a smaller proportion in rural areas.

The backlog has increased slightly from 2.4 million to 2.7 million between 1994 and 2002, a marginal trend in a persistent backlog which is acknowledged in DWAF's 2003 *Strategic framework*. The difficulty has been that the increasing number of households, rising on annually from 388 606 in 1997 to a projected 616 812 in 2008, is tending to erode progress in reducing the backlog even as delivery is accelerated. On the basis of the extrapolation of trends forward, there is a slow decline in the numbers of the backlog.<sup>14</sup> However, unless there is increased spending and an improved delivery system, it appears that the target of water for all by 2008 will not be met, as on the current basis, there will be a projected 2.1 million households unserved.

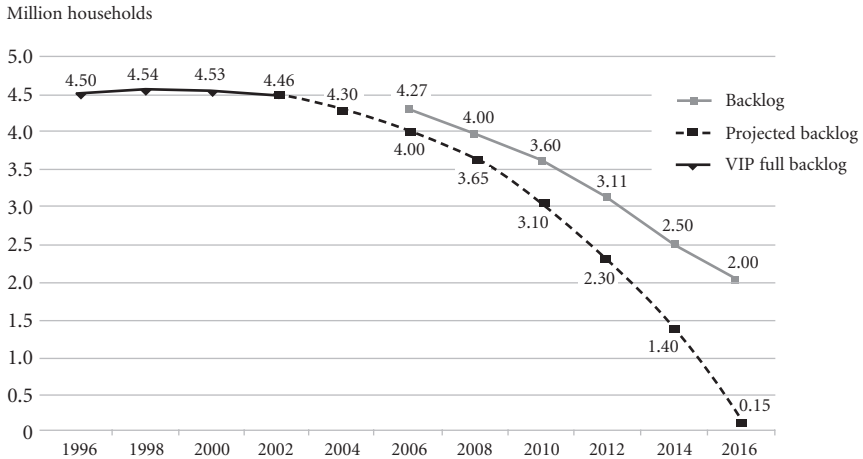
This seems a surprising conclusion as water delivery is generally regarded as an exemplary sector. The apparent contradiction is explained by comparison to electricity: compared to the 600 000 to 700 000 household connections to the electricity grid a year, the highest claimed level of delivery in DWAF records is 400 000 households (1.5 million people) gaining access to clean water in a year.

In these conditions, with a relatively static proportion of the Budget going to water services (some 0.7 per cent), not only will the target of water for all by 2008 not be reached but considerable effort and considerable additional resources will be needed to reduce the numbers in the backlog.

### *Toilets for all*

*Objective 3: During the current year more than 300 000 households will be provided with basic sanitation*

It is possibly significant that the promise of sanitation for all by 2010, along with commitments to bring sanitation to schools and clinics, to implement health and hygiene education and to eliminate bucket toilets by 2006, contained in the *Strategic framework* on the water sector, are not mentioned in the 2004 'State of the Nation' address. Instead of precise targets there is a commitment to step up delivery of basic sanitation to 300 000, a figure which implies a concentration on ventilated improved privies (VIPs), although it could also include other toilets. On the basis of projections of delivery of VIPs, it is likely that the 300 000 toilets will be achieved in 2006, although current information on delivery is unfortunately not available. The question, however, is what acceleration of sanitation delivery will happen in rural communities and slums?

**Figure 1.2** *The sanitation backlog, 1996–2016*

Source: Data based on Stats SA Survey 1998–2003 and extrapolated forward with number of households modelled on 1996 and 2001 Census data

Figure 1.2 shows changes within the backlog in sanitation at the VIP level or better. The curve represents the statistics derived from official surveys up to 2003 and thereafter on projections based on a model of household growth and level of delivery. In 2004 there were 4.5 million households without basic sanitation and, despite an acceleration of delivery, there has not been a significant decline in the backlog as yet. The decline in the forward projection of the backlog represents the results of recent accelerated delivery rather than accomplished fact.

