



LIFE IN SOUTH AFRICA

REASONS FOR HOPE

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South African Institute of Race Relations
The power of ideas



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LIFE IN SOUTH AFRICA: REASONS FOR HOPE

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...IF YOU CAN MEET WITH TRIUMPH AND DISASTER AND TREAT THOSE TWO IMPOSTORS JUST THE SAME... – RUDYARD KIPLING

How do you tally the progress or otherwise made by a society such as South Africa's? 'Jobless growth', 'no better life for all', 'failure to improve social and economic circumstances', 'failed transformation', 'a low point for race relations', 'worsening poverty and inequality' – these are all comments that appear often in the mainstream media. If these statements collectively seek to suggest that there is a great deal wrong with our society, this is because, in far too many areas, South Africa does not deliver on its potential to become a fully free and prosperous society. It is also true, and you will see it in the data below, that the past decade has been particularly tough and that much of the pleasing progress made after 1994, which will surprise some readers, really relates to the 1994 to 2007 window. After that, many key areas of progress began to stagnate.

At the Institute of Race Relations (IRR), we produce more social and economic data than any other civil society organisation. Where necessary, we are critical of failed policy, often in the face of pressure from business and government not to be so outspoken.

But in the course of that work we are also confronted with considerable evidence of real substantive progress in building a better country. This is not cherry-picking some successes here and there. All the trends that follow in this report are examples of substantive improvements in economic performance and the living standards of millions of people – sustained over a long period.

Over the past decade, that story was lost. The tone and inflection of media and other reporting and activist commentary became predominantly negative – often with good reason. But we became concerned that balance was being lost and that, amidst their fears and frustrations, South Africans would come to believe that they had failed in the main at what so many people had bravely set out to do in 1994. We felt that the nature of the climate of public opinion was such that it was necessary to produce a document that would remind South Africans, and those who watch us from abroad, that, despite our troubles, we are also a country in which a lot has gone right – a country in which the majority of black and white people have found a way to work together to make the future a better place. That quiet majority deserves a lot of credit for the things that have gone right and can justly be proud of what has been achieved. Their experience must inspire us to face and overcome the obstacles that lie ahead.

The IRR expresses its gratitude to the trustees of the Millennium Trust for investing in this project.

Part 1: THE SOUTH AFRICAN ECONOMY

1.1 GDP figures, 1994-2017

It is often alleged that little has improved in South Africa after 1994, but the table below shows that real GDP per capita increased from R42 386 in 1994 to R56 020 in 2017, or by over 30%. Readers will note, however – and this is a theme throughout this report – that much of that increase had occurred by 2007 whereafter the indicator plateaued. It is broadly true that, while life in South Africa has improved greatly since 1994, the rate of improvement stagnated after 2007.

YEAR	GDP GROWTH	REAL GDP PER CAPITA
1994	3,2%	42 386
1995	3,1%	42 849
1996	4,3%	43 267
1997	2,6%	44 193
1998	0,5%	44 420
1999	2,4%	43 720
2000	4,2%	43 826
2001	2,7%	44 735
2002	3,7%	45 075
2003	2,9%	45 798
2004	4,6%	46 287
2005	5,3%	47 605
2006	5,6%	49 335
2007	5,4%	51 331
2008	3,2%	53 334
2009	1,5%	54 322
2010	3,0%	52 838
2011	3,3%	53 823
2012	2,2%	54 968
2013	2,3%	55 543
2014	1,6%	56 147
2015	1,3%	56 343
2016	0,6%	56 054
2017	1,3%	56 020

Source: South African Reserve Bank (SARB)

1.2 Disposable income performance

The same pattern is reflected in the table showing that per capita income increased from R23 686 in 1994 to R31 460 in 2007, or by over 32%, yet advanced by less than 10% over the subsequent decade.

