

## **ANALYSING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN (NDP) OF SOUTH AFRICA**

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### **—Abstract—**

In recent years, South Africa has encountered many challenges as to regaining a well-structured long-term vision and plan for the country's economic growth. The South African economy has reached its highest rate of unemployment, which was at 29.1 percent in the fourth quarter of 2019. One of the main objectives set by the National Development Plan is to provide decent employment through inclusive economic growth. Many priorities in the NDP are not about new policies or programmes, but are about improving the quality of implementation of existing ones. South Africa has 40 national departments contributing to the outputs and funding of the 14 outcomes of the National Development Plan, but is the NDP sustainable? The aim of the study is to evaluate the state of policy frameworks pertaining to the NDP and to ensure awareness and responsiveness to policy making frameworks contributing to all outputs. Data collection is based on national departments and entities categorised and related to the outcomes that are all linked to the medium-term strategic framework (MTSF). The sample period consists of data extracted from 2013 to 2019, based on availability of data and reports. South Africa should look at how the Asian Tigers pursued their infrastructure and developmental models that can be transformed into economic powerhouses and industrial economies. The objective would be to assist the government with developmental challenges and to provide a planned policy process to the NDP framework; addressing and providing support to the various outcomes that are underperforming; and ensuring that frameworks are target specific and that the set targets are implemented in the specified time frames. This will contribute to the development of local economic growth and eliminate socio-economic challenges faced in the long run.

**Keywords:** development, implementation, local economic growth, National Development Plan (NDP), policy

**JEL classification:** H5, H6, F36, D04, O1, O2, R1, R5

## 1. INTRODUCTION

A lighthouse's role is to guide ships safely when they travel near seashores. Without it, ships may end up shipwrecked. As such, South Africa's National Development Plan acts as a guide on what development route the country should follow to combat past injustices and other challenges for achieving inclusive economic development. The National Development Plan's (NDP) main objective is to eradicate poverty and reduce inequality levels by the year 2030 (South African Government, 2013). South Africa can achieve these goals by drawing on its residents' energies, expanding and growing an inclusive economy, building capacity, increasing the state's capacity and promoting leadership. Due to the dehumanising exclusion of different races prior to 1994, democratic South Africa has inherited a very poor, unequal and unemployed society. In response to these challenges, the South African Government established the National Development Plan (NDP), consisting of various areas of improvement and an overall number of 14 set outcomes to be achieved. Each of these areas has numerous objectives, with the overarching objective of reducing inequality and eliminating poverty by 2030.

From the implementation period of the NDP, it would seem that little to no progress has been made. Since 2015, the real gross domestic product (GDP) per capita has been declining (South African Reserve Bank, 2018), productivity growth is slow and appears to be slowing down further (Aterido et al., 2019; Kreuser & Newman, 2018), and unemployment is rising from already high levels experienced throughout the years (Statistics South Africa, 2019). Many priorities in the NDP are not about new policies or programmes, but are about improving the quality of implementation of existing ones. South Africa has 40 national departments contributing to the outputs and funding of the 14 outcomes of the NDP, but is the NDP sustainable in the long run?

The performance and expenditure assessment of the National Development Plan (NDP) conducted by the Parliamentary Budget Office reported a lack of current implementation of the NDP. In addition, studies also indicated that the intergovernmental planning, budgeting and reporting framework for South Africa is complex and not fully aligned with the NDP objectives (Parliamentary Monitoring Group, 2018). The challenges faced include: the lack of data collection systems for reporting on MTSF targets, the failure of departments to submit progress reports, and some performance indicators that are not relevant. The way forward would be to analyse programme structures, report poor performance reflected by responsible departments, and assess the alignment of departmental APPs (Parliamentary Monitoring Group, 2018). Challenges faced include: the

absence of systems for collecting data for reporting on the MTSF targets, departments not adhering to submissions of progress reports, and some performance indicators not being relevant. The way forward would be analysing programme structures, to report poor performance reflected by responsible departments and assessments should be done on departmental APP alignments to the NDP outcomes to ensure correlation.