On the current basis of expenditure, by 2010 – the target date to provide sanitation for all – there will still be some 3.7 million households without basic sanitation. From Figure 1.2 it appears that the commitment to provide sanitation for all by 2010 is, even on these most generous estimates, illusory. The second curve (VIP full backlog) indicates the additional task which arises from the fact that VIPs fill over five to eight years and need either to be replenished or emptied, and represents a sum of the backlog plus the additional task of either emptying pits or replacing them.<sup>15</sup> In rural conditions

it is highly unlikely that pits can be emptied because of additional costs and accessibility. These full VIPs then become an additional burden on further delivery and the forward curve advances well beyond 2015.

### *Household electrification*

*Objective 4: Ensure that each household has access to electricity within the next eight years*

Despite the considerable growth in the number of households requiring services, notable progress has nevertheless been made in several arenas. One particularly successful field has been the provision of electricity. In 1994 only 55 per cent of all households had access to mains electricity; by 2003 this had increased to 78 per cent.<sup>16</sup> The most marked improvements in the provision of electricity are evident in informal and traditional dwellings. In both these cases, more than a third of all dwellings were electrified after 1994. The improvement in electrification among formal households is less marked, but nevertheless impressive. By 2003 another 19 per cent of formal dwellings were electrified despite the rapid rise in the number of such dwellings.

**Table 1.3** *Percentage of households with access to public electricity supply*

	1994	2003	Improvement
Formal dwellings	69	88	19
Traditional dwellings	6	41	35
Informal dwellings	20	54	34
Other dwellings	17	83	66
Total	55	78	23

Sources: Stats SA 1994, OHS: Lighting, access to electricity; 2003b

To achieve this improvement, an average of 562 000 households were electrified each year between 1994 and 2003. Table 1.4 compares electrification rates for three distinct periods after 1994. It shows that the tempo at which households were electrified increased from approximately 218 000 per annum (in the period 1994 to 1996) to 664 000 per annum (in the period 1997 to 2003). Should the current pace of electrification be maintained, some 3.3 million households could be electrified in the five years to which Mbeki refers.

**Table 1.4 Household electrification**

	1994	1996	2003
Total households	8 800 000	9 050 572	12 546 104
Total households electrified	4 797 720	5 233 372	9 811 308
Backlog	4 002 280	3 817 200	2 630 376
Prevalence of electricity	55%	57%	78%
Annual increment over preceding period		218 000	664 000

Sources: Stats SA 1994, OHS: Lighting, access to electricity; Census 1996, GHS 2003

Note: There is, unfortunately a considerable discrepancy between Stats SA figures and those of the National Electricity Regulator.

Unfortunately, significant as this figure is, it may be insufficient to offset the current backlog of 2.9 million households and the annual growth of the additional households each year. For the promise of electricity to all by 2012 to be met an extraordinary investment in electrification is called for precisely as Eskom, the main agent for the past success, is restructured.

### *Social security*

*Objective 5: Ensure social grants reach all 7.7 million beneficiaries...within two years add about 3.2 million children who will be eligible for child support grant*

One of the most successful redistributive measures taken by the state has been the expansion of state grants and, in particular, the increased use of the child support grant (CSG). Not only has the value of grants increased in recent years, but eligibility for disability, child support and other grants has also widened. CSGs in particular have been made more accessible as the eligibility criteria widened. Between 2000 and 2004 there was a more than ten-fold increase in the total number of people who received this modest grant (R170 per month per child).

The main reason for the dramatic expansion in the uptake of CSGs has been a widening of the age of eligibility and better means of access. In early 2003, to qualify for the benefit the intended beneficiary had to be under nine years of age, the household had to meet a means criterion and satisfy the documentation requirements. By August 2003, the age criterion had widened

to include children aged nine and ten. The age criterion will now be expanded until all children (that meet the income and documentation criteria) under the age of 14 will qualify for the benefit.

