



SOUTH AFRICA'S VOLUNTARY NATIONAL REVIEW



A progressive approach to human development.





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COMMITMENT TO AN INCLUSIVE PROCESS



2025

SOUTH AFRICA'S VOLUNTARY NATIONAL REVIEW

SUSTAINABLE
DEVELOPMENT
GOALS



COMMITMENT TO AN INCLUSIVE PROCESS



- South Africa's second Voluntary National Review (VNR) reflects and reaffirms the country's commitment to advancing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (SDGs). The SDGs are implemented through an inclusive process through the aligned South Africa's National Development Plan and the African Union's Agenda 2063.
- South Africa has embraced the localisation of SDGs as reflected in the Voluntary Local Reviews conducted in 2024.

A photograph of two young Black women standing on a city street, looking at a smartphone held by one of them. They are both smiling. The woman on the left is wearing a yellow top and blue jeans, while the woman on the right is wearing a white top and beige pants, with a backpack. In the background, there are blue buses and city buildings. The image is overlaid with a large, semi-transparent graphic of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals wheel.

SIGNS OF PROGRESS AMID PERSISTENT CHALLENGES



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SIGNS OF PROGRESS AMID PERSISTENT CHALLENGES

The 2025 VNR highlights South Africa's continued progress in improving the lives of its citizens, especially the most vulnerable:



- Comprehensive social protection coverage, including public employment, dent the high poverty levels.



- Universal health coverage for all South Africans is aimed at guaranteeing quality healthcare regardless of economic status.



- South Africa has witnessed a steady decline in maternal mortality, child mortality, new HIV infections, and other communicable diseases.



- There has been a notable increase in access to quality early childhood development and in school completion, universal school enrolment attained, and an expansion in the provision of student financial aid for higher education.

SIGNS OF PROGRESS AMID PERSISTENT CHALLENGES

The 2025 VNR highlights South Africa's continued progress in improving the lives of its citizens, especially the most vulnerable:



- A strong legislative framework promotes gender equality, social inclusion, and equity.



- A large majority of South Africans have access to water and sanitation.



- Ambitious commitments supported by substantial financing are driving the just energy transition in South Africa.



- Institutions aimed at identifying and prosecuting corruption have been strengthened significantly.



DESPITE AREAS OF PROGRESS CHALLENGES REMAIN



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DESPITE AREAS OF PROGRESS CHALLENGES REMAIN



- High unemployment rates and high inequalities persist, including income inequality as measured by the Gini coefficient.



- The skills mismatch between education and industry needs requires focused attention from all stakeholders.

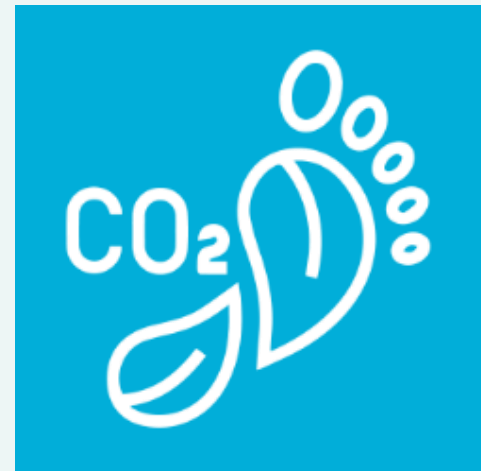


- South Africans experience regular power outages and rising electricity costs, negatively impacting quality of life and economic productivity.



- Infrastructure inefficiencies, including at the local government level, hinder increased production and the export of goods and services, thus negatively impacting growth.

DESPITE AREAS OF PROGRESS CHALLENGES REMAIN



- South Africans' material footprint remains high, and there is a slow uptake of sustainable practices.



- The level of violent crime, in particular violence against women and children, remains very high.



- Parallel public and private health systems exist, but resource allocation is skewed in favour of the private sector, resulting in huge health inequities in access to health.



- There is suboptimal use of evidence to inform policy development and implementation in all spheres of government.



AMBITIOUS PROPOSALS TO ACCELERATE PROGRESS

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AMBITIOUS PROPOSALS TO ACCELERATE PROGRESS

To accelerate the achievement of the SDGs in South Africa, the 2025 VNR recommends prioritising five high-impact SDG Acceleration Mechanisms:



- *Mechanism 1: Prioritise human well-being and enhanced capabilities through sustainable development (SDGs 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 11)*
Focus on improving the quality of life and enhancing the capabilities of all South Africans, particularly the most vulnerable, through improved social infrastructure investment – quality health, education, water and sanitation.



- *Mechanism 2: Invest in young people for participation in fields with a high job growth potential, such as the green and digital economy (SDGs 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 8, 9, 10, 13, 14 and 15)*
Empower young people to contribute to and participate in fields with a high job growth potential, such as the green and digital economy, through targeted vocational and skills development and entrepreneurship support.



- *Mechanism 3: Create economic growth and opportunities by increasing sustainable energy sources (SDGs 7, 8, 10 and 13)*
Urgently address South Africa's immediate energy security needs while shifting to renewables to enhance future energy security, reduce carbon emissions and create economic opportunities.

AMBITIOUS PROPOSALS TO ACCELERATE PROGRESS

To accelerate the achievement of the SDGs in South Africa, the 2025 VNR recommends prioritising five high-impact SDG Acceleration Mechanisms:



- *Mechanism 4: Unblock infrastructure constraints and invest in green and resilient infrastructure (SDGs 8, 9, 10 and 11)*
Address infrastructure constraints: invest in network industries and target key infrastructure investments that support a diversified and competitive economy in an environmentally sustainable manner, contributing to labour market activation and social infrastructure development.



- *Mechanism 5: Rebuild trust through effective and responsive institutions (SDGs 16 and 17)*
Rebuild public trust by effectively combating corruption and increasing efficiency in the public service. Build Strong local and global partnerships to help accelerate progress. Scale up successful and innovative interventions.



- *Mechanism 6: Mobilise means for implementation (SDG 17)*
Optimise domestic resource mobilisation - tax collection, reduce illicit financial flows, call for appropriate technology transfer, and expand technical and financial cooperation, which are required to accelerate South Africa's progress towards achieving the SDGs.



THANK YOU