The plan is clear and concise; however, poor implementation thereof will inevitably keep the country in this position. There are various factors that can prevent proper implementation of the plan and should be addressed hastily. The aim of the study is to assist the government with developmental challenges and to provide a planned policy process to the NDP framework; addressing and providing support to the various outcomes that are underperforming; and ensuring that frameworks are target specific and that the set targets are implemented in the specified timeframes. Focus on policy frameworks pertaining to the NDP and to ensure awareness and responsiveness to policymaking frameworks contributing to all outputs is needed. This will contribute to the development of local economic growth and eliminate social-economic challenges faced in the long run.

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1. National Development Plan**

Ever since its establishment, the National Development Plan has served as a guiding document that offers a long-term perspective towards the goals the South African government would like to achieve (South African Government, 2013). The NDP was developed with the objective to relieve high levels of poverty and reduce the inequality state of the nation by the year 2030. The major role played by the NDP is that it serves as a plan of action towards reaching these objectives over a long-term period. According to the National Planning Commission (2019), the design of the NDP policy is intended to secure the future of South Africans as set out in the Constitution. Therefore, large investments are required from government and the private sector to ensure that the objectives set out are achieved and that the citizens of South Africa are assured individual and national development (Naidoo & Mare', 2015).

The desired outcome to be achieved by the NDP is in essence ensuring that all the citizens of South Africa have an improved standard of living and a dignified existence. In order to fulfil and execute this dream, the crucial areas of focus are full employment and decent work, which, in turn, result in sustainable livelihoods.

The NPC (2019) stated in their vision statement that the NDP envisions a South Africa where “everyone feels free yet bounded to others”; where everyone embraces their full potential, a country where “opportunity is determined not by birth, but by ability, education and hard work”.

The following are the main objectives to be reached by 2030 as stated by the NDP:

**Table 1: Five main objectives to be reached by 2030**

<b>Objective</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Bibliography</b>
<b>Eliminate poverty and reduce inequality</b>	The elimination of poverty and reduction of poverty are meant for all races and classes in South Africa. Therefore, it requires the development and provision of a common programme that meticulously caters for the extensive level of diversity present in South Africa. Although the largest population living in poverty are black people, other races such as coloureds, Indians and whites are also living in poverty.	(National Planning Commission, 2019), (National Science and Technology Forum, 2018), (South African Government, 2013)
<b>Active and individual development</b>	Citizens need to be encouraged to play an active role in their own development. This encouragement will stem from the strengthening of democracy and ensuring that government is held accountable.	(National Planning Commission, 2019), (Zarenda, 2013), (Cooperative Governance Traditional Affairs, 2018), (Meyer, 2014)
<b>Economic growth, promoting exports and a more labour absorbing economy</b>	The promotion of exports is essential, although it will require government to critically select winners and losers who have the potential of creating labour intensive employment in order to raise economic growth.	(National Planning Commission, 2019), (Statistics South Africa, 2019), (SARB, 2018), (The World Bank group, 2019).
<b>Key capabilities of both people and the country</b>	These capabilities refer to skills, infrastructure, social security, strong institutions as well as partnerships both within the country and with key international partners	(National Planning Commission, 2019), (Isike & Ogunnubi, 2015), (Zarenda, 2013)
<b>A capable and developmental state</b>	This is to be achieved by building strong leadership that is required to work together to solve our problems in society	(National Planning Commission, 2019), (Statistics South Africa, 2019), (Cooperative Governance Traditional Affairs, 2018), (South African Government, 2013)

Source: Compiled by the author (National Planning Commission, 2019)

