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## THE MAKING OF DEMOCRATIC SOUTH AFRICA

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### INTRODUCTION

This chapter covers a set of policies, strategies, programmes and projects that have shaped socio-economic development since 1994 by focusing on prominent initiatives while engaging with the possibility and prospects of achieving the country's socio-economic developmental goals. This analysis examines policy directions pursued by the successive post-apartheid administrations: the Nelson Mandela administration (1994-1999), the Thabo Mbeki administration (1999-2008), the Jacob Zuma administration (2009-2018) – the brief caretaker administration of Kgalema Motlanthe (2008-2009) is discussed as part of the Jacob Zuma administration – and the Cyril Ramaphosa administration (which started in 2018 but officially in 2019 as the sixth administration).

In addressing this book's fundamental question – the issue of whether post-apartheid South Africa is achieving its developmental goals – this chapter discusses the policy reforms at a macro level. It deliberates on the various macroeconomic interventions since 1994, and the policy reforms and changes effected on the general wellbeing of South African society. The sixth administration had been in place for about three years when the book was completed. President Cyril Ramaphosa started as President in February 2018 after former President Jacob Zuma was recalled by the ANC, and Zuma had to subsequently resign as the president of the country. History effectively repeated itself: the ANC had recalled former President Mbeki in September 2008.

The chapter argues that, although South Africa's performance has been relatively satisfactory in many respects, there is room for far greater improvement. More specifically, while the evolution of the South African society from the mid-1990s to the late 2000s implied that the country was achieving its developmental goals, the trajectory has shifted from the kind of society envisaged by its liberation heroes and struggle stalwarts due to weak policy and lack of timely and ideal reforms, including poor coordination, among other factors. Aye (2013:262) states that "South Africa therefore may be regarded as a nation state that is achieving its developmental goals". This view was held by many who are now counter-arguing that South Africa is losing its opportunity to be an effective state. I hold this view too.

Any initiative for socio-economic development must be premised on thoroughly conceptualised and well-articulated policy. Numerous initiatives have failed to deliver optimally because of unclear policies and sometimes contradictory policy options. Often,

a cardinal question regarding policy – a 'why' – is rarely asked and when it is, the answer lacks clarity. Equally so, inadequate attention is paid to the context in which policy is to be reformed. Public policy literature calls this 'policy regime'– the inability to modify policy significantly even in the face of major changes in the context.

## **BACKGROUND**

The ANC-led government has, since 1994, undertaken extensive policy decisions and implemented policy reforms to transform society. The evolution of South Africa's policies, particularly from the context of whether set targets are being achieved, is an important aspect of the analysis of trajectory towards achieving the developmental goals.

The National Liberation Movement (NLM) had fought for almost a century to eradicate apartheid colonialism. Nelson Mandela became the first president of the Republic of South Africa in 1994, as head of the Government of National Unity (GNU). Prior to that, particularly in the years leading to 1994, the NLM devised ideas on the type of South Africa (and the economy) that was to be pursued. In simple nomenclature, the main objectives of the NLM have been and continue to be the pursuance of the creation of a united, non-racial, non-sexist, democratic, and prosperous South Africa (ANC, 1994). The outlines of, and the strategic path towards, the purported better life are thoroughly elaborated in the various documents of the ruling party. Documents such as the 1992 Ready to Govern discussion document and the objectives of the NLM were translated into the 1994 Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP), as well as other macro-economic documents adopted by the ANC-led government, that fundamentally influenced the pursuit of the National Democratic Society (NDS) as per the NDR.

In 1994, the ANC developed its main guiding policy framework for a post-apartheid South Africa: the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP). The RDP is the most comprehensive post-apartheid socio-economic development framework in many ways. The RDP articulated all aspects of the economy, social development, industrial development, small and medium enterprise development, wealth redistribution, and nation building, among others.

It is worth observing that the RDP, like Ready to Govern and other documents of the ANC, appeared to be informed by the 1955 Freedom Charter. In fact, the Freedom Charter is seemingly the natural fall-back position whenever the ANC is in an impasse in terms of policy, strategy and tactics. An important debate is overdue on the Freedom Charter, especially now that South Africa has gone through two decades of democracy. The Bill of Rights African's Claim should have been the framework used to guide South Africa's policy (Gumede, 2016).

This debate should also re-examine the thesis of the Colonialism of a Special Type (CST) because "the language of the NDR and its closely linked acronym CST originates from