Because the age criterion is expanding more rapidly than the rate at which children age, no children are currently being removed as beneficiaries because of their age. However, theoretically, children may be removed as a result of their no longer meeting the means test. In 2004 the Children's Institute reported that only 0.57 per cent of applications for the CSG were rejected on the basis of the household's income (Leatt 2004), indicating that this is hardly ever used as a reason for refusing or lapsing a grant.<sup>17</sup>

Although the value of the grant has kept up with inflation, the means criterion has remained static in nominal terms. Inflation has thus expanded the eligibility criteria as it reduces the real value set by the means test. This widens the eligibility criteria in a way similar to tax 'bracket creep', which rises as incomes rise over time. The expansion in the number of beneficiaries is thus derived from:

- Improved documentation/registration of babies and their caregivers;
- Expansion of the age eligibility criterion; and
- Lower real value set by the means test.

However, a reduction in the number of beneficiaries is indicated by the age profile. There are typically fewer 0–4 year olds than there are 5–9 year olds. There are also typically fewer 5–9 year olds than 10–14 year olds (Stats SA 2003: 28). The reduction in the size of the relevant age cohort will inevitably be offset by the expansion brought about by the income 'bracket creep'. Precisely how the relevant dynamics interact is unknown as they depend on demographic trends and on economic performance. However, if the most recent trends are maintained the objective set by the President is likely to be met.

As this number of social grant beneficiaries has objectively already been attained, Mbeki was, in effect, giving a confirmation that service levels would not be undermined. Of particular importance has been the expansion of the uptake in CSGs. The number of beneficiaries of social grants is set to increase as eligibility criteria are widened and the target is likely to be achieved.

## Education

### *Objective 6: No learning under a tree or in a mud school*

In a briefing it was reported that in 2003 there were 494 cases of schools without any classrooms, which is defined as a school ‘under trees’.<sup>18</sup> According to the Department of Education the number of these schools in September 2004 was 552. In April 2005 the Department established a task team to find ways of speeding up the provision of classrooms. In February 2005 a comprehensive audit was carried out which found there were 179 such schools concentrated mostly in KwaZulu-Natal and Limpopo. The evidence is of a sudden decline of 373 schools ‘under trees’ between 2004/05. The Minister of Education, Naledi Pandor, reported that, by June 2005, the task team was to report ‘concrete plans to end the practice of teaching children outdoors’.<sup>19</sup>

The incidence of ‘teaching under trees’ is probably less a reflection of the absence of classrooms than it is of the quality of the buildings (poor ventilation) and of overcrowding, both of which lead teachers to teach outside. In a number of rural schools, there is great overcrowding; in a recent visit to a primary school near Bizana it was found there were 175 learners in Grade 1 in a single damp classroom built by parents and not less than 65 learners in each of the other classrooms.<sup>20</sup> The school was without sanitation as toilet structures had been blown down in a tornado and there was no water supplied. No plans had been made to redress the problems.

According to the Minister, open exposure and overcrowding and a lack of basic facilities would cost R50 billion to solve. It appears that there is some progress, and provincial educational departments are required to report on school infrastructure on a monthly basis.<sup>21</sup>

### *Objective 7: By the end of the current financial year we expect all schools to have access to clean water and sanitation*

Schools should be the centres of health and hygiene education to improve the health, understanding and living standards of the rising generation. Teachers, officials, and public-health engineers should all be united to educate and provide services to schools, particularly in rural areas to counter the high levels of water-related diseases among children.

