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Background

South Africa is a middle-income country that spends on average above 5% of its Gross Domestic Product on education. Before the first democratic elections in South Africa in 1994, South Africa had a fragmented and racially divided education system. The policy of apartheid that discriminated against certain racial groups resulted in unequal education provision in terms of race and region. Economic and social discrimination against Black South Africans under apartheid left the country with considerable income inequality with public spending on each Black student as low as 20% of the spending on each White student. As late as 1986, the state spent nine times more on each white learner than it spent on learners in the worst off Bantustans.

In the past ten years of democracy, the government - and the country as a whole - has been engaged in a national agenda of transformation aimed at transforming government, civil society, and the economy. Education in particular, has undergone a dramatic change: a single unified system based on the principles of equity and redress has been built from the formerly fragmented and racially divided education system.

South Africa has aggressively tackled the legacy of a racially and culturally segregated and differentiated system by establishing a new legal and policy framework for education. The Constitution (1996) provides for a unitary system of education, managed by the Department of Education and nine provincial departments. The Minister of Education through the National Education Policy Act (1996) has the power to determine the national norms and standards for education planning, provision, governance, monitoring and evaluation. The Department of Education is responsible for education policy development and facilitating the implementation of education programmes and policies. Provincial Departments of Education through their regional and district offices are responsible for implementing education programmes aligned with the national goals (Higher education is the sole responsibility of the national department).

Since 1994 the new policies and legislative framework geared at increasing access to education, equitable distribution of resources to all including vulnerable children and women, redress of the past disparities with particular focus on improving the conditions for the previously disadvantaged, providing quality education for all and fostering values of democracy have been developed. Education for All (EFA) goals and principles inevitably underpin the policies and programmes of the new education system in South Africa.

Perception of EFA

The reform plans of the education system in South Africa incorporate the EFA principles, goals, targets and guidelines as contained in both the World Declaration on Education for
All and the Dakar Framework for Action. South Africa therefore, does not have a separate EFA plan. Basic education is a constitutional right, with further education and training having to be made progressively available. EFA goals that are embraced in South Africa’s education policies, national strategic plans and programmes assist in the accomplishment of these constitutional obligations.

**Scope of EFA in South Africa**

Progress towards the achievement of the six Dakar Goals is monitored and evaluated using a set of indicators developed to measure performance of education in the country and elsewhere in the world, these indicators also assist to measure the impact of the reform and intervention strategies of the new education system in South Africa. These indicators are developed from information and data collected from within the education system itself, from Statistics South Africa and from other research and statistical agencies. This report covers all six of the goals using some indicators of access, quality and efficiency to monitor progress towards achieving the EFA goals. The table below outlines the goals and the related indicators:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EFA Goal</th>
<th>Indicators</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Expanding and improving comprehensive early childhood care and education, especially for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children</td>
<td>Enrolment rates NER and GER</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Ensuring that by 2015 all children, particularly girls, children in difficult circumstances and those belonging to ethnic minorities have access to free and compulsory primary education of good quality</td>
<td>Participation in Mathematics and Physical Science at the Higher grade especially for girl learners, Performance in grade 12 Senior Certificate Examinations, Enrolment rates, per capita expenditure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Ensuring that the learning needs of all young people and adults are met through equitable access to appropriate learning and life skills programmes</td>
<td>Level of expansion and access to a range of FET programmes, Level of transformation of the FET landscape, Level of Implementation of the new FET curriculum, Enrolment rates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Achieving 50% improvement in adult literacy by 2015, especially for women, and equitable access to basic and continuing education for adults</td>
<td>National Adult Literacy rate by gender, National functional literacy rate (Ability to read and write) by gender, completion rate by gender, National grade 12 completion rate by gender,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Eliminating gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005 and gender equality in education by 2015, with a focus on ensuring girl’s full and equal access to basic education of quality.</td>
<td>Gross and Net enrolment ratios in Primary education by gender or Primary Education Gender Parity Index (GPI), Gross and Net enrollment ratios in Secondary Education by gender or Secondary Education Gender Parity Index (GPI), Performance in grade 12 Senior Certificate Examinations by gender</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Improving all aspects of the quality of education and ensuring excellence of all so that recognized and measurable learning outcomes are achieved by all especially in literacy, numeracy and essential life skills</td>
<td>Level of teacher qualifications, Level of implementation of curriculum reform, Level of mitigation of the impact of HIV/AIDS through the curriculum and the system itself, Level of management of teacher supply and demand, Level of poverty alleviation through an Integrated Nutrition Programme in schools and early childhood development and primary centres, Level of development of strategies to reduce the burden borne by poor parents in terms of the high cost of uniforms, textbooks and supplementary resource materials. Level of achievement, Learner to classroom ratio</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Challenges

