

# SA 2020 Scenarios:

The Future will be What we Make of it



**AFLI** AFRICAN LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE



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## More on the AFLI website

This document is the Summary of the SA2020 Scenarios. For the full report, PowerPoint presentation, and the short and long videos, please [visit the SA2020 page on the AFLI website](#).

Should you want to engage further, [please email us](#).

# Foreword

South Africa ushered in a new era in 1994 with its first non-racial democratic elections. In ten years, the country has recorded some remarkable successes in guaranteeing freedom and improving the quality of life for millions of its citizens. South Africa represents one of humanity's great triumphs.

But as Bonhoffer said, "What is success, what is failure? Time alone will tell", and of course, many challenges remain and new ones have emerged. The great uncertainties of our times include: the threat posed by HIV and AIDS; the changes in the weather patterns; how to build a world class economy and successfully address the problem of having 40 percent of the population unemployed.

In the early 1990s, a group of South Africans representing a wide spectrum of opinions, met regularly over a period of several months in an exercise that contributed towards shaping the future of the nation. That exercise produced the Mont Fleur Scenarios — fascinating and probing stories of how South Africa might develop between 1992 and 2002 under different strategies. South Africa rejected the "Ostrich scenario" that characterized the status quo, and embarked upon a strategic path that resembles in many respects the scenario called "the Flight of the Flamingos". I was fortunate to participate in that fascinating and illuminating exercise.

But while we celebrate the successes of the past decade, we must also focus on the future. The occasion of the tenth anniversary of freedom was an opportune time to think about where South Africa goes from here and how best to create a desirable future. The scenario process has proven to be an excellent means for a diverse group to share their stories and their logic and their desires of how this wonderful country of ours could develop, and to reach agreement on both desirable and undesirable possible paths to the future. It is for this reason that the University of Western Cape has sponsored this initiative, South Africa 2020, as a follow-up to the Mont Fleur Scenarios.

This set of scenarios explores plausible futures for South Africa, provides key messages on how a desirable future could possibly be created, and identifies the pitfalls that must be avoided. As always, the scenarios are stories about possible paths to the future, and not predictions. However, they do create a framework for discussion and debate, and it is our hope that, much like the first Mont Fleur scenarios, the outputs of this exercise will be widely discussed across South Africa, and that it will stimulate a collective reflection on the kind of future South Africans want to build.

The players in this exercise were twenty-three dynamic young leaders from a broad spectrum of ideas, philosophies, and backgrounds in South Africa: potential occupants of the leadership cadre of the nation by 2020. The team was enriched by six young leaders from other regions in Africa for an external African perspective on the issues South Africa may face.

I thank the participants who gave generously of their time and intellect over the year, and the many distinguished guest speakers who shared their knowledge and wisdom. I also thank the staff at the University of Western Cape, Prof Pieter Le Roux in particular, for their support. I thank also the African Leadership Institute for its technical advice and coordination, and for providing the facilitators—Peter Wilson and Olugbenga Adesida. The Mont Fleur Conference Centre gave our young leaders a peaceful haven to think about the future of South Africa, as it so successfully did for us just over ten years ago.

*Prof. Brian O'Connell:  
Vice-Chancellor, University of Western Cape*

# Preface

## THE VISION



*By 2020 South Africa could be an inclusive, prosperous and just society founded on ubuntu, equality and freedom, fostering creativity and allowing its people to realise their full potential.”*

The year is 2021. As the two facilitators of the SA2020 Scenarios, we are delighted to be able to share with you the four different scenario outcomes that a group of 30 young leaders in 2004 could visualize for South Africa sixteen years later in 2020. It is a rare privilege to undertake such scenario planning which covers a long horizon and then be able to look back and reflect on the outcomes. And more importantly, as a leadership institute, to draw the leadership lessons.

In 2004, the group of young South Africans, selected for their acknowledged leadership potential, envisioned that by 2020 South Africa could be “an inclusive, prosperous and just society founded on ubuntu, equality and freedom, fostering creativity and allowing its people to realise their full potential.” This vision formed the foundation of their preferred scenario—**All Aboard the Dual Carriageway.**

Their hope was that:

*“a quarter of a century after its transition to democracy, it would be a South Africa that has significantly dealt with the legacy of underdevelopment, poverty, unemployment and inequality that it had inherited. They imagined a South Africa that will have proudly taken its place within the world community of nations, as an economic and political equal.”*

They recognised that:

*“There are no easy solutions and caution against complacency and disjointed interventions. We call, instead, for bold and visionary leadership, whose primary motivation is to serve others, that accepts the need for calculated risks, including going against conventional or dominant wisdom if the underlying problems of poverty, unemployment and inequality are to be addressed.”*

When they spoke of leadership, it did not only mean political leadership at the highest level, but leadership throughout the political spectrum, as well as in the various channels of government, in state-owned enterprises, in business and in civil society. For rapid and sustainable transformation, engagement and commitment of all to a societal-wide agenda for change was key. Development and transformation cannot be outsourced whether to donors, the government, or the private sector alone. It requires all with the ‘power to act’ including civil society and the citizenry must do the right things. Government must create the enabling environment and motivation for all to participate in and lead the transformation.

**The failure of leadership – a vital building block of the Vision – has meant that instead of South Africa progressing triumphantly to “All Aboard the Dual Carriageway”, in 2020 the nation languishes somewhere between the two least desirable scenarios: “Dead End” and a “Slow Puncture”.**

By 2004, the euphoria of the Mandela years was fading, despite the enormous strides that were made during the first few years after 1994 in achieving macroeconomic stability and starting to create a more just society and to eradicate apartheid backlogs in access to housing, water and sanitation, electricity, health, education and communications. But there were still big backlogs to overcome, and poverty, inequality and unemployment remained serious issues, whilst secondary sectors of the economy were underdeveloped, and entrepreneurship had not taken off as needed. Thabo Mbeki entered his second term as President of South Africa in 2004 as the HIV/AIDS pandemic was raging, and rumours of the infamous arms deal began to filter through to the public.

**Dead End** explored the possible outcome of self-serving leadership, un-curtailed corruption and rampant individualism. The scenario paints a picture of South African malaise with extreme individualism, high levels of corruption and slow pace of reforms.

**Slow Puncture** explored the possible outcome of South Africa choosing to beat the same path rather than adopting a bold vision and decisive leadership to reduce inequalities. Preferring not to 'rock the boat', an incremental approach to development was pursued in an attempt to accommodate conflicting interests in society. This results in a more divided and unstable society, with obscene and ill-gotten wealth coexisting with pervasive squalor and disease.

**Sharp Right Turn** examined the implications of a South Africa focusing only on achieving high economic growth. In this scenario, fed up with incremental change, leadership takes a Sharp Right Turn with a single-minded mission to improve the growth rate without the necessary investment in the social sectors. Capital intensive growth led to increasing unemployment and rising poverty. Consequently, inequality rose as well as crime and unrest. The response was clamp down and repression.

The team believed there were some fundamental building blocks to achieving their vision for South Africa in 2020, and without all these building blocks being in place the Vision would collapse. In only one of the four scenarios are all the building blocks in place, so the outcomes of the other three scenarios are sub-optimal at best, and disastrous for the people at worst.