Schools, particularly in rural communities, are characterised by *inadequate* water and sanitation, but unfortunately it has not been possible to access the

latest data at this level. There are, however, statistics relating to access. The figures of schools without *any* water supply alone are daunting: of a total of 27 458 schools, in July 2002 there were 7 817 entirely without water and this was reduced to 3 860 by June 2005. Of those without sanitation there were 3 420 in April 2004 and this was reduced to 3 220 in June 2005. Progress, it appears, is made most readily in access to water as, over the three years, 3 957 gained water while only 200 received sanitation.<sup>22</sup> At this rate it appears unlikely that the remaining 4 000 or so schools could receive both water and sanitation in a year. According to the updated Social Cluster report, 52 schools are in the planning phase to be provided with water and sanitation by March 2006,<sup>23</sup> the date all schools are to be upgraded.

The Minister has expressed concern that all provinces should provide statistics and in a media briefing on 28 May 2004, she reported that the matter ‘will be attended to as a matter of urgency’, and that some R200 million is required to eliminate the problem of sanitation in schools alone. An interdepartmental task team has been established and funding is being sought from donors as well as from the Treasury. Significantly, the President has identified delays in school infrastructure development as a problem (Mbeki 2005). It appears that this target will not be met by April 2006.

### *Health*

#### *Objective 8: Reduce malaria cases by ten per cent each year*

In 1996 the government, persuaded by environmental interests, stopped using DDT to control malaria-carrying mosquitoes. This move was followed by a dramatic escalation in the number of malaria cases (and deaths). In the face of an impending health crisis, the moratorium was scrapped and the use of DDT was again adopted, although not in general application. The Medical Research Council has developed Geographic Information System monitoring of malaria cases, followed by a strategy of deploying teams with DDT to targeted homesteads and villages. The impact of the new policy on the number of malaria cases was dramatic. Between 2000 and 2001 the number of malaria cases reported dropped by 59 per cent. Between 2001 and 2002 it dropped by another 41 per cent.

**Table 1.5** *Incidence of malaria reported*

Year	No. of cases reported	Difference previous year	Percentage change over previous year
2000	64 622		
2001	26 506	38 116	59
2002	15 619	10 887	41
2003	13 459	2 160	14
2004	13 399	60	0

Source: Department of Health <http://www.doh.gov.za/issues/malaria/statistics.html>, accessed 16.08.05

In this context, the promise of a sustained reduction in the number of cases of ten per cent each year appears feasible. In 2002–03, the number of cases reported dropped by ‘only’ 14 per cent and in the period 2003–04 it dropped negligibly. The downward trend is slowing and it is uncertain that the annual ten per cent can be re-established after 2004, although successful management held the numbers downward in the first half of 2005. Unfortunately these positive developments are threatened by the onset of global warming which is anticipated to increase the spread of malaria southwards.

*Objective 9: Implementation of our Comprehensive Plan on HIV and AIDS. 113 health facilities will be fully operational by March 2002 and 53 000 people will be on treatment at that time*

Despite the relative modesty of these objectives, there are reasons to doubt whether they had been attained before the end of the 2004/05 financial year. At the end of 2004, despite 129 state health facilities providing therapy, only half the targeted number of people living with HIV/AIDS were receiving anti-retroviral treatment (ART).<sup>24</sup> It is not clear how many of the 129 facilities were ‘fully operational’. Unfortunately, the matter has been clouded by the Health Minister. At a briefing in 2005 it was stated that there were 50 009 patients on ART at 143 health facilities where comprehensive HIV/AIDS services were being provided (Social Sector Cluster briefing, June 2005). However, Minister Tshabalala-Msimang questioned these figures, saying she had not been informed of how the numbers were reached. Rather than confirming an achievement, she reported that she would try to establish how many people were on the government’s anti-retroviral programme, how many had fallen out and ‘how many had died as a result of the side effects’ (SAPA 05.05.05).

This statement undermined the credibility both of the objective and the departmental figures (as the Minister added she was not concerned with figures but with ‘quality’) and, unfortunately, there has been no report on what she has established.