The monitoring and evaluation of the six Dakar Goals is affected by lack of sufficient data, exacerbated by the demands of the ongoing reforms within the education system. Also, in the past ten years South Africa was primarily addressing the legacy of segregation and differentiation in education, therefore more focus on redress. Also, during these ten years South Africa was transforming the education system in terms of input equalization (learner educator ratio’s, funding) and process transformation (policies and curriculum change).

On the path to 2015: Towards a realization of EFA

South Africa through the equitable inter-provincial allocations of funds and education specific poverty targeting mechanisms, has been able to mobilise funds towards the elimination of backlogs in the provision of education to previously disadvantaged groups which include African people, women, people in rural areas, learners with special education needs, people from poor households. Since 1994, legislative and policy interventions have resulted in the following achievements for our education system:

Early Childhood development (ECD) provision

Before 1994, only 9% of the children from birth to six years had access to early childhood facilities (Survey 1992). Over 75% of the children in these ECD programmes were privately funded and thus excluded children from poor households. In 2000, a Nationwide Audit of ECD provisioning in South Africa revealed an increase in participation to 13% of all South African children aged 0 to 6 years. The expansion of the Grade R to 5 year olds in publicly funded ECD programmes has increased participation from 273 499 in 2000 to 386 539 in 2004. Funding for ECD has increased to R538 million in 2004/5 compared to R12 million in 1995. To improve the quality of the ECD programmes in the country, materials have been developed and distributed and 4500 practitioners have been trained nationwide. The White Paper 5 on ECD has been developed. Its purpose is to protect the child’s rights to develop his or her full cognitive, emotional, social and physical potential. The main ECD policy priority addressed in White Paper 5 is the establishment of a national system of provision of the Reception Year for children aged 5 years that combines a large public and smaller independent component. In this regard, our medium-term goal is for all children including vulnerable children entering Grade 1 to have participated in an accredited Reception Year Programme by 2010. The White Paper outlines how we will achieve this through a phased, poverty-targeted approach that makes use of grants-in-aid to primary schools and subsidies to selected community-based ECD sites within conditional grants and provincial budgets.
Access to free and compulsory primary education

The South African Schools ‘Act (1996) makes schooling compulsory for children aged 7 to 15. This has resulted in the sustained participation of over 95% in schooling since the mid to late 1990s and sustained increases in enrolment in all primary age groups at education institutions observed in the years since 1999 according to data by Statistics South Africa on Universal Primary Education. The primary net enrolment ratio was still stable around 95% in 2003. Secondary participation has increased from levels of 70% in 1992 to approximately 85% in 2003.