**Figure 1: Inequality measures by population group**

Population group	Year	Gini coefficient	Theil's indices		Atkinson indices		Palma ratio			
			GE (0)	GE (1)	A (1)	A (2)	Bottom 40%	Middle 50%	Top 10%	Ratio
<b>Black African</b>	2006	0,54	0,51	0,61	0,40	0,58	11,4%	43,7%	44,9%	4,0
	2009	0,57	0,57	0,68	0,44	0,62	10,0%	43,2%	46,8%	4,7
	2011	0,55	0,54	0,63	0,42	0,61	10,4%	44,7%	44,9%	4,3
	2015	0,59	0,59	0,66	0,44	0,64	9,6%	44,2%	46,2%	4,8
<b>Coloured</b>	2006	0,56	0,56	0,60	0,43	0,63	9,9%	45,9%	44,2%	4,5
	2009	0,53	0,50	0,50	0,39	0,61	10,1%	51,2%	38,7%	3,8
	2011	0,53	0,50	0,54	0,40	0,60	10,5%	49,2%	40,3%	3,8
	2015	0,56	0,57	0,58	0,43	0,65	9,2%	48,6%	42,2%	4,6
<b>Indian/Asian</b>	2006	0,52	0,49	0,55	0,39	0,61	11,2%	48,2%	40,6%	3,6
	2009	0,50	0,44	0,48	0,36	0,55	11,4%	50,2%	38,4%	3,4
	2011	0,45	0,37	0,35	0,31	0,53	12,9%	54,3%	32,8%	2,5
	2015	0,45	0,35	0,36	0,30	0,49	13,5%	53,8%	32,7%	2,4
<b>White</b>	2006	0,43	0,32	0,32	0,28	0,49	14,7%	53,8%	31,5%	2,1
	2009	0,39	0,28	0,27	0,25	0,49	16,3%	55,4%	28,3%	1,7
	2011	0,41	0,31	0,30	0,26	0,49	15,4%	54,2%	30,4%	2,0
	2015	0,41	0,30	0,28	0,26	0,48	15,4%	54,8%	29,8%	1,9
<b>Total population</b>	2006	0,67	0,85	0,95	0,57	0,74	6,6%	36,2%	57,2%	8,6
	2009	0,65	0,81	0,86	0,56	0,74	6,5%	40,2%	53,3%	8,1
	2011	0,65	0,80	0,86	0,55	0,74	6,8%	39,9%	53,3%	7,9
	2015	0,65	0,80	0,84	0,55	0,75	6,6%	40,8%	52,6%	7,9

Source: Statistics South Africa, 2019

The task for the effective adoption of the NDP is to ensure that short- to medium-term policy preparation is coordinated and that the policies and objectives as well as outcomes identified in the NDP are adopted. As seen in figure 1 above the total population is greatly unequal and the gap continues to broaden. Gini coefficient for the black African population has been above 0.54 since 2006 and increased to 0.59 in 2015. The other population groups show fluctuations throughout the observed years.

**Table 2: National Development Plan outcomes**

OUTCOMES	DESCRIPTION
<b>Outcome 1</b>	Quality basic education
<b>Outcome 2</b>	A long and healthy life for all South Africans
<b>Outcome 3</b>	All people in South Africa are and feel safe
<b>Outcome 4</b>	Decent employment through inclusive economic growth
<b>Outcome 5</b>	A skilled and capable workforce to support an inclusive growth path
<b>Outcome 6</b>	An efficient, competitive and responsive economic infrastructure network
<b>Outcome 7</b>	Comprehensive rural development and land reform
<b>Outcome 8</b>	Human settlements
<b>Outcome 9</b>	Responsive, accountable, effective and efficient developmental local government system
<b>Outcome 10</b>	Protect and enhance our environmental assets and natural resources
<b>Outcome 11</b>	Create a better South Africa, contribute to a better and safer Africa in a better world
<b>Outcome 12</b>	An efficient, effective and development-oriented public service
<b>Outcome 13</b>	An inclusive and responsive social protection system
<b>Outcome 14</b>	Nation building and social cohesion