DISPOSABLE INCOME PER CAPITA OF HOUSEHOLDS, 1994–2017		
Year	R	Change
1994	23 686	0,2%
1995	24 308	2,6%
1996	24 950	2,6%
1997	25 239	1,2%
1998	25 008	-0,9%
1999	24 862	-0,6%
2000	25 315	1,8%
2001	25 533	0,9%
2002	25 930	1,6%
2003	26 128	0,8%
2004	27 238	4,2%
2005	28 368	4,2%
2006	30 103	6,1%
2007	31 460	4,5%
2008	31 772	1,0%
2009	30 730	-3,3%
2010	31 503	2,5%
2011	32 579	3,4%
2012	33 173	1,8%
2013	33 355	0,4%
2014	33 383	-0,2%
2015	33 660	1,1%
2016	33 793	0,5%
2017	34 250	1,4%

Source: SARB

1.3 Inflation

Inflation is the enemy of the poor in that it reduces the purchasing power of households. It is, therefore, a very dangerous early driver of social and political instability. It is to be welcomed, then, that South Africa has done particularly well in keeping a lid on the inflation rate since 1994 – an indicator that speaks to sensible macro-economic management.

INFLATION RATES, 1994–2017	
Year	Headline inflation (CPI)
1994	9,0%
1995	8,7%
1996	7,4%
1997	8,6%
1998	6,9%
1999	5,1%
2000	5,3%
2001	5,7%
2002	9,2%
2003	5,8%
2004	1,4%
2005	3,4%
2006	4,7%
2007	7,1%
2008	11,5%
2009	7,1%
2010	4,3%
2011	5,0%
2012	5,6%
2013	5,7%
2014	6,1%
2015	4,6%
2016	6,4%
2017	5,3%

Source: Stats SA

1.4 Budget outcomes over the past 25 years

BUDGET DEFICIT AS A PROPORTION OF GDP, 1992/93-2020/21	
Year	Deficit/Surplus
1992/93	-7,1%
1993/94	-5,4%
1994/95	-4,5%
1995/96	-5,0%
1996/97	-4,8%
1997/98	-3,6%
1998/99	-2,7%
1999/2000	-2,1%
2000/01	-1,9%
2001/02	-1,4%
2002/03	-1,0%
2003/04	-2,2%
2004/05	-1,4%
2005/06	-0,3%
2006/07	0,7%
2007/08	0,9%
2008/09	-0,7%
2009/10	-5,1%
2010/11	-4,0%
2011/12	-4,8%
2012/13	-5,3%
2013/14	-4,6%
2014/15	-3,6%
2015/16	-3,7%
2016/17	-3,5%
2017/18	-4,3%
2018/19	-3,6%
2019/20	-3,6%
2020/21	-3,5%

The budget deficit reflects how much more the government spends than it earns. The post-1994 government inherited a deficit that had flirted with levels of between -5% and -7% of GDP. In one of the most important markers of South Africa's post-1994 success, that figure was sharply reduced by 2005/06 and, in the subsequent two years, small surpluses were even recorded. It is a pity, then, that, since 2007, all that hard work was sacrificed as counterproductive government policy deterred investors to the extent that, by last year, the deficit was again flirting with the levels recorded in 1994. But the example of the pre-2007 era must not be forgotten as it demonstrated to what extent it was possible to begin the rebuilding of a stable economy.

Source: SARB, National Treasury

1.5 Government debt financing costs over the past 25 years

YIELDS ON 10-YEAR GOVERNMENT BONDS 1992–2022	
Year	Yields on 10-year government bonds 1992-2022
1992	14,9%
1993	12,3%
1994	16,8%
1995	14,6%
1996	16,2%
1997	14,1%
1998	16,4%
1999	14,0%
2000	12,9%
2001	11,6%
2002	10,4%
2003	9,2%
2004	8,4%
2005	7,6%
2006	7,8%
2007	8,3%
2008	7,8%
2009	9,0%
2010	8,4%
2011	8,5%
2012	7,4%
2013	8,3%
2014	7,8%
2015	9,3%
2016	9,0%
2017	8,7%
2018	8,7%
2019	8,8%
2020	9,1%
2021	9,4%
2022	9,3%

Bond yields are in many respects an indicator of the level of risk associated with an economy and are important as they determine the cost of government borrowing. Yields that were recorded at levels as high as 16.8% in 1994 were subsequently sharply reduced. Together with the above inflation and deficit indicators, the bond yield trend speaks again to an economy which, after 1994, was well on its way to recovery.