Figure 1. Age-specific Enrolment Rates: 1999 to 2001

Participation in education is affected by the quality and conditions of teaching and learning. To address the imbalances of the past, expenditure in education remains the largest budgetary item since 1994. Public funding for education inputs such as infrastructure, textbooks, and nutrition programmes reflect an average increase of about 7% per year in spending from R46.7 billion in 1999 to just under R60 billion in 2002/3. Education reform has reduced inequality in spending per learner by 60%, owing to the progressive Norms and Standards for School Funding, which came into effect in April 1999 which ensure that the poorest learners receive seven times more of non-personnel funding per head than the least poor in a province, contributing to intra-provincial equity. The norms and standards are being revised with an emphasis on allocating more funds to the poor. The South African Schools Act allows parents of learners from poor households to apply for exemption from paying school fees; currently the Ministry of education is consulting with government on the amendment of the schools act so that school fees can be abolished in the poorer public schools.
Participation is further enhanced by a pro-poor nutrition programme, which also contributes to improvement in learner achievement. The National School Nutrition Programme was funded to the tune of over R838 million in 2004/5 from an amount of R460 million in 1999 enabling the programme to reach 5 million learners in 16000 schools. There has been some considerable improvements with the learner/classroom and learner/educator ratios getting closer to the of 1:40 and 1:35 at primary schools and secondary schools respectively compared to 1:60 and 1:80 that were inherited particularly from the former Bantustans. Also, the number of out of school youth who should be in compulsory schooling has nearly halved since 1996 from 945000 to 581,000 for 7-15 years.

**Progress towards skills development**

The South African government has put in place policies that are specifically designed to address the learning needs of youth and adults in the country. *The South African Schools Act*, *the Further Education and Training Act*, and, in particular, *the South African Qualifications Authority Act* have transformed the education policy environment. The new policy framework promotes access, provide the basis for the development of a nationally coordinated further education and training system that brings together senior secondary components of schools and institutions focused on technical and vocational training. The new policy framework requires these institutions to become responsive to the curricula and related needs of young people. In addition, the new curriculum framework and the Revised National Curriculum Statement have addressed the complex and multifaceted education needs of young people.

The Department of Education in collaboration with the Department of Labour have developed policies and legislation that facilitates the integration of education and training programmes and qualifications at all educational levels in order to address the skills development needs of the country. The framework allows for the portability of qualifications, the flexibility of learning programmes, recognition of prior learning and provides a variety of access points to learning which creates a wider enabling environment in which young people and adults can gain access to quality and relevant education and training.

The areas of Mathematics, Science and Technology (considered scarce skills in the country) have been identified as key economic development drivers for the country. The Department of Education’s contribution is to improve participation rates in these subjects and has since developed a National Strategy for Mathematics, Science and Technology aimed at 1) - raising the participation and performance of Black learners (especially females) in Mathematics and Science at Senior Certificate level; 2) providing high-quality education in the three subjects to all learners and 3) increasing and improving human resource capacity to deliver education in the three subjects. Plans are underway to develop schools of focused learning in the areas of Performing and Visual Arts and Sports. Government has made an allocation of R1, 5bn additional funds to recapitalize colleges of education over the period 2006-2008.
Progress made in Adult Basic Education

The Adult Basic Education and Training Act of 2000 provides for the establishment of public and private adult learning centres, funding for Adult Basic Education and Training provisioning, the governance of public centres, and quality assurance mechanisms for the ABET sector. The uptake of ABET programme has been improving at a very slow pace as has the retention rate. However, the adult illiteracy rates for South Africans are not high and have shown improvement over the years. Adult literacy rate for adults (15 years and above) was 14.6% in 1991. Huge strides were made post-1994. The literacy rate for the adult population (15 years and above) increased from 67% in 1996 to 89% in 2004.

Table 2: Literacy rates for adults and young adults, 1991-2004

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Adult literacy 15+ years</th>
<th>Young adult literacy 15-24 years</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Calculated from StatsSA database.

There has been an increase in literacy rates for the 15-24 year olds from 83% in 1996 to 98% in 2004. This increase and difference between adult and youth literacy indicates that youth have had more opportunities to access basic education compared to adults. There are, however, significant provincial, racial and gender disparities in illiteracy rates that still exist.