Source: National Planning Commission, 2019

## 2.2. Local economic development (LED)

Local economic growth is a bottom-up strategy, whereby local communities make use of their own unique resources in order to expand local economic activity in an inclusive manner (Todaro, 1994). LED is important in order to facilitate the equitable distribution of resources, the alleviation of local occurrences of poverty and to create employment for local residents (Meyer, 2014). LED institutes a sense of belonging within local communities, as it encourages the participation of the entire local region, thereby empowering the local stakeholders to play an active role in shaping their economic futures (Malefane & Mashakoe, 2008). According to the Department of Cooperative Governance Traditional Affairs (2016), LED is a tactic used towards economic development whereby it aspires indigenous individuals to collaborate in order to achieve sustainable economic growth and development. LED is anticipated to capitalise on the economic potential of all local municipalities all over the country. Throughout the apartheid era, a large percentage of disadvantaged South African individuals had no access to land, and did not have adequate skills and opportunities to establish businesses (Urban-Econ, 2006). This was done in an effort to address inequality that formulated from the past events that took place in order to transform and rebuild the economy, which resulted in the adoption of the local economic development framework (Urban-Econ, 2005). Both the Integrated Development Plan (IDP) and LED were introduced to complement and balance the

positioning of South Africa's municipalities and be able to go with the expected changes from communities (Malefane, 2008).

### **2.3. Gini-coefficient as a measure of inequality**

The Gini-coefficient is used as an indicator of inequality in South Africa. The Gini ranges from 0 to 1, where 0 indicates perfect equality, assuming that all individuals have the same wealth. Furthermore, 1 indicates perfect inequality, which means one individual has all the wealth and the remainder has none. Therefore, the closest the Gini coefficient is to 1, the more segregated the group will be. On the other hand, when the Gini-coefficient is closer to 0, the more equal the group will be (Statistics South Africa, 2019).

### **2.3. Policy as a measurement tool of NDP implementation**

The National Development Plan (NDP) objectives have provided impetus to the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP), driving the government's policy framework in 1994; they are the motivation behind the 2012 National Development Plan (NPC, 2019). The government's commitment to reducing poverty is often expressed in its economic policy: the equal share method used to calculate payments to various tiers of government incorporates the poverty portion as a redistribution measure. However, this has been questioned by volatile economic growth expectations, which have been showing slow and especially sluggish growth patterns in recent years (Statistics South Africa, 2019).

In the government's most recent planning documents, the vision for 2030 remains insight. The NDP, despite the various constraints faced, is still anchored by their objectives to reduce poverty, narrowing the curve of inequality and reducing unemployment through means of programmes strategically planned for the prospect (Masilela, 2013). These include: public works programmes, anti-poverty campaigns, infrastructure development programmes and many others. According to Mahlaka (2019), the NDP has not satisfied its targets and has accumulated residue and is slowly being forgotten.

## **3. METHODOLOGY**

### **3.1. Data collection and methods**

To evaluate the implementation of the National Development Plan (NDP), which consists of 14 outcomes, the study adopted a multiple-method design in order to compare how effective the plan is. Making use of secondary data obtained from Parliamentary Budget Office (PBO), Statistics South Africa and Trading Economics, data collection is based on national departments and entities

categorised and related to the outcomes that are all linked to the medium-term strategic framework (MTSF). In addition, the study also reviewed various reports on the NDP and related outcomes. The sample period consists of data extracted between 2012 and 2019. It was selected based on the availability of data in all departments. Next, the study conducted a systematic and comprehensive review of literature on national development planning published since the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). A fundamental World Bank document (World Bank, 2007) was established, which focused on the findings of the Bank’s survey in the search for ‘results-oriented’ national development plans. The World Bank (2007) furthermore reported in 2006 that an overall of 62 countries had such plans, which provides a reference point figure for the national development plan (NDP) that was implemented before this study.

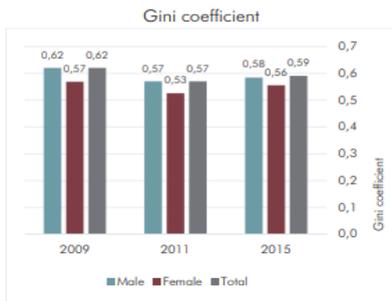
#### 4. DATA AND DISCUSSIONS

Figures represented below depict the various distributions and state of the National Development Plan and its main objectives over the years. There are various comparisons to be considered in order to gain an overview of how the plan was implemented and its projected outcomes as well as how many of these objectives have been reached.