Source: SARB

1.6 Labour market performance

As that recovery began, South Africa saw marked improvements in a range of socio-economic indicators. The labour market participation rate measures the proportion of working-age people who are economically active. In 1994, it was 43.1% for black South Africans and 47.7% for all South Africans. The number subsequently increased to 58.7% and 59.9% respectively. The impact on the living standards and independence, dignity, and self-respect of households was considerable.

LABOUR MARKET PARTICIPATION, 1994–2017		
Year	Black	Total
1994	43,1%	47,7%
1995	41,2%	45,5%
1996	39,0%	44,0%
1997	39,5%	43,9%
1998	44,9%	48,8%
1999	47,2%	51,5%
2000	59,2%	61,3%
2001	58,8%	60,8%
2002	57,0%	59,7%
2003	55,3%	58,3%
2004	52,7%	55,7%
2005	53,3%	56,3%
2006	55,4%	57,8%
2007	55,4%	57,7%
2008	57,3%	59,5%
2009	55,4%	57,9%
2010	53,3%	56,1%
2011	53,5%	55,9%
2012	53,6%	55,9%
2013	54,3%	56,6%
2014	55,2%	57,3%
2015	56,4%	58,1%
2016	56,4%	57,9%
2017	58,7%	59,9%
1994-2017	36,2%	25,6%
2016-17	4,1%	3,5%

Source: Stats SA

1.7 Black employees

It is often alleged that the South African economy is no more inclusive than it was two decades ago. But data on both employment and employment equity tells a different story. One survey suggested that the proportion of executive management jobs held by black people had increased almost fivefold since 1994. Activists argue that more must be done, and it takes only the most cursory examination of unemployment and poverty statistics to acknowledge that socio-economic empowerment and economic access remain a policy priority. Yet, it must not be forgotten that a measure of progress has been made, and that the more dire assessments that 'nothing has changed' are wrong.

BLACK EMPLOYEES IN THE WORKFORCE AT DIFFERENT LEVELS OF SENIORITY, 1996-2016		
Year	Executives/Top Management	Management
1996	8%	10%
1997	6%	11%
1998	9%	18%
1999	11%	18%
2000	16%	19%
2001	14%	24%
2002	15%	24%
2003	17%	25%
2004	22%	28%
2005	23%	29%
2006	23%	30%
2007	23%	30%
2008	25%	31%
2009	25%	32%
2010	26%	33%
2011	34%	38%
2012	33%	32%
2013	33%	33%
2014	31%	30%
2015	41%	36%
2016	37%	36%
1996-2016	363%	260%

Source: P E Corporate Services SA

1.8 Employment

Employment data provides a vivid reflection of the progress that has been made. It is not true, as many populist activists and politicians allege, that South Africa has suffered two decades of 'jobless growth'. Rather the number of black people with a job increased from 4.9 million in 1994 to over 12 million last year, while the total number of employed people roughly doubled. But if you look closely at the numbers, you will see that most of the increase was recorded towards the middle of the era when sensible policy saw the economy grow with increasing strength.

EMPLOYMENT, 1994–2017		
Year	Black	Total
1994	4 980 000	7 971 000
1995	5 124 000	8 069 000
1996	4 535 000	7 590 000
1997	4 580 000	7 548 000
1998	5 922 000	9 390 000
1999	6 668 000	10 369 000
2000	8 124 000	11 880 000
2001	8 680 000	12 494 000
2002	8 161 000	11 995 000
2003	7 815 000	11 666 000
2004	7 945 000	11 823 000
2005	8 572 000	12 503 000
2006	9 271 000	13 237 000
2007	9 362 000	13 236 000
2008	10 363 000	14 584 000
2009	10 119 000	14 357 000
2010	9 700 000	13 809 000
2011	9 868 000	13 922 000
2012	10 297 000	14 330 000
2013	10 623 000	14 692 000
2014	11 072 000	15 094 000
2015	11 625 000	15 657 000
2016	11 506 000	15 545 000
2017	12 025 000	16 100 000
1994-2017	141,5%	102,0%
2016-17	4,5%	3,6%

Source: Stats SA

Part 2: LIVING CONDITIONS

2.1 Change in living conditions over time

The IRR has argued very strongly that living standards improved rapidly in the democratic era. The data below buttresses that point as well as anything. In 2001, for example, nearly 40% of South Africans were estimated to live in the lower third of South Africa's living standards spectrum. That percentage had, however, fallen to just 10% in 2015.