Progress made in gender

Over the last decade more girls than boys have enrolled in South Africa's educational institutions. In 2000, for example, there were 2.1 million girls in secondary schools compared to 1.8million boys. The higher enrolment of females is also reflected in the number of female learners registering for secondary certificate examinations. While there has been a net decline in enrolment in the final examinations for both male and female learners, females continue to outnumber males and, as a cohort, perform better in the examinations.
Figure 2: Male and Female Enrolment in Secondary Certificate Examinations, 1996-2002

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>226425</td>
<td>285049</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>219969</td>
<td>269972</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>202212</td>
<td>247159</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>202730</td>
<td>241091</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>201408</td>
<td>238859</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>214922</td>
<td>253063</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Not only do more female learners complete their secondary education and gain symbols that allow them access to higher education institutions, the proportion of female learners who earn merit passes (Cs and Bs) and distinctions (As) exceeds that of male learners. Of the 8,412 learners who were awarded A aggregates in 2002, 60% were female. The overall pattern of female success is consistent in all but one of the nine provinces.
Table 3: Number of learners who passed, and Endorsements: 1999-2004

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Passes Male</th>
<th>% of Total</th>
<th>Passes Female</th>
<th>% of Total</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Endorses Male</th>
<th>% of Total</th>
<th>Endorses Female</th>
<th>% of Total</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>118441</td>
<td>47.4%</td>
<td>131390</td>
<td>52.6%</td>
<td>249831</td>
<td>30304</td>
<td>47.6%</td>
<td>33421</td>
<td>52.4%</td>
<td>63725</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>134622</td>
<td>47.5%</td>
<td>148672</td>
<td>52.5%</td>
<td>283294</td>
<td>32969</td>
<td>48.0%</td>
<td>35657</td>
<td>52.0%</td>
<td>68626</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>128629</td>
<td>46.4%</td>
<td>148577</td>
<td>53.6%</td>
<td>277206</td>
<td>31539</td>
<td>46.6%</td>
<td>36168</td>
<td>53.4%</td>
<td>67707</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>143289</td>
<td>46.9%</td>
<td>162485</td>
<td>53.1%</td>
<td>305774</td>
<td>35392</td>
<td>47.2%</td>
<td>39656</td>
<td>52.8%</td>
<td>75048</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>151127</td>
<td>46.9%</td>
<td>171365</td>
<td>53.1%</td>
<td>322492</td>
<td>39124</td>
<td>47.7%</td>
<td>42886</td>
<td>52.3%</td>
<td>82010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>154780</td>
<td>46.8%</td>
<td>175937</td>
<td>53.2%</td>
<td>330717</td>
<td>40689</td>
<td>47.8%</td>
<td>44428</td>
<td>52.2%</td>
<td>85117</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Senior Certificate Examination Reports: 1999-2004

While the overall achievement of female learners is noteworthy, pregnancy of teenage girls remains a challenge. Although our policies are non-discriminatory and therefore do not prohibit pregnant girls from attending school, the school environment is still not enabling enough despite efforts to raise awareness about the right to education of pregnant girls. To empower girl learners, a Life Skills Programme is offered in schools and it addresses amongst other things teenage pregnancy and the effect it has on the lives of young girls.

The Girls' Education Movement (GEM) was launched in 2003 and since then 40% of all schools in the country have GEM clubs. The GEM campaign called “I am my sister's keeper” is aimed at raising awareness about out of schoolgirls and reporting them to the Department of Education. A toll free line has been created to facilitate reporting of the out of schoolgirls. GEM clubs have been active in fighting harmful cultural practices in the villages and supporting HIV/AIDS infected youths. Girls and boys with disabilities have been involved in the skills development programmes offered in GEM. Materials on managing and eliminating gender based violence have been developed for use in schools and by School Governing Bodies. Some of the materials developed have been translated into Braille.

Quality in education

Educational quality is another important component by which the Department of Education measures its success. The competency in literacy, numeracy and life skills of South African learners is analysed and compared with those of other developing countries. Quality is further defined by the actual learning experience determined by the education inputs and processes, and the characteristics displayed by learners.

1. Since 1994, teaching quality has been improving with the annual increase of just over 2 percentage points in the proportion of qualified teachers in South Africa. This translates into a 30% increase in the proportion of qualified teachers in South Africa.