However, the most essential building block, which underpinned everything, was seen to be Leadership by the SA2020 team. That is, bold and visionary leadership, whose primary motivation is to serve others, that accepts the need for calculated risks, including going against conventional or dominant wisdom if the underlying problems of poverty, unemployment and inequality are to be addressed.

**All Aboard the Dual Carriageway**, the optimistic scenario which examines how South Africa as a country challenges its approach to growth and development and chose a bold path to enable all to climb aboard the dual carriageway to a better life, remains the desired pathway forward. As a nation that was highly stratified and divided on so many levels and with high levels of inequalities across race and class, the All Aboard the Dual Carriageway scenario calls

## THE ESSENTIAL BUILDING BLOCKS TO ACHIEVING THE VISION



### A Just Society

A society based on the rule of law, democratic and well governed



### Ubuntu

A society that is humane, caring & with opportunities for all to realise their full potentials



### Inclusive Economy & High Growth

An innovative, high growth & inclusive economy



### Social Delivery

Access for all to basic social services: education, health



### Enabling Environment for Creativity

A society that encourages and nurtures creativity, innovation, and learning



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*The most essential building block, which underpinned everything, was seen to be Leadership... that is, bold and visionary leadership, whose prime motivation is to serve others...*

*The good news is that...coupled with a leadership focused on serving the best interest of the nation and its people, the vision of the SA2020 team can still be achieved.*

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for transformation and building an inclusive society, where all can aspire to a better life. Making this a reality will require significant emphasis on and advances in the five building blocks identified by the SA2020 team as well as bold and visionary leadership.

Critical steps must be undertaken to enhance the capacity and capabilities of those historically left behind to actively participate in the economy through human capital formation (education, skills training, health, etc.), building an inclusive economy and society, as well as investing in building a robust infrastructure and the ecosystem for creativity, innovation and entrepreneurship.

The good news is that despite the challenging realities which the COVID-19 pandemic has further exposed, South Africa today has the ingredients to still realize the vision outlined in the All Aboard the Dual Carriageway scenario. What South Africa needs are bold actions as well as the commitment and engagement of all the stakeholders with the power to act. Everyone must be engaged and do have important roles to play to bring about the desired future. Coupled with a leadership focused on serving the best interests of the nation and its people, the vision of the SA2020 team can still be achieved (just not in 2020).



**Dr Olugbenga Adesida**  
AFLI Board



**Peter Wilson**  
AFLI Co-Founder & Member  
Programme Director,  
Archbishop Tutu Leadership Programme

# SA2020: • An Introduction

This publication presents the outputs of South Africa 2020: Creating the Future exercise which include this report and the short and long videos that can be viewed on the AFLI [YouTube channel](#). The SA2020 exercise, designed, coordinated and facilitated by the African Leadership Institute (AFLI), is a futures creating exercise which explored the future of South Africa until the year 2020 from the perspective of the youth. Under the guidance and facilitation of AFLI, the team was charged with reflecting on and providing answers to:

- What are the dominant issues South Africa will face over the next 15 years, at home, and as part of the African continent?
- How do we tackle these issues to ensure a better South Africa and Africa for all?
- What could be the outcomes of tackling these issues in different ways?
- What scenarios do they see for the future of South Africa, and what messages do these deliver? What South Africa do they wish to inherit as the leaders in 2020?
- What are the critical leadership capabilities that this next generation of leaders need to have to deliver the desired future, and how do we build this leadership capacity?

Launched in November 2003, the team met over a period of 10 months in five workshops and a series of sub-committee meetings. AFLI developed a scenarios approach which was used by the team. The approach focused on dialogue and consensus building amongst the broad spectrum of opinion reflected in the diverse team, around critical issues of today and tomorrow. It involved an interactive process of examining the South African context both local and external to distill the array of variables, forces and uncertainties into a limited set of divergent, interesting, simple and plausible stories of how the future could unfold, with the aim of delivering powerful messages on the choices and issues facing South Africa (see Figure 1). Between the workshops, the participants undertook assignments and participated in a series of online dialogues over a private space created for the SA2020 exercise on AFLI's website. Experts were brought in to stimulate thinking and challenge accepted norms and received wisdom during the workshops.