### *Security*

#### *Objective 10: Ensure that 152 000 officers are on active duty in the SAPS by 2006*

This promise by Mbeki was a reaffirmation of the Enlistment Programme established by the South African Police Service (SAPS) in 2001. That programme sought to reverse the drop in the number of SAPS personnel prompted, *inter alia*, by an earlier moratorium on recruitment. The Enlistment Programme set staffing-level targets for 2003 and subsequent years. According to the plan, by March 2006 SAPS should have 152 560 officers on active duty. There is some difference whether civilians are included in the definition of ‘officers on active duty’. The definition has a significant impact on whether the objective is being reached; the figures of ‘staff including civilians’ reach the target in 2005 but those of ‘staff excluding civilians’ do not. (Significantly, the SAPS website on police/population ratios refers to figures of police officers and excludes civilians.)<sup>25</sup> Although the March 2003 target was met that year, it was followed by another pronounced drop in staffing levels. By 2004 the combination of escalating targets and lower staffing levels resulted in staffing levels of officers being only 75 per cent of what was envisaged (see Table 1.6) and an additional 8 000 members and 3 000 support staff were subsequently recruited. Although the situation improved in the second half of 2004, the current rate of recruitment (10 640 per year) is insufficient to ensure that the promise of ‘officers on active duty’ for 2006 will be met.

**Table 1.6** *Actual and targeted staffing levels of SAPS*

Date	Staff (excl. civilians)	Staff (civilian & officers)	Target
2002	119 560	123 000	No target
2003	*	132 310	131 560
2004	106 364	134 857	140 560
2005	115 056	148 454	147 560
2006	*	*	152 560
2007	*	*	156 760

Source: SAPS 2002 and data for staff (civilian and officers) from the Presidency 2004 and 2005

Note: \* Indicates lack of data

*Objective 11: In the current year establish at least two community courts in each province*

In his address to Parliament in February 2005, Mbeki stated that (only) three community courts had been established: ‘We have also launched three community courts and started eight pilots in six provinces.’<sup>26</sup> It is reported that four community courts have now been set up in Cape Town.

*Objective 12: In the next three months we will set up special joint teams to target and focus on serious crime with an immediate objective of apprehending the top 200 criminals in the country*

Although special joint task teams focused on serious crimes have been established, the effectiveness of these teams is unknown. Although the immediate task of these teams was to apprehend ‘the top 200 criminals in the country’, progress is being monitored by the Justice, Crime Prevention and Security Cluster. Although defining the ‘top’ criminals is a grey area, it is stated by the Presidency that the top 200 criminals ‘for 2004’ had been apprehended.<sup>27</sup> These are impressive statistics, but the question is whether top criminals and others are not only being apprehended but also convicted.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter has sought to assess how close government has come to meeting its goals put forth in the 2004 ‘State of the Nation’ addresses. This is in line with the official commitment to new forms of public accountability and open government. Yet effective review depends closely on the availability of data for providing an independent audit of public commitment to the poor and the performance of departments.

Departments are subject to review by Parliament and the annual ‘State of the Nation’ addresses also now offer something of a scorecard. Meanwhile, the government website<sup>28</sup> proclaims that the public disclosure of statistics has democratic objectives:

This will allow the public to continue to follow progress in implementation of the government’s programme. By facilitating transparent governance it will contribute to the conditions enabling all of society to work together to build a South Africa that truly belongs to all.

These are laudable aims, but greater reliance has still had to be placed on national surveys rather than departmental statistics, largely because these are not often readily available or verifiable. Yet well-developed departmental statistics are essential to assessment against specific targets and they therefore clearly need to be improved, and the means of their assembly be made publicly available.

More difficult to understand is the appearance and disappearance of specific targets in government pronouncements. Many key targets are set out but others are not. While it is difficult to imagine all targets being reported on in each 'State of the Nation' speech, some key commitments are not repeated, not even by line-department ministers. It is significant to note in what sectors promises are *not* made. Although jobs are widely regarded as the top priority of the nation (even more so than health), there are no specific commitments to job creation. Similarly, an RDP target such as housing for all by 2003 has disappeared without comment and has not been replaced by another target date. A 2004 election promise to create one million jobs over the next five years through expanded public works programmes has dropped from view.