CHANGE IN LIVING STANDARDS MEASURE (LSM) CATEGORIES, 2001-15				
Year	1-3	4-7	8-10	Total
2001	38,8%	44,9%	16,3%	100,0%
2002	38,2%	45,2%	16,6%	100,0%
2003	37,0%	46,5%	16,5%	100,0%
2004	35,8%	48,0%	16,0%	100,0%
2005	32,8%	50,0%	17,1%	100,0%
2006	32,9%	50,6%	18,4%	100,0%
2007	27,7%	52,8%	19,6%	100,0%
2008	21,5%	57,4%	21,1%	100,0%
2009	18,7%	14,3%	22,6%	100,0%
2010	15,1%	58,7%	23,4%	100,0%
2011	12,2%	63,5%	23,5%	100,0%
2012	14,0%	64,0%	23,0%	100,0%
2013	11,0%	64,0%	25,0%	100,0%
2014	10,0%	65,0%	25,0%	100,0%
2015	10,0%	67,0%	25,0%	100,0%

Source: Eighty20 XtracT based on AMPS 2015

2.2 Change in living conditions by housing type, 1996 and 2016

The effects of higher levels of investment-driven growth, and sensible policy, particularly in the era to 2007, provided the government with the revenues to bring about vast improvements in living standards via its service delivery efforts. As much as it courts controversy, we stand on the point that service delivery was one of the key successes of the African National Congress in government. This is not to overlook the many and varied failures both in the extent and in the quality of services delivered. Nor is it to suggest that State-driven delivery is a sustainable path out of poverty – a point that the IRR does not support. But the numbers below are so great that they speak to a profoundly important raising of the living-standards floor in our country. Consider that the number of formal houses increased by 131% after 1996, the number of families with electricity by 192%, and the number with access to clean water by 110%. At current and expected future rates of economic growth, however, it will not be possible to maintain the levels or tempo of service delivery achieved after 1994.

We have given the government and the ruling party much credit for the numbers cited above. But more credit must go to the entrepreneurs, investors, employers, and employees, whose hard work and risk-taking generated the tax revenue that funded the free and subsidised houses and services, and social welfare. Too often, these entrepreneurs and the middle classes are hounded as an uncaring and selfish elite that have done nothing to bring about a better future. They have done a great deal and deserve much credit.

LIVING CONDITIONS BY HOUSING TYPE, 1996 AND 2016					
Indicator	1996	2016	Change (number)	Change (proportion)	Average daily change
Total number of dwellings/ households	9 059 606	16 921 183	7 861 577	86,8%	1 077
Formal	5 794 399	13 404 199	7 609 800	131,3%	1 042
Informal	1 453 018	2 193 968	740 950	51,0%	102
Access to piped water	7 234 023	15 218 753	7 984 730	110,4%	1 094
Access to piped water in dwelling	3 976 853	7 511 853	3 535 000	88,9%	484
Access to piped water on site/in yard	1 491 230	5 081 255	3 590 025	240,7%	492
Access to flush or chemical lavatories	4 552 854	11 436 619	6 883 765	151,2%	943
Use of electricity for lighting	5 220 826	15 262 235	10 041 409	192,3%	1 376
Use of electricity for cooking	4 265 305	14 012 036	9 746 731	228,5%	1 335
Use of electricity for heating	4 030 850	6 370 000	2 339 150	58,0%	320
Refuse removal by local authority/ private company	4 841 587	10 810 450	5 968 863	123,3%	818
Communal refuse dump/container	287 205	850 381	563 176	196,1%	77
Own refuse dumps	2 905 584	4 416 606	1 511 022	52,0%	207

Source: Stats SA

2.3 The middle class

Contrary, again, to some perceptions, there was much expansion in South Africa's middle class. One of the best measures of middle-class status and living standards is mobility. The number of motor cars increased from 3.8 million in 1999 to 7.1 million in 2017, or by 85%. This increase reflects broadly an increase in the number of middle-class households and aligns with a series of other measures indicative of middle-class expansion.