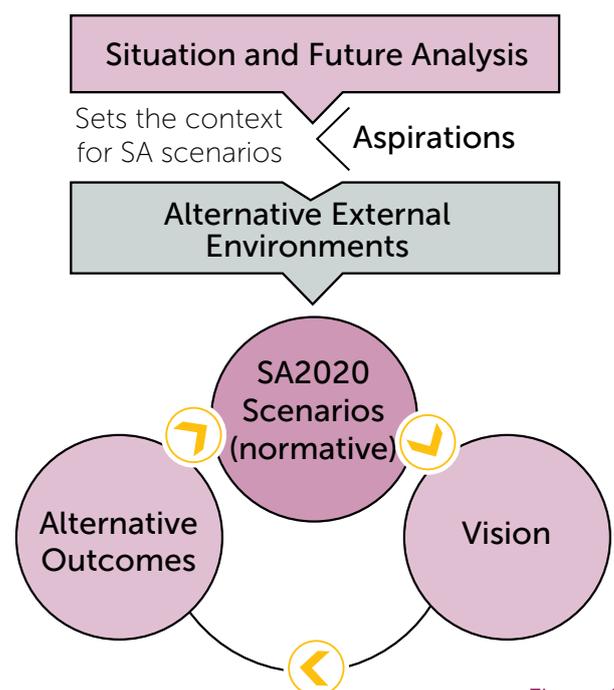


Figure 1  
*Situation and Future Analysis*

### Scenario Branch Points

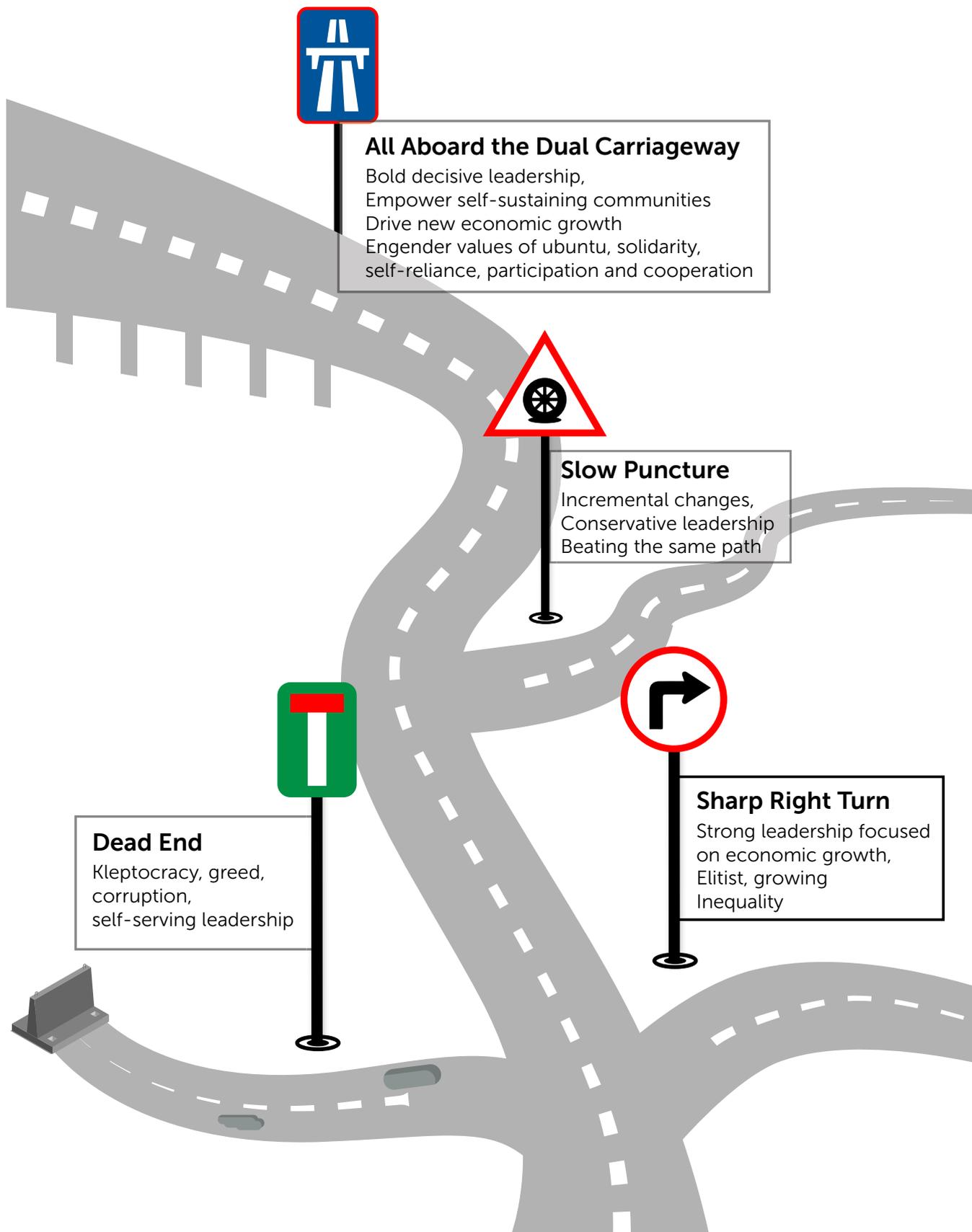


Figure 2  
Scenario Branch Points

This report presents the vision and synthesis information on the situational analysis, the four scenarios on the future of South Africa, and a summary of ideas on how to make the most optimistic scenario a reality. The videos of the scenarios present a dramatic presentation of the outputs with audio and visual images and animations. The two videos can be viewed on the AFLI  YouTube channel: 1) [A full, hourlong version](#); or 2) [An 18-minute summary version](#). Briefly, the four SA2020 scenarios are:



## DEAD END

DEAD END explores the possible outcome of self-serving leadership, uncurtailed corruption and rampant individualism



## SLOW PUNCTURE

SLOW PUNCTURE explores the possible outcome of South Africa choosing to beat the same path rather than adopting a bold vision and decisive leadership to reduce inequalities



## SHARP RIGHT TURN

SHARP RIGHT TURN examines the implications of a South Africa focusing only on achieving high economic growth



## ALL ABOARD THE DUAL CARRIAGEWAY

ALL ABOARD THE DUAL CARRIAGEWAY examines how South Africa as a country challenges its approach to growth and development and chose a bold path to enable all to climb aboard the dual carriageway to a better life.

The publication of the SA2020 Scenarios brochure, PowerPoint, full report and videos marks the end of the first phase of the SA2020 scenarios exercise. It is hoped that the outputs will contribute to national debate and dialogue about the future of South Africa, facilitate the building of a shared national vision, and create a national consensus on how to make the vision a reality. Additionally, it is hoped that the scenarios and vision and the national dialogue will inspire each actor to get engaged and participate in creating a desirable future for all South Africans.

# Yesterday and Today

## End of the first Decade of Freedom

Following the 'miracle' transition of 1994, South Africa concentrated her efforts to consolidate democracy and political stability, to deracialise its political system and lay the foundations to eradicate the social and economic legacy of apartheid.

**In 2004, as South Africa celebrated the end of the first decade of freedom, many achievements were noted:**

- Human, political and socio-economic rights and equality are entrenched in the constitution;
- Laws, policies and institutions have been deracialised; and
- A stable and working democracy and public institutions have been formally put in place.

The first steps have been taken to eradicate apartheid backlogs in social services and providing millions more with access to water and sanitation, electricity, housing, health, education and communications. More people have been included in a broadened social security net.

From stagnant growth in 1994, South Africa achieved macro economic stability, improved revenues and a modest 2.8% growth over the decade. It rapidly opened its economy without large-scale de-industrialisation, it diversified and grew its export markets.

**Despite these achievements, there are a number of fault-lines as a result of the legacy of the past:**

Unacceptably high levels of poverty and a persistent uneven distribution of income, assets and access to basic services, social marginalisation, the exclusion of the majority of South Africans from productive economic activity, an economy that is not sufficiently developed in terms of secondary sectors, huge backlogs in providing access to basic social services and infrastructure, unacceptable levels of crime, and the HIV and AIDS pandemic.

**If these are not addressed, they could reverse these important gains of the first ten years.**

## The World we Live in

South Africa achieved its democracy in a world, which has increasingly become globalised in a post cold war geo-political setting, with many advances in nearly all aspects of human endeavour and greater interdependence amongst peoples of the world. Whereas over time we have placed more and more strains on our natural environment,

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*South Africa achieved its democracy in a world, which has increasingly become globalised in a post cold war geo-political setting, with many advances in nearly all aspects of human endeavour and greater interdependence amongst peoples of the world.*

there is greater awareness that we need to act together to ensure greater sustainability, for present and future generations.

**Despite the advances, the world has also been characterised by a widening gap between rich and poor countries, and between the rich and poor within countries.**

The forces of globalisation were presented as irresistible (there is no alternative – TINA) and the “latecomers” were given formulaic prescriptions of how to catch up. More often than not, this led to countries falling even more behind in this mad scramble and to increasing misery for their populations. The Asian and South American crises in the 1990s and growing international social movements (in the North and South) introduced important shifts in the debates about globalisation.

**The African continent has largely been marginalised in the global economic scene and is part of the South that has not benefited from the developments of the last decade or so. South Africa’s liberation in 1994 and other developments on the continent provided an opportunity to refocus efforts to ensure that the continent breaks out of the cycle of poverty, disease, wars and famine.**

The creation of the African Union and its various institutions and programmes was an attempt by the continent to take its destiny into its own hands.

Africans are reclaiming responsibility for the social and economic development of the continent, for ensuring that its people live in peace and with opportunities to participate in shaping their future. It provides a common platform for the continent to engage with the world, and to take its place as an equal partner in the global village.

South Africa’s development is closely linked to that of the Southern African region and the continent as a whole. It shares a common objective with the people of most countries in the South and with many in the North to advocate for a global dispensation that is more just and sustainable.