##### 4.1. Eliminate poverty and reduce inequality

In Figure 3, it shows the gender-specific-headed households and it also gives an indication that male-headed households are more unequal than those of female-headed households. Male-headed households’ inequality also seems to be closely correlated with the total level of inequality in South Africa. Therefore, the figure shows that female-headed households are less unequal than those of male-headed households.

**Figure 2: Gini-coefficient by headed households – South Africa**



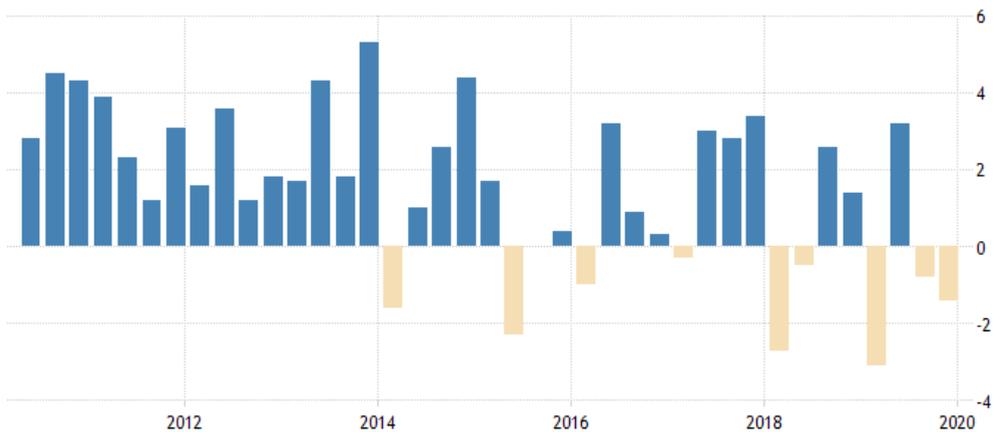
Source: Statistics South Africa, 2019

The Gini-coefficient statistics indicate that those individuals who live in a male-headed household are more unequal in comparison to those living in female-headed households, which is shown by the various data points. The inequality level was also greater in 2009, ranging between 0.62 points for males and 0.57 for females – a gap of 0.05 variation between the gender groups in comparison to 2015, whereby the inequality gap narrowed to 0.02 males accounting for 0.58 and females 0.56. The total Gini-coefficient was 0.62 points in 2009 and decreased to 0.59 points in 2015, a decline of 0.04 Gini-points.

#### 4.2. Economic growth (GDP), encouraging exports and a more labour absorbing economy

The figure below shows that nine of the 29 quarters since the implementation period of 2012 of the NDP reflected negative economic growth, peaking at 4.4 percent in 2014 and a low of -3.1 percent in the first quarter of 2019, having a severe effect on South Africa’s main industries, namely agriculture, government services, transport and manufacturing, to name a few.

**Figure 3: Gross domestic product (GDP) growth rate South Africa**



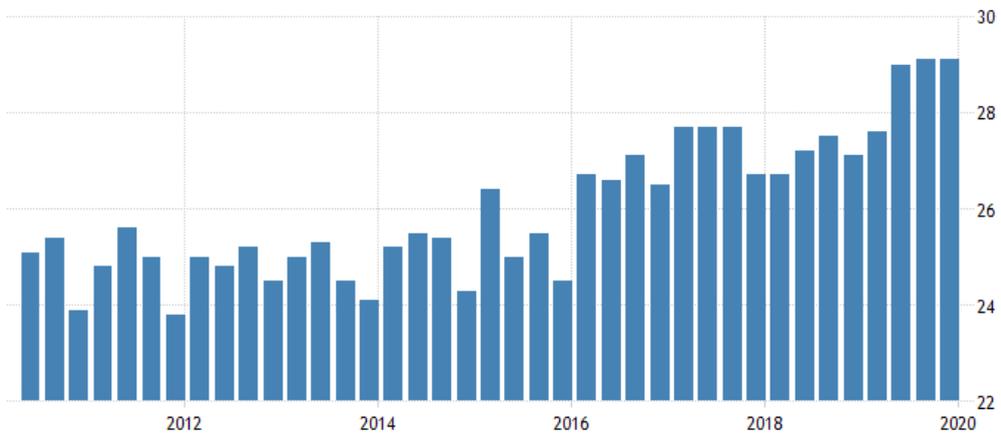
Source: Trading Economics, Stats SA, 2020

