



This edition of the *South Africa Yearbook* (SAYB) 2015/16 prominently portrays South Africa as being imbued with the requisite resources and countless opportunities, for sustainable growth and development. It also highlights the indomitable fact that South Africa is open for business as a tourist and investment destination of choice.

Since 1994 the country has witnessed unprecedented development, which is attributed to the far-reaching interventions that government has implemented in order to move the country forward.

The content in this SAYB echoes the core elements being championed in the National Development Plan, which aims to tackle the triple challenge of poverty, unemployment and inequality by 2030.

These include housing; water; electricity and sanitation; safe and reliable public transport; quality education and skills development; safety and security; quality healthcare; social protection; employment; recreation and leisure; clean environment, and adequate nutrition.

Another milestone worth celebrating is the more than 4,3 million houses and subsidies delivered by government since 1994, benefiting more than 20 million South Africans. Government has been at the forefront of efforts to reduce poverty and unemployment through various job-intensive and capacity-building projects.

They include the Expanded Public Works Programme and environmental programmes such as Working on Waste, Working for Wetlands, Working for Water and Working on Fire, which have collectively created a significant number

of work opportunities, especially for women and the youth.

Despite the devastating impact of the global economic downturn, the country remains amenable to foreign and local investors alike.

One of the achievements that reinforce South Africa as one of the most globally competitive countries in the world is that the African Union has designated the country as the rail production hub for the continent. The tourism industry has proved to be a major contributor to the South African economy and employment.

The Bill of Rights, as enshrined in our Constitution, is the cornerstone of our democracy and affirms the right to human dignity, equality and freedom of all people in our country. Social cohesion and nation-building remain the building blocks for a united, non-sexist and prosperous nation that is averse to any form of racism, xenophobia and intolerance.

Some of the progressive policies introduced in 2015 included the White Paper on the National Health Insurance, which aims to provide access to healthcare to all people, and the *White Paper on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities*, which is intended to uphold the dignity and rights of persons with disabilities.

In addition to ongoing HIV and AIDS awareness campaigns, government has put over 3,4 million people on antiretroviral treatment, which has resulted in a significant reduction in both the number of people dying as a result of HIV infection and the levels of mother-to-child HIV transmission rates.

Government continues to provide social grants to more than 17 million South Africans in order to alleviate poverty. We value the importance of quality education and skills development. In the words of former President Nelson Mandela, “education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world.”

Therefore, more funding has been channelled towards learning and teaching at both basic and tertiary levels.

Government remains steadfast in its fervent endeavour to improve the lives of all South Africans.

His Excellency Jacob G. Zuma
President of the Republic of South Africa
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