This global and continental context is an important backdrop against which the birth of the South African nation and its development over the next sixteen years will unfold. When we rejoined the community of nations in 1994, we did so with the understanding that although we may be small, we can and must contribute towards the shaping of the global agenda, not just for our generations, but also in the interests of future

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	Internal Issues	External Issues
 <b>Economic</b>	<p>Inclusive &amp; distributed economic growth &amp; investment</p> <p>Employment &amp; job creation</p> <p>Entrepreneurship</p> <p>Developing a culture of capital, competitive productivity &amp; work ethic</p> <p>Community self-sufficiency &amp; economic deconcentration</p>	<p>Impact of globalisation upon trade &amp; competition</p> <p>Competition for foreign investment</p> <p>Global economic growth/shocks &amp; structural changes</p> <p>Regional economic cooperation</p> <p>Unfair trade practises (e.g. subsidies)</p>
 <b>Political</b>	<p>Deepening &amp; consolidating democracy, with transparency &amp; accountability</p> <p>Ensuring future good governance &amp; no corruption</p> <p>Pan-Africanism &amp; SA's role therein</p>	<p>Fundamentalism &amp; terrorism</p> <p>SA's relations &amp; role with Africa &amp; the World</p> <p>Polarisation between developed &amp; developing world, &amp; SA's role therein</p> <p>Regional &amp; continental stability and peace</p>
 <b>Environment</b>	<p>Protection of natural resources – sustainable consumption</p>	<p>Global environmental governance</p> <p>Climate Change</p>
 <b>Social</b>	<p>Accelerated social service delivery</p> <p>Poverty reduction &amp; social security safety net</p> <p>Substantive equality – bridging the gaps</p> <p>Education &amp; skills development</p> <p>Effective control of disease, notably HIV/AIDS</p> <p>Empowerment of women &amp; youth</p> <p>Crime, safety, security &amp; violence</p>	<p>Global response to the HIV/AIDS pandemic</p> <p>Impact of Biotechnology, Life Sciences &amp; new technologies</p> <p>Development of the Information Sciences</p>
 <b>Culture</b>	<p>Identity, heritage &amp; multi-culturalism</p> <p>Caring &amp; tolerant society with high moral standards</p>	
 <b>Technology</b>	<p>Adoption of technology for economic &amp; social delivery, including ICT innovation to support economic development</p>	<p>Impact of Biotechnology, Life Sciences &amp; new technologies</p> <p>Development of the Information Sciences</p>

# Our Vision 2020

In its scenario exercise, the SA2020 group imagined a future South Africa that is vibrant, diverse and caring and which draws on the best of all who live in it. We would like to see a South Africa, we said to ourselves, that will be “an inclusive, prosperous and just society founded on the values of ubuntu, equality and freedom, fostering creativity and allowing its people to realise their full potential.” A quarter of a century after its transition to democracy, it would be a South Africa that has significantly dealt with the legacy of underdevelopment, poverty, marginalisation, unemployment and inequality that it had inherited.



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*We call for bold and visionary leadership... that appreciate the fact that many interventions will need to achieve structural transformation in order to make significant advances on any of the challenges.*

We imagine a South Africa that will have proudly taken its place within the world community of nations, as an economic and political equal. Our continent, the origin of humankind, has also lifted itself out of the cycle of poverty and marginalisation. Though the world is still unequal, there is a growing force of alternative voices raising the call to improve the planet for all its inhabitants and for future generations.

This vision will remain a utopia, unless we act now to make it a reality. We know there are no easy solutions and caution against complacency and disjointed interventions.

We call, instead, for bold and visionary leadership, whose primary motivation is to serve others, that accepts the need for calculated risks, including going against conventional, complacent or dominant wisdom if the underlying problems of poverty, unemployment and inequality are to be addressed. Visionary leadership that appreciate the fact that many interventions will need to achieve structural transformation in order to make significant advances on any of the challenges.

Our reflections as a nation on the achievements of the last ten years provide a window of opportunity to ask and answer the hard questions that are necessary to find solutions to seemingly intractable conflicts. We might not achieve all elements of our vision by 2020. But we hope our scenarios will contribute towards and influence the national debate as we enter our second decade of freedom.



*Without ALL the building blocks in place, the SA2020 vision collapses*

Figure 3  
SA2020 Vision: The Building Blocks

# Four Scenarios ◦

The seeds for the future are already present today, as we continue to grapple with how to build a better country, continent and world, for everybody. There are some issues which may be outside of our immediate control—rain and droughts or development in the globalised world. However, we do have choices as to how we manage and engage with these realities. There are also many things which are within our immediate control—values, improving education,

access to services, addressing income equality—yet they may be more difficult to solve.

As the first decade of freedom draws to a close, there is a sense of optimism, that we will be able to resolve the more pressing problems facing our society. There are others who warn against complacency, that we seem to sleep too easily, living with extreme poverty and wealth as bed fellows.

**The four stories we will tell here  
are about the different paths we took towards the SA2020 vision.**

## Scenario 1: Dead End



These voices are shouted down: **Did we engage in the struggle in order to be poor? Why shouldn't black people also be filthy rich?**

Though the answer to these questions seems obvious, they do reflect a malaise in our society. South Africans have swallowed the extreme individualism of a certain brand of capitalism with enthusiasm. A sense of entitlement and the expectations that accompanied the transition to freedom, also contributes to this predicament. The pursuit of individual wealth, as quickly as possible, and the display of that wealth (what's the point of hiding your lamp under a bushel?) became a national occupation, amongst black and white alike. If you have it, you seek to accumulate even more, if you don't, you find ways of acquiring it, by hook or by crook. Thus, from its noble goals of economic liberation, increasingly black economic empowerment is viewed as a vehicle for getting-rich-quick.

Any connections, whether old boys, social or political are used to legitimise the path to riches. Corruption and white collar crime increase, as backhanders become part of the business process.

A parallel and equally worrying trend develops in the political and public spheres. The ruling party promised in its 2004 election campaign to halve unemployment and poverty within a decade. It won the elections handsomely, with generous donations to its election coffers from the patriotic and some not so patriotic bourgeoisie.



*A sense of entitlement and the expectations that accompanied the transition to freedom, also contributes to this predicament... Thus, from its noble goals of economic liberation, increasingly black economic empowerment is viewed as a vehicle for getting-rich-quick.*



However, dealing with unemployment and poverty at the rate promised is a tall order. During the previous ten years Government had enabled an environment for business (particularly white business), and yet, big business did not reciprocate. **The slow pace of land and agrarian reform saw thousands of poor rural people flocking to the cities.** Protected by the constitution, farmers expected exorbitant compensation for their land expropriated for redistribution and yet they expected government to evict people illegally occupying their farms.

The political leadership embarked on a path of blaming others or the global environment for the failure to deliver on its promises of a better life for all.

Many of those in government also begin to feel resentful as they read about their former comrades and colleagues growing richer and richer. Initially on small scale, but becoming bolder they started looting public coffers, demanding bribes and setting up front companies for themselves. The perceived need for political connections saw many buy political membership and patronage. It seemed difficult to stop the rot. Kickbacks at provincial and national levels became rife. Donations to political parties not only benefited companies directly, they influenced policy and the direction of the country. Seeing their political masters lining their pockets, large sections of the public service follow suit. Large-scale inefficiencies in the public sector became the order of the day. There were frequent headlines about schoolbooks, medicines and other such goods disappearing on the way to state warehouses or to schools and clinics.

While the anti-corruption institutions were kept very busy in this period, the big fish that they caught were few and far between. Its own credibility was undermined by convictions of some of its key personnel for receiving kickbacks to lose investigation dockets.

