



SOUTH AFRICA'S 2019 VOLUNTARY NATIONAL REVIEW (VNR) SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS (SDGs)

MAIN MESSAGES

- South Africa's first Voluntary National Review (VNR) is testimony to the national **commitment to the full and integrated implementation of Agenda 2030** and includes multi-stakeholder contributions. The review will assist in understanding the impact of policies and programmes towards realising sustainable development and the considerable developmental challenges that remain. The shortcomings highlighted - particularly the need to improve multi-stakeholder engagement - will be addressed. A national coordinating mechanism has been established for national engagements and reporting on the 2030 Agenda, the African Union's Agenda 2063 and the Southern African Development Community's Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan, in alignment with the National Development Plan (NDP).
- ***Achieving the SDGs is in South Africa's interest.*** The NDP is closely aligned to the 2030 Agenda. The NDP prioritises the elimination of poverty, reduction of inequality and growing an inclusive economy by 2030. NDP goals are aligned to SDGs and to AU Agenda 2063, and are integrated into Government planning systems and processes at national, provincial and local level.
- ***Significant progress on our developmental journey since the advent of democracy in 1994:*** The country is therefore well placed towards meeting the SDGs. The NDP has contributed to improved living conditions for millions of South Africans in a context where, for historical reasons, South Africa is amongst the most unequal of societies.
- Progress in critical areas such as **the provision of clean water, electricity, sanitation, education and health:** Access to free education for children from poor households has been expanded - over 9 million children attend no-fee schools. Individuals benefiting from the social protection system increased: from 3 million in 1994 to 17,5 million in 2018. South Africa has the biggest anti-retroviral treatment programme in the world - over 4.5 million people. Inclusive growth is being accelerated by increasing levels of investment and measures to create more jobs.

- Other highlights of progress:
 - **Major strides in addressing gender inequalities:** Legislative frameworks have been developed aimed at ending all forms of discrimination against women and girls. Representation of women in national parliament has increased: 25% in 1994 to 41% in 2016. Approximately 35% of permanent judges are women.
 - **Acting on climate change.** Implementation of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and its Paris Agreement is of paramount importance. A suite of legislation and policies have been adopted, including a carbon tax, to address climate change and to enhance the country's ability to adapt to ongoing environmental changes. Significant investments are made in renewable energy, cleaner public transport, energy efficiency, waste management and land restoration initiatives.
 - **Ensuring access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all, particularly for the poor.** South Africa is among leaders in the transition to sustainable energy by 2030.
 - **Conserving the use of oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development.** Measures are implemented to sustainably manage considerable national marine resources to boost economic growth, job creation and infrastructural development.
 - An **Integrated Urban Development Framework** has been adopted to guide the development of inclusive, resilient and liveable urban settlements.
 - Continued investment in and harnessing of **science, technology and innovation.** In the spirit of leaving no one behind, the science, technology and innovation system continues to invest in programmes that advance inclusion of girls, indigenous knowledge holders and innovators.
- **Major challenges remain:**
 - Persistent high levels of inequalities (SDG 10).
 - Violence against women and femicide continue.
 - Discrimination persists.
 - Securing a just transition to a low carbon economy while a high degree of dependence on fossil fuels prevails.
- **International support is required in the implementation of sustainable development** programmes, notwithstanding that the overwhelming majority of development resources are derived nationally and account for the greatest portion of Government spending.
- **We all have a role to play in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.** The implementation of SDGs is inclusive and transparent. Working together with all stakeholders and partners we can ensure that a better life for all becomes a reality.

Going **towards 2030**, critical **interventions** include: disaggregated data; addressing corruption; improved employment opportunities for the most vulnerable, discriminated sectors in society; strengthening multi-stakeholder partnerships; eliminating gender

inequalities and gender-based violence; and gauging the impact of the 4th Industrial Revolution.