2 Table 3 indicates that some progress has been made in improving the teaching and learning conditions and addressing historical inequities in the provision of infrastructure.

### Table 3: Percentage of Schools with Telephones, Water, Electricity, Toilets and Classrooms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Province</th>
<th>Telephone</th>
<th>Water</th>
<th>Electricity</th>
<th>Toilets</th>
<th>Schools with classroom shortages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Eastern Cape</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Free State</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gauteng</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KwaZulu-Natal</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mpumalanga</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern Cape</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limpopo</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North West</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western Cape</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3 The classroom ratios have decreased and the number of learners under trees has been reduced although eliminating all such instances is still a challenge.

4 In South Africa, fewer than 3% of school going learners attend private/independent schools which is evidence of confidence in the quality of the public education system.

5 Performance in the Grade 12 Senior Certificate has improved significantly in pass rates in recent years from 49% in 1999 to 71% in 2004.

6 The curriculum has been modernised to make it more relevant to the needs of citizens of a developing country aiming to achieve sustainable economic and development growth.

7 To achieve the national learning standards as specified in the Revised National Curriculum Statements, government is committed to enhancing learning materials and teacher development as part of the larger effort to improve the quality of secondary education via the new curriculum. The budget for further education and training has been increased to support the materials rewriting process required for the effective implementation of the further education and training National Curriculum Statements (Grades 10-12).

8 The improvement of teacher qualifications has been a major area of focus in the past decade. The number of under qualified teachers has been reduced to 5000 in 2004 compared to 12000 in 2002. An Advanced Certificate in Education is offered nationally to upgrade teacher qualifications in Maths, Science and Technology and 2500 teachers have graduated in this programme since 2001.

9 To address shortage of skills in Maths, Science and Technology, Dinaledi schools were established to improve performance of both learners and educators in these subjects. In addition to the Dinaledi schools a White Paper in e-Education and an implementation strategy have been developed to consolidate these interventions in
the system, and to create a corps of learners and educators who are fully ‘e’ competent/computer literate.

10 Language in education policy. The revised National Curriculum enhances multilingualism, diversity and respect for different language traditions in a national context and provincial departments of education are obliged to make the necessary arrangements to ensure that the language requirements of learners are met at local level.

11 Religion in education. A policy on religion in education has recently been finalised to encourage respect for diversity in religious practice and observance.

12 Systemic Evaluation is conducted in grades 3,6 and 9 to measure competency in numeracy, literacy and life skills. The benchmarking of performance of learners through TIMMS Quality of learning and teaching is also measured through benchmarking the performance of South African against that of other developing countries in the world.

Dealing with HIV/AIDS in Education

Funds amounting to R519 million have been allocated for dealing with HIV and AIDS in education since 2001. The Department of Education has developed and produced HIV and AIDS resource guides to assist educators in dealing with their own sexuality issues and risk behaviours. More than 85000 teachers were trained on the Life Skills and HIV and AIDS Programme since 2000. As part of the curriculum, HIV and AIDS education is responsible for the greater awareness on this subject and ongoing advocacy workshops on how to manage the HIV and AIDS are conducted in schools across the country. HIV and AIDS learner support materials for primary and secondary levels have been developed and distributed to schools. A Peer Education Programme aimed at assisting learners develop knowledge, skills, values and attitudes required in making responsible choices is offered at secondary level. A study is being completed now to identify the factors affecting the supply and demand of educators including the impact of HIV and AIDS.

Values in education.

The focus of the values in education initiative will be on familiarising learners with Constitutional values and symbols. The revised National Curriculum, completed in 2003, places emphasis on the principles of Social Justice, a Healthy Environment, and Human Rights and Inclusivity. The important role of History in encouraging respect for heritage and diversity in the broader population (in addition to learners) is also recognised.