The focus on self-enrichment instead of developing the state's capacity to build an inclusive national vision sees the breakdown of services, infrastructure, lack of confidence in the country and spiralling unemployment. The flight from economically desperate rural areas causes mass urbanisation that city municipalities are unable to manage. This moral degeneration cascades downwards, permeating the whole of society. Confidence in the ability and willingness of the state to deliver social services to the poor waned. Continuous riots savaged the peace with violent attacks against government buildings and officials. Illegal reconnections of water and electricity became the order of the day, as the poor took what they were not receiving. Disillusionment and frustration drove aggression and intolerance. Senseless road-rage, violent crime and organised crime were constantly in the media. Street kids began to idolise their violent heroes for striking back at society's injustices.

The state responded with repressive measures creating a vicious circle with general mayhem and crime increasing. Vigilantism epitomised the loss of faith in public institutions ability to restore the rule of law. Social inequality deepened. A further breakdown of law and order ensues. **With diminished law enforcement, hijacking, rape,**

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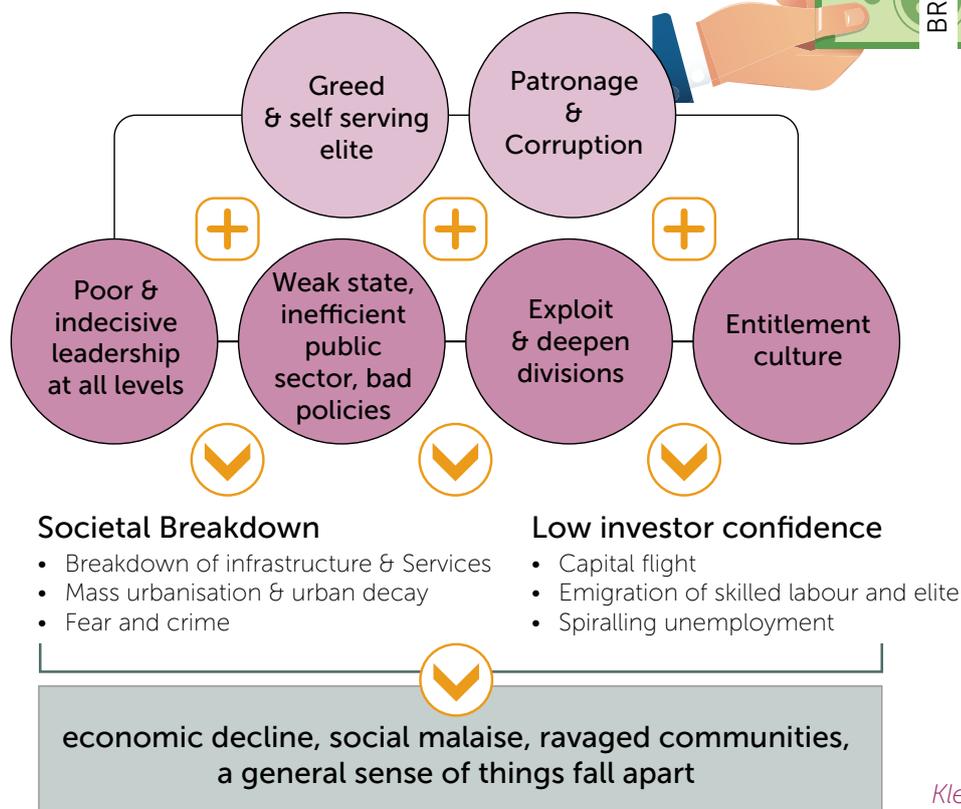


Figure 4  
*Dead End -  
Kleptocratic State*

**robbery and murder increase steadily. Increasing poverty and desperation fueled crime even further.**

The poorly managed HIV/AIDS crisis is also contributing to our social woes. By 2015, the number of orphaned children results in South Africa having the greatest number of street kids in the world.

Failure in the last 16 years to shift to renewable energy sources, combined with depleted coal reserves, weakened South Africa's capacity to generate sufficient electricity for industrial and domestic use. High oil prices led to high domestic prices. **Power failures and blackouts have become the norm.** Only the rich can afford to import energy. The poor are subjected to rations of electricity and are beginning to illegally chop down trees in the rich enclaves.

**With kleptocracy came diminished accountability.** No one takes responsibility for the break down in electricity, water and social services. **There is no recourse to the law and the government, to protect itself and its cronies, has turned to repression as a means of control.** It continues to blame its inability to deliver on others and circumstances beyond its control.

To the rich, South Africa had reached a revolutionary and ungovernable situation. They panicked and

responded by shifting capital overseas. Many left the country themselves.

South Africa has been replaced as the "engine of SADC" by Angola and the DRC. It has little credibility or influence internationally even though it remains active on the subcontinent. Faced with numerous internal problems, a self-serving leadership, and a shift in balance of forces favouring other resource-endowed countries, South Africa is not able to play the role it had played in the first 10 years of democracy. It is included on the AU list of countries urgently requiring a 'Peer Review.'

**South Africa in 2020 is a deeply divided and unstable society.**

A special UNDP report informs us that on almost all of the development and economic indicators, South Africa is worse off than it was in 2004. Our nation is by and large impoverished, with obscene and ill-gotten wealth coexisting with pervasive squalor and disease. Our natural resources plundered, our infrastructures dilapidated, the outlook for the future looks bleak. We have reached a dead end. The general saying is that we too have gone the way of 'the rest of Africa.'

## Scenario 2: Sharp Right Turn



**By 2004 the government had successfully managed to stabilise and reform the country's macro-economic status.**

Inflation was brought under control, low interest rates were spurring investment, and the basic standard of living was edging upwards. The spin-offs from the fiscal austerity of the previous decade allowed for slightly more expansionary budgets, though not quite enough to lift economic growth beyond 3%. **This rather pedestrian growth rate was still way too low to have a meaningful impact on the high unemployment rate and continued poverty of the majority.**

Domestic business confidence still lagged and foreign direct investment remained as elusive as ever. The reasons cited were an inflexible labour market, poor skills, Zimbabwe, HIV/AIDS and high input costs.

As the 2009 elections approached; the slow pace of growth, lack of progress regarding poverty and unemployment became a major battleground in the succession struggles at the national conference of the ruling party. A former student activist, now a business magnate, won the presidency on the platform that South Africa needed to fast-track economic growth by creating an environment for business and FDI, speed up privatisation and deregulation and aggressively build export markets in the continent and the world.

In the next term, she aggressively steered the country towards growing the first economy, arguing that growing the pie was much more likely to lead to redistribution and poverty reduction.

**Government embarked on a single-minded mission to improve the growth rate.**

In order to improve its global competitiveness, it did all it could to satisfy the needs of big business. In the first hundred days of the new term, decisive steps were taken to cut the cost of business inputs, with privatisation and deregulation in areas such as transport, electricity and telecommunications. Consortia of local BEE partners and Singaporean companies would run the Durban and Cape Town harbours. The third and fourth fixed-line national operator licences were awarded. Incentives and lowered taxes were introduced to spur exports, attract foreign direct investment and increase investments in research and development.