The status of targets is often difficult to establish. A key commitment to sanitation for all by 2010 is made in the *Strategic framework on water services*, yet is not repeated in the 'State of the Nation' address or in the Social Cluster's priorities, but reappears in a recent Government Communication and Information System pamphlet. On the other hand, an objective which does not appear in the 'State of the Nation' address or in those of the social or economic cluster gains considerable additional expenditure of R6 billion to 'complete the land restitution programme' (Manuel 2005). It is not clear where the real priorities lie without intensive scrutiny of Treasury expenditure plans.

There is also evidence of disjunctures between the public-policy process and budgeting. A number of promises seem to stand alone without the funding to support them. White Papers set out broad objectives (of which the RDP was the most comprehensive) and targets always have the explicit endorsement of Cabinet before presentation. These targets, however, do not appear to be comprehensively absorbed into the government's programme of action or Budget.

A similar situation is found in relation to South Africa's realisation of the United Nations' Millennium Development Goals. Although these have been officially endorsed, the attitude of government is generally condescending. For instance, it is officially maintained that these goals will be reached or over-fulfilled, yet they are not often related to government's programme of action and do not appear incorporated in the objectives of the social cluster which sets the goals for basic services serving the poor. Since the Millennium Development Goals concentrate on outcomes, it is not clear whether many can be reached in relation to the goal of reducing infant and under-five mortality by two-thirds or by halving the proportion of people living in extreme poverty and hunger between 1990 and 2015.

The key indicators of life expectancy – infant and child mortality – are central to achieving the Millennium Development Goals. A recent statement by the Minister of Health states that some progress is recorded in reducing both the infant mortality rate and child mortality. There has been a welcome decline in infant mortality from 45 to 43/1 000 live births over five years, 1998 to 2003 (Tshabalala-Msimang 2005), but this masks the enormous change which still has to come in the next ten years to reduce infant mortality by more than half to 18/1 000 in 2015.<sup>29</sup> The other key indicator in the Millennium Development Goals is that of halving the proportion of the population living in extreme poverty and experiencing hunger by 2015. There has been preliminary work undertaken by departments together with the UNDP (UNDP 2003), but government objectives do not refer to progress in outcomes along these lines.

The executive has seemingly learnt from past experience and has steered away from enumerating outcomes. Targets consequently tend to be measured in terms of inputs rather than results. With a few exceptions, the emphasis is on departmental objectives rather than on final outcomes in human development. For example, rather than speaking of the extent to which the overall housing backlog will be reduced, the President refers to the amount to be spent on tackling the issue. Similarly, he speaks not of a reduction in crime rates but focuses on the inputs – the staffing levels of the SAPS, number of courts, and so on. While he promises that all households will have access to clean water and electricity, Mbeki is silent as to the extent to which this access will be translated into consumption via, for example, free basic allocations. Progress towards

reducing poverty as a result of all these and other interventions is critical, yet curiously it is not mentioned as a measurable target towards 2015.

Clearly there is a complex process of new packing of old promises; housing, water and sanitation live on in the commitments of the social cluster of the government's programme of action, although timelines on basic services taken over from the RDP are either dropped or extended forwards. The executive can be seen to be capitalising on its service-delivery strengths and relying heavily on continued performance by the more efficient national institutions. Inputs and strategies are highlighted, and when there is a reference to outcomes, there has to be good reason for confidence around achieving the outcome. Hence, while government can proclaim its success in achieving targets such as 'placing two million children on social grants', there is silence on the more difficult issues of nutrition, refuse removal, sanitation and telecommunications that were cornerstones of the RDP. Several of the earlier objectives appear to have fallen by the wayside and are no longer mentioned, like increasing access to affordable communications, even though that goal remains vital to closing the digital gap between rich and poor and modernising the economy.