Language in education policy: The Revised National Curriculum enhances multilingualism, diversity and respect for different language traditions in a national context and provincial departments of education are obliged to make the necessary arrangements to ensure that the language requirements of learners are met at local level.
Challenges

The following are challenges threaten to further attainment of the goals of quality education for all:

1. Poverty and unemployment rates are still considerably high and encourage dropping out, low achievement and exclusion of the poor.
2. The two economies in one country – the developed and developing continue to be a reality in South Africa.
3. The appropriateness and the quantity of skills being developed in South Africa at present is a critical issue for government given the high levels of youth unemployment, the mismatch between the skills of our graduates and the needs of the labour market, the obvious links between unemployment and poverty, and the central role of human resources in a highly competitive global economy.
4. Lack of maturity of systems of implementation, monitoring, evaluation especially in terms of resource allocation and administrative.
5. The problems of coordination of various skills development agencies as well as Government in ensuring coherent quality programmes in Early Childhood, Adult Basic Education and vocational education.
6. The drain of teaching skills away from the continent.
7. The impact of HIV/AIDS on society and how these impact on education and training.
8. Challenges of infrastructure degradation and maintenance which play themselves out in many of rural and farming communities, and the transport and travel of learners to and from rural schools.
9. Strengthening the participation in, and completion of programmes in scarce skills areas such as Maths, Science and Technology, South Africa still under performs when compared to other developing countries in the world.
10. Low performance and slow through put rates.
11. Environment and context issues in some institutions make it difficult to implement reform policies and need intervention.

Conclusion

South Africa has made significant progress since 1994 towards ensuring access to education for the majority of children. The provision of ECD at Grade R will prepare Grade 1 learners to be ready for primary schooling. Improvements have been made in primary enrolment by ensuring enrolment of age appropriate learners. Unqualified educators at the Foundation Phase are currently being targeted through the National Professional Diploma in Education (NPDE). The current NER and GER and literacy rates for adults and young adults show that South Africa is on track towards achieving EFA. Government support and commitment is strong towards improving the quality of life for all. All policies and programmes are aligned with EFA goals. Priority is being given to respond to the needs of the poorest of the poor through government’s Social Cluster (which promotes an integrated approach to addressing the development needs of the country). However, workable strategies and programmes will need to be implemented in order to counter the impact of HIV AIDS. Otherwise the gains made towards the
achievement of the primary education are likely to be reversed.

As indicated earlier, monitoring of the EFA goals is carried out using information from schools through the Education Management Information System (EMIS) and other research agencies. The schooling conditions are being monitored using the Schools Register of Needs. A follow up publication to the 1996 SNR was published in 2000. In its 2004-2006 Strategic Plan, the Education Department intends to further strengthen the EMIS unit so as to ensure quality control systems and procedures. There is a need to link school based data to Census data in order to obtain an accurate measure of poverty levels. A comprehensive school register of needs audit is at an advanced state of being conducted this year.

Some trends can be noticed from the current assessment of EFA Goals with regards to education as South Africa celebrates 10 years of democracy. First, although the primary NER has increased since 1994, it has stabilised between 95% and 90% from 1997. The policy message emerging from this is that there is no room for complacency. Efforts should be increased to ensure that primary NER is not only stabilized, but increased substantially in the next few years. Even though South Africa scores favourably when compared with the developing countries, it is important that South Africa is always benchmarked against developed countries to gain a global view of our performance.

The democratic government is committed to gender empowerment, and to ensure that children, especially girls have access to education. It is encouraging that levels of access have increased dramatically since 1994. However, it appears that more efforts are required to ensure that girls remain in school. Evidence suggests that women older than 15 years are more likely to be illiterate than their male counterparts. It is encouraging that literacy levels have improved dramatically over the past decade, and are among the highest in developing countries.

The Ministry of Education aims to make massive gains in the achievement of quality education and training opportunities for all in the next decade of democracy. This will be in terms of quality inputs, quality processes and quality outputs which are not necessarily only measured in terms of learner achievement, but also in terms of the way that learners participate in social, civic and economic life during the time they spend in schooling as well as the time they spend outside the school walls. Through vision 2014, government commits to half unemployment, increase access to basic services, and to improve the quality of life for all.

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