**Amendments were made to the Labour Relations Act.**

These amendments formally allowed a two tier labour market, with less stringent protection of workers in industrial processing zones and in small and medium businesses. A national youth employment scheme was also introduced, with subsidies to businesses that employed school-leavers in learnerships. When the unions protested, they were

### Fed up with incremental change, leadership takes a Sharp Right Turn

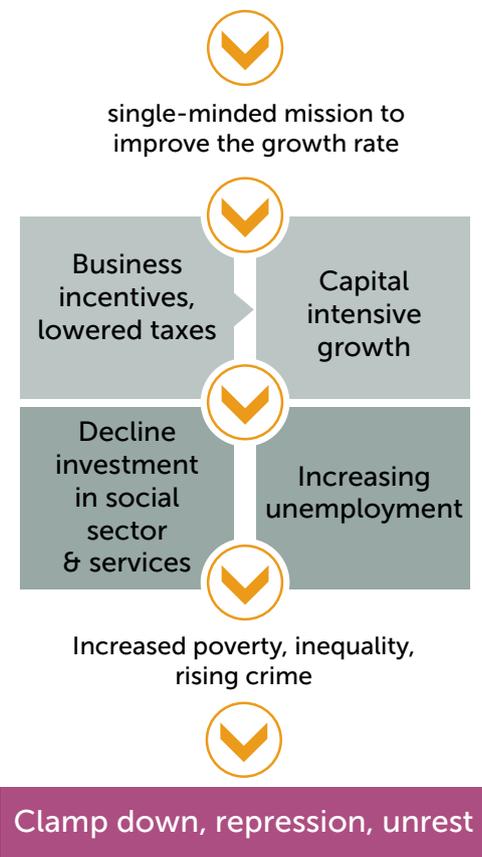


Figure 5  
Sharp Right Turn



berated as being selfish and caring only about themselves while millions of people were unemployed and willing to work at any price.

**Its aggressive drive secured huge markets in Africa and South Africa soon came to be known as the Lion of the South.**

Linking its policy of bringing peace, democracy and stability to the continent, South Africa's peacekeepers and constitutional advisors were followed by delegations of business people. South African business began muscling its way into various African countries. The perception of South Africa as a sub-imperialist nation was strengthened as it displaced competition from the former colonial powers.

**Preparations for the 2010 World Cup saw an increase in foreign and domestic investment with business confidence at an all-time high.**

Growth in the first economy meant continued high demand for skilled people and a growing middle class. A number of industrial processing zones were formed across the country, producing goods for export to the rest of Africa at low cost. Bilateral relations with China saw South Africa doubling its exports. Corporate taxes were further slashed to an all-time.

**Far-reaching reforms also swept through the public sector.**

The state was right-sized and managers from the private sector were brought in to turn around key departments and programmes. Provincial government was scrapped to reduce inefficiencies and to free up financing in order to focus on making local and national level government more effective. Public sector unions were co-opted by drawing their leadership into management. Their members, blamed for the poor quality of the public services of yesteryear, received little public sympathy.

The criminal justice system, the only arm of the state that grew, clamped down on crime harshly in order to make South Africa a safer place for investors, business and tourists.

**The president, a former teacher herself, and her Minister of Education promised to get a handle on the skills problem.**

400 primary and secondary schools, mainly in poor areas, were selected to be Centres of Excellence. These schools were equipped with libraries, science and computer labs. Teachers were recruited with competitive salaries and benefits, despite loud protests from teachers' unions. The Centres of Excellence began to compete with private schools but the rest of the public school system lumbered along.

The merger of universities that was completed in 2006 simply reproduced the two-tier system. The majority of historically white universities maintained their superiority, their graduates finding jobs much easier as the demand for high skills continued to grow. Of the historically black institutions, Turfloop's faculty of mining had overtaken the Wits faculty in private sector endowments and the Fort Hare School of Governance became the premium training ground for political and public sector leadership from the SADC.



“

*A number of industrial processing zones were formed across the country, producing goods for export to the rest of Africa at low cost. Bilateral relations with China saw South Africa doubling its exports.*



Numbers at universities in the second tier continued to dwindle as their students, drawn from the yizo yizo schools who were generally unable to pay their fees.

**2014 and the ruling party celebrated the second decade of freedom with confidence as the export sector boomed and the rate of growth settled at 6%.**

The President was made The Times "Man of the Year". SA was held up by the World Bank as an example that its policies could work if properly implemented.

Recognising that the benefits have not trickled down to the poor as fast as promised, the President promised in her election campaign to raise corporate taxes by one percent to help pay for the introduction of a Basic Income Grant and the reintroduction of free basic services that had been discontinued in 2009.

However, by this point, government was beholden to business and changing gear would mean alienating its most staunch supporters. Coming out of the sharp right turn was proving to be difficult for the majority. For unskilled workers, finding and staying in a job became a battle. Many working class people found themselves in sweatshops in the export oriented industrial processing zones.

**By 2014, the majority of voters were young and first-time voters who did not have the same loyalties as those who had suffered under apartheid.**

They, along with the disappointed older voters, stayed away resulting in the lowest voter turnout in the history of South African democracy. Only those with good fortune celebrated the elections. In the lead-up to the elections, civil society activists and unionists formed a number of radical parties to contest the elections winning a sizeable number of seats. They accuse the ruling party of having turned to the right. The ruling party lost support, but managed to maintain a majority by making inroads into the white constituency.

The results forced government to introduce its election promises of a Basic Income Grant and free basic services. It was, however, too little too late and widespread social protest ensued.

**In 2016, four of the radical parties formed the New Socialist Coalition to contest local government elections, and became the official opposition in many councils.**

Business confidence took a dip and in order to restore confidence, government cracked down on protests to ensure stability. Though South Africa remains a good place to do business, but the inequality gap means that it is a precarious stability.

The 2019 elections are fiercely contested and the New Socialist Coalition won a slight majority on the promise that they would reverse the right turn of the ruling party and create 'JOBS FOR ALL'. Ironically, the same promise made by the ruling party 15 years ago.

Celebrations of the first quarter of a century of democracy in 2019 were muted.

**By 2020, South Africa has a more vibrant economy, but it remains a divided society.**

“

*For unskilled workers, finding and staying in a job became a battle. Many working class people found themselves in sweatshops in the export oriented industrial processing zones*



## Scenario 3: Slow Puncture

The ruling party interpreted its resounding election victory in 2004 as a vote of confidence in the existing government policies and continued therefore on the same trajectory, emphasising that effective implementation would follow. It reaffirmed its commitment to eradicate poverty and unemployment and to ensure a better life for all, but emphasised that Rome was not built in a day.

**Preferring not to 'rock the boat', an incremental approach to development was pursued in an attempt to accommodate conflicting interests in society.**

Inherent contradictions existed as government talked of building a development state but one that would not crowd out the private sector, it talked of growing and developing the economy but according to global rules. It would intervene in the second economy but not without tampering with "what works" in the first economy. It would address the apartheid backlog in social and economic infrastructure and services, but would also stick to tight budget deficit targets.

The state engaged with business through sectoral charters and the Growth and Development Summit process, seeking to convince them to voluntarily increase investment, ownership and job creation in their sectors. This somewhat dispersed industrial strategy enjoyed varied levels of success. The sectors that grew were mainly capital intensive and in export-oriented.

The government's South-South initiative embarked on a decade ago begins to show promise with trading opportunities into Africa, China and Brazil availing themselves.

However, a strong rand, increasing oil prices and rising interest rates and a difficult global trading environment results in business taking an over-cautious stance, holding back on anything but speculative investment.

The public departments, still under pressure to perform, experiment with new public management methodologies but continue to have limited success. Corruption was brought under control.