While progress in many sectors is being made, in others (water, sanitation, school infrastructure) the targets set out in 2004 are unlikely to be met. The cost of meeting fundamental social objectives is substantial and is not acknowledged in budgetary reviews. Clearly, many of the social goals will not be met unless there is substantial change in budgetary allocations in infrastructure delivery. Who will take responsibility for goals not being achieved? Unfortunately, as public statements are made of progress in terms of 'distance to target', there is the danger that old targets will slip off the record and be replaced by departmental inputs rather than achieved outcomes.

Objectives and their associated targets, while presented as part of the rational ordering of public management, are also essentially political in nature. The achievements of service delivery in a society of huge inequalities are intensely contested, and in this political context it is likely that government will play its stronger cards.

Nowhere is this clearer than in the management of the assessment of goals. Public accountability exercised by democratic control is central to notions of equity and effectiveness and cannot be replaced by the mechanisms of

public management. In the recent period, there have been rising levels of community mobilisation to secure service delivery. The emphasis of new public administration is on models of efficiency rather than of building equity into all governmental processes. Greater efficiency can only be achieved with greater public accountability at every level of government: through rigorous parliamentary review, through democratic local government, and with the energetic involvement of civil society.

### Notes

- 1 This chapter has benefited from extensive comment from Goolam Aboobaker from the Presidency who responded to the paper in a key discussion at the July 2005 Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) Winter Conference. He felt that the view that there was centralisation of power in the Presidency was exaggerated. Criticism was also directed at some statistical trends which showed uneven progress towards targets; and mention was made particularly of South African Police Services (SAPS) staff figures and conditions in schools. These and other points have been taken into consideration and where there are contrasting figures, the sources are given for each.
- 2 It is argued by representatives of the Presidency that much of the additional financial support is not for personnel and that not all positions have been filled. The tendency towards centralisation is not peculiar to South Africa; a recent study of British politics identified prime ministerialism, greater power to the prime minister, as an important trend over time (Hennessy 2000).
- 3 Figures derived from the ten per cent samples of the 1996 and 2001 Censuses.
- 4 A high-ranking municipal official from the Eastern Cape recently rejected statistics derived from the 2001 Census and presented by one of the authors for being ‘wrong, completely wrong’ as they showed some progress in delivery. He felt that municipal statistics would show a much lower level of delivery.
- 5 In water delivery, for instance, the RDP set out that the quantity of water available should rise from 25 to 50 litres per person per day by 1999.
- 6 The figure for shacks in 1994 is of 757 000 free-standing and backyard shacks (from the 1994 OHS).
- 7 There is evidence that population growth is now declining substantially (see Stats SA, 2005b) and that the population growth halved between 2004/05 to 0.92 per cent. It is not clear yet what effect this is having on the trends identified in household growth.

