



**A NATION IN THE MAKING**  
A DISCUSSION DOCUMENT ON MACRO-  
SOCIAL TRENDS IN SOUTH AFRICA

Policy Co-ordination and  
Advisory Services (PCAS)  
Social Sector  
The Presidency



## PREFACE

While the performance of the economy receives significant attention through a series of broad 'macroeconomic' indicators (e.g. the consumer price index, production price index, gross domestic product growth by quarters, etc.) that are reported regularly, there is not a similar focus on many 'social indicators'.

At the July 2003 Cabinet Lekgotla, government took a decision to undertake a country/macro-social analysis to focus its attention on how these indicators were behaving over time. This would help inform our assessment of the efficacy or appropriateness of government's social programmes. The discussion document on macro-social trends in South Africa (Macro-Social Report [MSR]) is based on extensive research and discussions at the Forum of South African Directors-General clusters and Cabinet.

The matters raised in the document are critical in understanding the movement of our society from its apartheid past towards non-racialism, equity and unity in diversity. Though many of the critical social trends may require a longer timeline than a decade to evince definite patterns, the analysis depicts important critical drifts, some because of public policy and others occurring somewhat independently of material conditions and policy prescripts.

The release of the MSR for public discussion provides an opportunity for interaction across society on the many critical issues it raises. This will afford South Africans the opportunity to reflect on such critical matters as identity, networks of social solidarity and social mobility – the better to determine the role that each one of us can play in building a society that cares.

Arising from work done in preparing the MSR, the Policy Co-ordination and Advisory Services (PCAS) is pursuing various areas of policy analysis, such as the National



Income Dynamics Study, which will provide new data, to be tracked over time, on issues of income dynamics and social mobility.

We do hope that the discussion generated by this document will help propel our democracy to new heights.

Joel Netshitenzhe

*Head: Policy Co-ordination and Advisory Services (PCAS)*

Frank Chikane

*Director-General: The Presidency*



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