MOTORISED VEHICLES REGISTERED BY YEAR-END, DECEMBER 1999–2017		
Year	Motor cars	Total
1999	3 851 048	5 992 056
2000	3 913 470	6 074 201
2001	3 977 255	6 159 679
2002	4 041 828	6 245 392
2003	4 154 593	6 417 484
2004	4 307 943	6 677 239
2005	4 574 972	7 128 791
2006	4 890 206	7 653 044
2007	4 992 401	7 823 313
2008	5 224 652	8 245 589
2009	5 411 093	8 600 031
2010	5 472 090	8 686 032
2011	5 675 488	8 926 548
2012	5 928 532	9 266 775
2013	6 202 323	9 649 303
2014	6 461 553	10 010 643
2015	6 707 175	10 350 835
2016	6 905 939	10 669 410
2017	7 140 959	10 967 568
1999-2017	85,4%	83,0%
Vehicles per 100 people in 2017	7,9	5,2

Source: Electronic National Administration Traffic Information System (eNaTis)

Part 3: EDUCATION

3.1 South Africa's university population

Even in the terrain of education, which the IRR has long seen as the single greatest obstacle to socio-economic advancement, there are some measures of progress that are indicative of what might still be achieved if government officials and policy makers could get their act together and care more about the future of South Africa's children. The table below shows that the number of students at university has increased almost threefold since 1985, and by well over 100% since 1995. This has opened a wealth of new opportunities to young people to contribute to building a modern economy.

HEADCOUNT ENROLMENT AT UNIVERSITIES, 1985-2015	
Year	Enrolment
1985	211 756
1986	233 625
1990	285 986
1995	385 221
2000	380 168
2005	563 199
2010	739 368
2011	785 988
2012	798 551
2013	824 692
2014	807 663
2015	824 880
1985-2015	289,5%

Source: Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET)

3.2 Headcount enrolment at universities by race

The table below shows that the bulk of beneficiaries of expanding university enrolment are black and, therefore, in the main – which is the important thing – from poor backgrounds where they were often the first people in their families to graduate with a university degree. In 1995, just under half the national university class was black, but by 2015 that proportion had increased to 70%.

HEADCOUNT ENROLMENT AT UNIVERSITIES BY RACE 1986-2015										
Year	Black		Coloured		Indian/ Asian		White		Total	
1986	19,8%	54 997	4,9%	13 652	7,9%	21 848	64,1%	177 744	100,0%	277 115
1987	22,7%	69 577	6,6%	20 167	7,1%	21 842	60,3%	184 895	100,0%	306 689
1988	23,1%	76 175	6,8%	22 492	6,2%	20 477	57,1%	188 019	100,0%	329 260
1989	27,2%	98 335	6,9%	25 037	7,1%	25 795	56,5%	204 782	100,0%	362 156
1995	46,6%	268 144	5,2%	29 771	6,3%	35 990	36,4%	209 640	100,0%	575 412
2000	58,8%	340 652	5,3%	30 472	6,8%	39 492	28,1%	162 864	100,0%	579 257
2001	57,1%	375 059	5,1%	33 247	6,5%	42 425	26,3%	172 950	100,0%	657 269
2002	59,2%	399 915	5,1%	34 329	7,1%	47 706	26,6%	179 380	100,0%	675 164
2003	60,0%	430 745	6,1%	43 551	7,4%	52 883	26,2%	188 353	100,0%	717 793
2004	60,9%	453 626	6,2%	46 090	7,3%	54 314	25,3%	188 687	100,0%	744 470
2005	60,8%	446 945	6,3%	46 302	7,4%	54 611	25,3%	185 847	100,0%	735 073
2006	60,8%	451 106	6,5%	48 538	7,4%	54 859	24,9%	184 667	100,0%	741 380
2007	62,7%	476 770	6,4%	49 066	6,9%	52 596	23,7%	180 461	100,0%	760 889
2008	64,4%	514 955	6,5%	51 647	6,6%	52 401	22,3%	178 140	100,0%	799 387
2009	65,4%	547 686	6,6%	55 101	6,4%	53 629	21,4%	179 232	100,0%	837 779
2010	66,7%	595 783	6,5%	58 175	6,1%	54 492	20,0%	178 190	100,0%	892 936
2011	68,3%	640 443	6,3%	59 312	5,8%	54 698	18,9%	177 365	100,0%	938 200
2012	69,5%	662 123	6,2%	58 692	5,5%	52 296	18,1%	172 654	100,0%	953 373
2013	70,1%	689 503	6,2%	61 034	5,5%	53 787	17,5%	171 927	100,0%	983 698
2014	70,1%	679 800	6,3%	60 716	5,5%	53 611	17,1%	166 170	100,0%	969 154
2015	70,7%	696 320	6,3%	62 186	5,4%	53 378	16,4%	161 739	100,0%	985 212
1986-2015	—	1166,1%	—	355,5%	—	144,3%	—	-9,0%	—	255,5%