- 8 While a consistent reduction in household size is evident the magnitude of the decline is more problematic. There is some indication that domestic workers and migrant workers living in institutions were not treated in precisely the same way in 1996 and 2001.
- 9 The exact level of housing delivery has been complicated by language which refers to subsidies, 'housing starts', 'top structures', and so on, rather than completed houses. The figure of one million houses has been provided by the DWAF in private correspondence. Public sources for actual completed houses are difficult to source; the General Household Survey (GHS) of 2002 had 600 000 households responding that they had received a housing subsidy which is about half the number claimed to be 'built or under construction' by the Department of Housing. In 2002/03 the National Home Builders' Registration Council, which is required to register all housing, registered 43 000 RDP houses out of the 203 588 stated to be 'built or under construction' by the Department in that year.
- 10 The Minister of Housing, Lindiwe Sisulu, 'declared war on informal settlements' in a speech to the National Council of Provinces in Cape Town on 11 June 2004, and in a subsequent speech to the Public Policy Forum meeting of Cities Alliance on 1 November 2004 stated: 'Therefore by 2014 we would expect to be able to say that we have contributed towards the Millennium Development Goal in significantly improving the lives of over 2.2 million households which implies that we will have reached some nine million people.' On another occasion in 2004 she said, 'The ten-year target of clearing informal settlements is realistic' (available at <http://www.dailytenders.co.za/General/News/Article/Article.asp?ID=1199>).
- 11 This estimate is based on estimates of household earnings in 2001.
- 12 See, for instance, a review of the sustainability of rural water projects in KwaZulu-Natal conducted in 2003 which concluded that more than half the projects were not operating within the RDP standards. Of the 23 projects sampled, ten were found to be sustainable or functioning at RDP standards (43.4%), eight were working but problematic (34.9%), and the remaining five (21.7%) were not working (Hemson 2004).
- 13 The greatest controversy in delivery relates to those receiving piped water beyond 200 metres as the relevant question is no longer put in surveys after the LFS, February 2001. Equally, the proportion of households beyond 200 metres varies considerably in surveys. Unfortunately departmental statistics do not assist as they reflect access to 'safe' water, not necessarily piped water. The statistics since 2001 (that is, 2002 and 2004) of access to communal taps within 200 metres have been established by adjusting the number of households by a factor established in previous surveys.
- 14 The persistent backlog is partially explained by social surveys registering those actually receiving services, not those communities where infrastructure has been installed. The

numbers ‘unserved’ also include households where schemes have decayed and failed and who now draw water from other sources.

- 15 The figures are calculated on the basis of replenishment over ten years, a generous estimation of the lifespan of a typical latrine.
- 16 Figure derived from the 2003 Stats SA’s general household survey.
- 17 This test is expressed in terms of the joint income of a child’s caregiver and that person’s spouse. In urban areas this income must not exceed R9 600 per annum and in rural areas it must not exceed R13 200.
- 18 Parliamentary media briefing by the Minister of Education, Naledi Pandor, 28.05.04. Available at <http://www.info.gov.za/speeches/2004/04052809451002.htm>.
- 19 See [http://www.news24.com/News24/AnanziArticle/0,,2-7-1442\\_1691789,00.html](http://www.news24.com/News24/AnanziArticle/0,,2-7-1442_1691789,00.html).
- 20 Fieldnotes on a visit to Tsawana Junior School, KwaJali, 24.02.05.
- 21 Information provided by the Presidency.
- 22 Statistics compiled from those made available to one of the authors undertaking an assessment of water services for DWAF in 2004 and from the June 2005 Provincial Education Monthly Infrastructure report submitted to the Department of Education.
- 23 Social Cluster, updated 28.06.05, available at <http://www.info.gov.za/aboutgovt/poa/report/social.htm>.
- 24 Available at <http://www.tac.org.za/Documents/ARVRollout/arvstats.htm>.
- 25 See [http://www.saps.gov.za/\\_dynamicModules/internetsite/buildingBlocks/base-Page4/BP444.asp](http://www.saps.gov.za/_dynamicModules/internetsite/buildingBlocks/base-Page4/BP444.asp).
- 26 Available at <http://www.anc.org.za/ancdocs/history/mbeki/2005/tm0211.html>.
- 27 The latest Justice, Crime Prevention & Security Cluster on 29 June 2005 does not mention the matter. See [http://www.nia.org.za/SPEECHES/speech/jcps\\_cluster\\_media\\_briefing%2029%20June.htm](http://www.nia.org.za/SPEECHES/speech/jcps_cluster_media_briefing%2029%20June.htm).
- 28 <http://www.gov.za>
- 29 Advanced industrial countries have achieved the rate of four or five deaths per 1 000 live births. For details of a preliminary assessment of all Millennium Development Goal indicators see UNDP 2003.

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