**Following outcries about the "usual BEE suspects", attempts were made to ensure that more people benefited from empowerment policies.**

This, however, continued to be constrained by access to finance and slow economic growth in general. There were high expectations of the micro finance assistance funds, but quibbling between NGOs and the Department of Trade and Industry resulted in delays of a few years.

**Despite some setbacks, steady growth at between two and three percent a year were maintained and revenues remained stable.**

The largest portion of the budget was focussed on the provision of public goods (housing, roads, schools, clinics and social security). By 2006, income poverty was relieved through social grants to over 9 million people and the Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) provided temporary jobs to tens of thousands of unemployed.



*Empowerment policies continued to be constrained by access to finance and slow economic growth in general.*

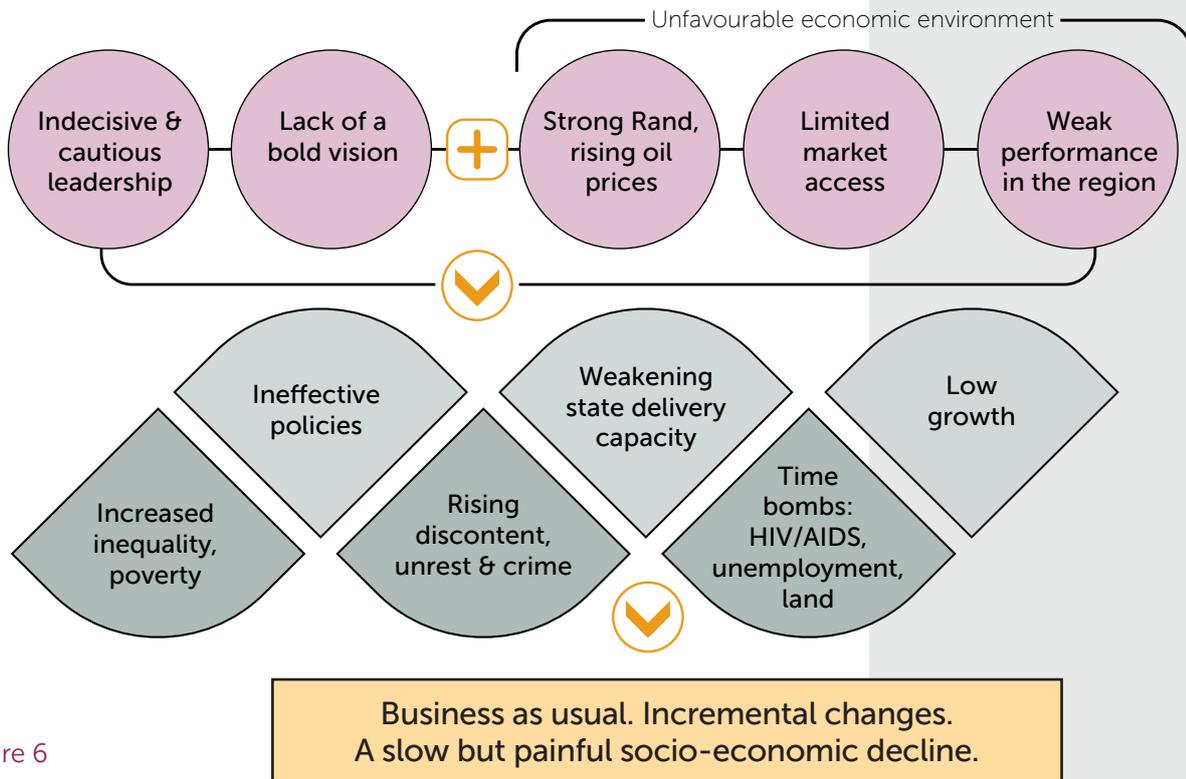


Figure 6  
*Slow Puncture*

### Public investment in infrastructure remained under pressure as social expenditure continued to grow.

Progress made on the provision of basic services (water, sanitation, housing, telephones) was limited, as departments were also required to allocate resources to the maintenance of existing infrastructure and the provision of a basic basket of free services.

HIV infections stabilized and started declining by the end of 2004. The younger generation had been bombarded with AIDS messages and had witnessed those around them falling ill or dying. However, the rate of AIDS deaths accelerates for a brief period due to the progression of the disease and the slow uptake of the ARV rollout programme. The resultant loss of productivity in the private sector and the effects on the public sector in terms of health, education and AIDS orphans prompted more urgent action to train health personnel and ensure affordability of medicines.

### Interest groups and communities mobilised around particular issues and engaged the state.

Those with resources were able to advocate their ideas to parliamentary committees and through the media while poor communities resorted to protest tactics that had the potential to turn violent. The distance between civil society and the ruling party grew during the second decade. Sporadic confrontations occurred between government and the unions, and it became an annual ritual to predict the collapse of the Alliance.





The official opposition began to attract more supporters in the black community while consolidating its position in the white community. The media saw its role as keeping the ruling party on its toes.

**The ruling party won the 2009 elections with a convincing majority, claiming in its campaign that 'we are on-track to meeting our target of halving unemployment and poverty'.**

Under the new president, previously the Minister of Labour, state programmes improved and during the first two quarters of her tenure the growth rate climbed to just above the elusive three percent mark.

A drought just ahead of the 2010 World Cup, followed by floods in the DRC and the SADC region saw a slowdown in growth. South Africa was lucky to record a 2,5% growth rate on the back of a successful World Cup.

At the ruling party's 2012 Conference serious tensions emerged about predictions that the movement will not succeed in meeting its promise to halve unemployment and poverty by 2014.

**The party youth wing and critics of past approaches argued that social expenditure, economic growth and employment had not improved in real terms.**

Celebrations for the second decade of freedom in 2014 were marred by the fact that the Millennium Goals would not be achieved for another decade. In the 2014 elections, a new party, the Civil Society Imbizo, had entered the fray. Its support came from the unions, youth and women's lobbies and various sectoral organisations whose main concerns were poverty and unemployment. Amidst apathy, the ruling party won with a much-reduced majority, the Civil Society Imbizo capturing 10% of the vote.

Over the next five years a weaker ruling party continued to steer a cautious middle path amidst growing discontent from opposition parties, from the community, the markets and investors.

**The younger generations found themselves, by and large, outside the "traditional" modes of participation in society and were largely spectators in the national debates.**

Change has not occurred at a fast enough pace for the 'kwaito generation' who had high expectations of democracy and freedom in the 90s and who are informed by the global culture of instant gratification and quick fixes. For them the current leadership is stuck in the past and is way too cautious.

By 2020, more than a quarter of a decade after its 'miracle' transition, South Africa is still confronted with some of the same challenges faced by the Mandela government in 1994: how to reduce inequality and build a better life for all of its people.

Meantime, the older leadership urges the youth and other disaffected people to focus on the positives, e.g., the general improvement in the quality of basic education, more effective delivery of social grants, universal access to primary health care and HIV/AIDS at manageable levels. More poor people have access to basic services now than 15 years ago, they point out.

**Nevertheless, initiatives to deal with poverty, inequality and unemployment have not been sufficiently bold or imaginative.**

The promised "better life for all" continues to elude millions of people. Many warned 16 years ago that if we simply continued on the same trajectory, the negatives would start to outweigh the positive achievements we made as a society. **Like a slow puncture, you may only notice after a while, but it will eventually slow you down. Instead of heeding this warning, South Africa's political leadership preferred to play it safe and avoided the bold changes that were necessary.**

Public opinion is evident in the shock results of the 2019 elections. For the first time since 1994, no party has an absolute majority in parliament.