Source: DHET

3.3 Post-school education outcomes

The table below shows the results of increased enrolment between 2002 and 2016, the proportion of black people (over the age of 20) with a degree or higher increased from 1.2% to 3.1%, or by 158.3%. The proportion of white people with such a degree increased by 67.9%.

PEOPLE AGED 20 AND OLDER WITH A DEGREE AND HIGHER BY RACE, 2002 AND 2016			
Race	2002	2016	Change
Black	1,2%	3,1%	158,3%
White	10,9%	18,3%	67,9%
Total	2,9%	4,9%	69,0%

Source: Stats SA

Part 4: HEALTH

4.1 Life expectancy

Life expectancy fell sharply in the decade after 1994 as the AIDS pandemic wreaked havoc in the context of the then policy insanity of the government. By 2005, it reached a low point of 53.5 years. However, it subsequently recovered to a level of 64 years in 2017 – testimony to what can happen if South Africa’s government can be convinced of the need to adopt sane and sensible policies.

LIFE EXPECTANCY AT BIRTH BY SEX, 2002-17			
Year	Male	Female	Total
2002	52,9	56,6	54,9
2003	52,5	55,8	54,2
2004	52,2	55,3	53,8
2005	52,1	54,8	53,5
2006	52,3	54,7	53,5
2007	53,3	56,1	54,7
2008	54,3	57,9	56,1
2009	55,0	58,7	56,9
2010	56,4	60,6	58,5
2011	57,6	62,7	60,2
2012	58,5	63,6	61,1
2013	59,2	64,6	61,9
2014	59,7	65,1	62,5
2015	60,0	65,5	62,8
2016	60,6	66,1	63,4
2017	61,2	66,7	64,0
2002-17	15,7%	17,8%	16,6%

Source: Stats SA

4.2 HIV/AIDS

While even one is too many, between 1999 and 2016, the number of annual new HIV infections fell from 646 806 to 266 931. The number has fallen for the past seven consecutive years.

NEW HIV INFECTIONS, 1999–2016		
Year	New infections	Change
1999	646 806	3,7%
2000	636 716	-1,6%
2001	607 762	-4,5%
2002	573 261	-5,7%
2003	535 984	-6,5%
2004	496 878	-7,3%
2005	460 243	-7,4%
2006	424 512	-7,8%
2007	389 399	-8,3%
2008	361 892	-7,1%
2009	437 705	20,9%
2010	398 570	-8,9%
2011	365 153	-8,4%
2012	337 725	-7,5%
2013	314 943	-6,7%
2014	300 983	-4,4%
2015	286 442	-4,8%
2016	266 931	-6,8%

Source: South African National Aids Council (SANAC)

4.3 Infant health

The broader healthcare sector receives much criticism with good reason, but, as is the case across so many areas of policy, where an analyst makes the effort, it is possible to identify trends of progress. This is the case both for infant mortality and child mortality rates, which have fallen by 31.8% and 40.5% respectively since 2002. Such rates are a very good indicator of the overall healthcare and living-standards environment in a society, and testimony to the fact that even over the past decade South Africa was still able to make some progress in critical areas.

INFANT AND UNDER-FIVE MORTALITY RATE, 2002-17		
Year	Infant mortality rate	Under-five mortality rate
2002	48,1	71,3
2003	48,1	71,6
2004	48,7	71,8
2005	49,1	72,5
2006	48,7	71,7
2007	47,8	70,1
2008	46,6	67,6
2009	42,8	63,3
2010	41,1	58,4
2011	39,9	54,4
2012	38,8	51,5
2013	37,4	49,1
2014	36,0	47,1
2015	34,0	44,7
2016	33,5	43,6
2017	32,8	42,4
2002-17	-31,8%	-40,5%

Source: Stats SA

4.4 Stillbirth rate

The stillbirth rate, which broadly reflects the quality of natal care in the public service, has fallen from 27 deaths per 1 000 births to 21 since 2001.