The GDP rate is closely linked to some of the NDP outcomes, which include outcomes 4, 5, 9 and 12. All of these speak of decent job opportunities, introducing inclusive growth. Being able to grow both skilled and capable employees who can support the objective of inclusive growth, the government and public being accountable and effective, better service delivery and developmental-oriented public services can be achieved. All of these outcomes should build the economy and be given priority to develop a better state of the nation in the long term.

### 4.3. The main capabilities of both people and the country

As stipulated in outcome 4, the NDP aims to create decent employment through inclusive economic growth and in outcome 5 to attain a skilled yet capable workforce to support the NDP to achieve inclusive growth. Figure 5 below is a graphical view of South Africa's current unemployment rates. Looking at the statistics from 2012 when the NDP was implemented and standing in 2020. On observation, it is clear that the unemployment rate has increased drastically and is peaking at 29.1 percent in 2020. With the pandemic we are facing now as a country, it is unlikely that the unemployment rate will decrease since many industries are suffering and many job losses have been reported.

**Figure 4: South Africa's unemployment rate**



Source: Trading Economics. Statistics South Africa, 2020

### 4.4. National Development Plan (NDP) outcomes

Since the NDP was launched in South Africa, joblessness and inequality have increased, corruption has increased in the private and public sectors, and property rights and access to opportunities still favour and benefit some individuals; which was represented in Figures 1 to 4 above. The establishment of the NDP was to alleviate all those affects.

**Figure 5: Progress report on selected National Development Plan outcomes as at 2014-2016 (continuous report)**

Outcome	Responsible/coordinating department	Number of targets	Targets achieved	Percentage achieved
Outcome 1: Quality basic education	Department of Basic Education	60	22	37%
Outcome 2: A long and healthy life for all South Africans	Department of Health	58	26	45%
Outcome 3: All people in South Africa are and feel safe	JCPS cluster	66	19	29%
Outcome 4: Decent employment through inclusive economic growth	Department of Trade and Industry	67	30	45%
Outcome 5: A skilled and capable workforce to support an inclusive growth path	Department of Higher Education and Training	50	26	52%
Outcome 6: An efficient, competitive and responsive economic infrastructure network	Economic Development	37	17	46%
Outcome 7: Comprehensive rural development and land reform	Department of Rural Development and Land Reform	2	0	0%
Outcome 8: Human settlements	Department of Human Settlements	38	5	13%
Outcome 9: Responsive, accountable, effective and efficient developmental local government system	Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs	44	28	64%

<b>Outcome</b>	<b>Responsible/coordinating department</b>	<b>Number of targets</b>	<b>Targets achieved</b>	<b>Percentage achieved</b>
Outcome 10: Protect and enhance our environmental assets and natural resources	Department of Environmental Affairs	7	2	29%
Outcome 11: Create a better South Africa, contribute to a better and safer Africa in a better world	International Cooperation, Trade and Security Cluster	39	17	44%
Outcome 12: An efficient, effective and development-oriented public service	Department of Public Service and Administration	36	14	39%
Outcome 13: An inclusive and responsive social protection system	Department of Social Development	15	4	27%
Outcome 14: Nation building and social cohesion alignment and progress	Department of Arts and Culture	48	20	42%

Source: South African government, 2013. National Planning Commission, 2019

As indicated in Figure 5, it is noticeable that the NDP has not been performing as well as it should. NDP outcomes are the basis for economic and policy reforms to establish a new and inclusive growth path. The figure above shows the analysis on the alignment of the 14 chapters in the NDP outcomes with the medium-term strategic framework (MTSF) as well as the programme of action (POA).

The objectives selected are based on the terms of targets that were achieved and include outcomes 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9 and 12. In comparing the number of targets and number of targets achieved in the POA, it shows that only 37 percent of the targets have been achieved for quality basic education and a low of 13 percent for sustainable human settlements. Progress has been very slow and it places continuous strain on the economy. In addition, considering that millions of the annual budget is allocated to the NDP, is this plan sustainable in the long term? It

has been eight years since the NDP was adopted. A plan intended to provide a pathway for policy frameworks that may lead to better quality and access to education, reindustrialising and inclusive economic growth and lastly eradicating poverty. Some changes should be made in order for the overall objectives to be reached by 2030.

## **5. RECOMMEDATIONS**

The NDP sees skills development as critical and therefore they need to establish a well-structured skills programmes that will empower the youth and provide training to those who lack the trade. South Africa lacks economic growth and needs a type of growth that can help with the development of the country. To enhance this type of growth, the following points are recommended: On a continuous basis, revise the original plan and ensure accountability and transparency. Impose efforts to gradually reduce the compensation of government employees so that more funds can be allocated to community- and economic development. Ensure that there is infant industry protection and perform import substitution where possible. Focus on quality and relevant education, and invest in various programmes for schools to better themselves. Provide training and support to educators that they may develop and allow opportunity for growth and innovation in the classrooms. Increase transportation networks across South Africa as this will help with the mobilisation of workers. Modernise the network markets in order to encourage sustainable development and productivity.

In addition, the NDP should reduce the barriers of entry to combat skewed ownership structures and encourage the development of small, micro- and medium-sized enterprises. Make labour-intensive growth a priority, especially in agriculture and services in the tourism sector. Agriculture should be conducive to investments. Consistent policy frameworks that may consist of various reforms that will lead to successful implementations of objectives and in order to have a policy framework that preys on consistency and leadership stability as their main features are needed. The NDP continuous policy framework needs to be designed in such a way that it can bring about change and transformation over a short-term period.

Strengthen and develop all available chains for accountability. The most crucial step in doing this is ensuring that all the actions and activities that are necessary to implement desired programmes are clearly defined and consequently include the time period pertaining to the responsibilities for implementation. Lastly, the NDP should focus on the creation of continuous active learning and improvement. It is imperative for the NDP to figure out how it can create things and make them work before trying to actively implement proposals on a large scale. The implementation

stage needs to be a process of learning, so that, in turn, the plans being implemented can evolve on the experience of various departments and the results that come from evidence-based monitoring and assessment.

## **6. CONCLUSION**

The National Development Plan is an important tool to be used by South Africa to break the chain of poverty, reduce inequality and increase the number of people employed. Without it, South Africa will wander aimlessly and stay mounted on its present problems. It is imperative that the plan is followed through with precision. In addition, government has to continuously analyse the NDP and ensure that there is growth and reports that can support the growth within various departments. By 2050, it is planned to have an inclusive economy where no areas or regions are left behind. Regions will be connected, and growth should be spread evenly.

Furthermore, local economic development ensures that through goal-driven collaboration, firms, workers and the government, in a specific region, can structure itself to develop economically. LED also helps regions to tap into the potential it possesses, thereby exploiting local opportunities that are to the benefit of all its residents. However, one of the unmoveable pillars in ensuring the success of LED is the institutions that govern and ensure the implementation of the LED strategies.

There is therefore room for development and growth in both the short- and long term for the NDP. The implementation of the plan should be monitored on a continuous basis and should ensure accountability. All departments must play an active role and comply with availing reports on various targets achieved throughout the year. The NDP should be spending the budget in a manner that it is not just funds wasted, but to ensure its growth and development are gained.

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