STILLBIRTH RATE PER 1 000 BIRTHS, 2001-15/16	
Year	Rate
2001	27
2002	29
2004	24
2006	24
2008	22
2010	23
2012	22
2014	21
2015/16	21
2001-15/16	-22,2%

Source: HealthSystems Trust (HST)

4.5 Public sector general practitioners and specialists

The table below shows that, since 2000, the number of general practitioners in the public service has increased from 7 591 to 14 036 or by 85%. The number of specialists increased by 22%, indicating improved human resources available to poor people making use of government hospitals and clinics.

PUBLIC SECTOR GENERAL PRACTITIONERS AND SPECIALISTS, 2000-16			
Year	General practitioners	Specialists	Total
2000	7 591	3 881	11 472
2001	7 352	3 812	11 164
2002	7 287	3 685	10 972
2003	7 645	3 446	11 091
2005	8 747	3 499	12 246
2006	9 527	3 695	13 222
2007	9 959	4 000	13 959
2008	10 653	4 026	14 679
2009	10 878	4 311	15 189
2010	11 309	4 442	15 751
2011	12 014	4 620	16 634
2012	12 444	4 775	17 219
2013	13 531	4 947	18 478
2014	13 593	4 893	18 486
2015	13 656	4 986	18 642
2016	14 036	4 737	18 773
2000-16	84,9%	22,1%	63,6%

Source: HST

4.6 Public sector nurses

Likewise, the nursing council reports that the number of public sector nurses increased from 41 734 in 2000 to 67 766 in 2016.

PUBLIC SECTOR NURSES, 2000-16	
Year	Professional nurses
2000	41 734
2001	41 460
2002	40 318
2003	41 563
2005	43 660
2006	44 071
2007	45 102
2008	47 834
2009	49 341
2010	51 966
2011	56 075
2012	59 890
2013	63 833
2014	66 711
2015	68 105
2016	67 766
2000-16	62,4%

Source: South African Nursing Council (SANC)

Part 5: CRIME AND SECURITY

5.1 Murder

Crime takes a terrible toll on our society and continues to occur at extraordinary levels. But South Africa's murder rate, as shown in the table below, has been halved through the democratic era.

MURDER PER 100 000 OF THE POPULATION, 1994/95–2016/17		
Murder		
Year	Cases	Rate
1994/95	25 965	67
1995/96	26 877	68
1996/97	25 470	63
1997/98	24 486	60
1998/99	25 127	60
1999/2000	22 604	52,5
2000/01	21 758	50
2001/02	21 405	48
2002/03	21 553	47
2003/04	19 824	43
2004/05	18 793	40
2005/06	18 455	40
2006/07	19 106	41
2007/08	18 400	39
2008/09	18 084	37
2009/10	16 767	34
2010/11	15 893	32
2011/12	15 554	31
2012/13	16 213	31
2013/14	17 023	32
2014/15	17 805	33
2015/16	18 673	34
2016/17	19 016	34
1994/95-2016/17	-26,8%	-49,3%

Source: South African Police Service (SAPS)

Part 6: FINAL COMMENTS

Our sense is that far more has been achieved in South Africa over the past two decades than many people understand. There is a lot to be proud of and in no way is it true to say that ‘South Africa is no better than it was in 1994’, or that ‘South Africans have refused to work together to bring about change’. This is a substantively better society to live in than it was in 1994. We think that, as a result of that progress, social and other relations remain predominantly sound. But there must be no doubt that the radical inflection of government policy after 2007 did great harm to the South African economy and stalled much of the progress that was being made to that point. If policy makers can adopt sensible ideas that draw investment, create new wealth and jobs, and grow the economy, then there is no reason to believe that the trajectory our country was on into 2007 cannot be resumed. But it is now more certain than ever that, if the requisite degree of economic performance cannot again be secured, reckless and dangerous commentators and politicians in our midst may deflect public criticism of their own failures down lines of populist and nationalist incitement. That must be stopped if our hope for a better future is to be realised.