**It's up to the post liberation generation to take up the challenge for change.**





## Scenario 4: All Aboard the Dual Carriageway

The 2004 national **elections and reflections on the first decade of freedom sparked a national debate about what needed to be done during the second decade regarding the 'dual economy'**. Oil price shocks, US global hegemonic policies and wars, ethnic violence in Rustenburg, mass protests around housing in Soweto and the increasing toll of the Aids pandemic were further reminders that the opportunity for fundamental change was closing out.

In the meantime South Africa's economic growth from 1991 - 2002 averaged a mere 2.8% per year compared to the over 6% attained by Nigeria, Botswana, Algeria and Mauritius. Poverty levels had not dropped and inequality had in fact increased.

**There was increasing activism and agitation around the lack of delivery of basic services, slow transformation in the economy and the slow pace of land reform.**

**South Africans accepted that political democracy would struggle to flourish in an unequal society where the masses remained poor and unemployed.**

**South Africa was keen to learn from international best practices but realised it also needed to draw on the strengths, experiences and wisdom of its own people and history.**

Strengths such as its active citizenry organised as communities, associations, and sectoral organisations, as social, business and political movements or simply as individuals making a difference.

As 2004 drew to a close, increasing calls were made from different sectors of society for a rapid move towards an inclusive economic and social development path.

A groundswell of public opinion, especially from grassroots level, resulted in the country's leadership increasingly beginning to define **a vision for the society based on the values of ubuntu: self-reliance, solidarity, participation and collaboration. The informal or secondary economy is intervened upon to ensure it can generate sustainable livelihoods.**

**During the first few years much emphasis was placed on strengthening developmental local government and local participation.**

Communities, civil society and local government came together to map out ways of reversing the downward economic cycles in townships, informal settlements, small towns and rural areas. The Integrated Development Plans born at local level influenced national debates and policy, **highlighting the need for a two track path: on the one hand, interventions into the second economy to improve the productivity of the informal sector and build sustainable livelihoods and, on the other hand, the transformation of the first economy so that it could become more inclusive and meet the needs of a developing country.** The approach to building sustainable livelihoods was primarily aimed at increasing the productivity of the 23 million people living below the poverty line. Measures include concerted efforts to support and expand their capabilities (education, health, information and knowledge), their

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*South Africans accepted that political democracy would struggle to flourish in an unequal society where the masses remained poor and unemployed.*



access to finance, as well as their means of living (food, assets and income) through robust government intervention. During the first five years a few lead programmes were prioritised.

**Key among these lead programmes was capacity building for developmental local government.**

It included the redeployment of many senior public servants from provincial and national levels and secondments from the NGO and private sector. This developmental role of local government was aimed mainly at improving planning, ensuring integrated service delivery and mobilising social capital, i.e. within communities to identify needs, agree on priorities and to ensure that programmes reached the target groups.

The programmes coordinated and implemented at local level included an expanded public works programme, registering all people eligible for social assistance and free basic services, providing common land for food gardens in urban areas, negotiations with farmers around land availability for redistribution and the provision of agricultural support services.

Conscious efforts were also made to move away from the geography of apartheid separate development by ensuring that new housing settlements were built near social and economic amenities, reducing transport and other service costs.

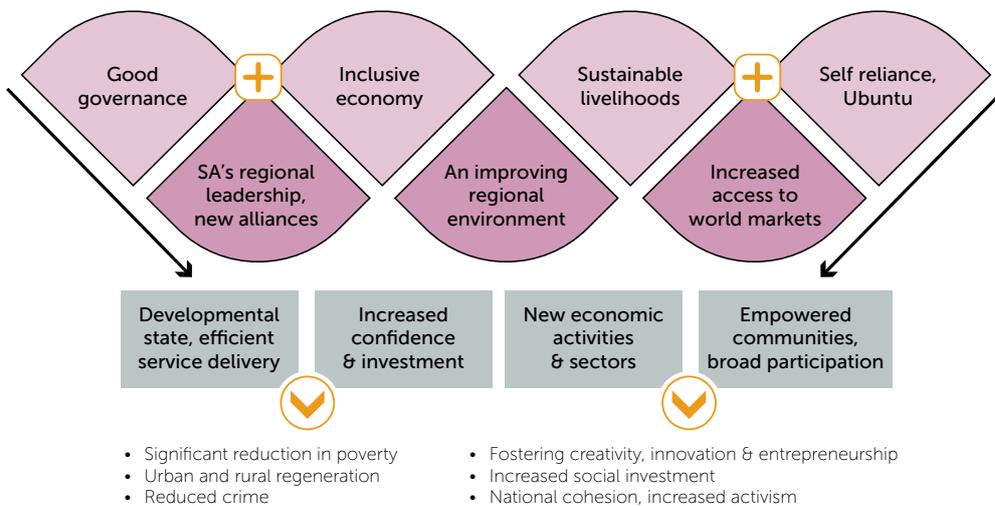
An effective anti-retroviral drug programme became universally available as the health system was strengthened and became more effective. Local government, working with Community Development Workers, NGOs and CBOS, played an important role in initiating, coordinating and supporting prevention, treatment access and compliance and home-based care programmes and ensuring access to sufficient nutrition required to take the treatment.

The state and private sector invested in establishing R&D centers.



*The developmental role of local government was aimed mainly at improving planning, ensuring integrated service delivery, and mobilising social capital.*

**ALL ABOARD THE DUAL CARRIAGEWAY!**



**A rapidly growing and inclusive economy underpinned by the principles Ubuntu, Self-sustainability, Solidarity, Participation and Cooperation between all Sectors**

Figure 7

*All Aboard the Dual Carriageway*



The state and private sector invested in establishing R&D centers. This enabled South Africa to later become a leader in addressing new ways of doing things and the following projects emerged:

- Two of the metros collaborated to develop energy generators using wind and in a number of the rural development nodes in Limpopo, entire villages shifted to **solar power for its energy** needs.

Early childhood development centres were set up in communities, increasing the school-readiness of children and freeing parents to engage in economic activity. Community food gardens, developed on household plots, at schools and pre-schools and on common land made available by local councils contributed to food security. Strengthened local governments with access to funding helped mobilize the community into participative self-reform. SME's are

used as the basis for the development of infrastructure, housing cooperatives assist in overcoming the backlog in housing. Land reform permits small-scale agriculture and together with community gardening projects helps provide food security.

Concerted efforts were made to improve the public sector at all levels bringing it in line with the new vision. Changes were made from the top with pressure coming from citizens who refused to accept poor services or corrupt practices.



In Mpumalanga, Free State and KwaZulu-Natal, successful steel manufacturing projects started in 2007 grew tremendously by 2011. Products ranged from building materials to ploughs.



An aggressive agricultural reform programme saw a sharp increase in small-scale and organic products for local as well as export markets. Local processing of staple foods like mielie meal, vegetables, flour and samp led to more affordable prices.



A major Black Economic Empowerment player partnered with stokvels in Langa, Kwa Mashu, Galeshewe, Boipatong and Mdantsane to form community banks, which provided finance at competitive rates to local businesses. These successes prompted other communities to follow suit.



Local communities began harnessing indigenous knowledge. For example, the beneficiation of aloe grown in the Karoo resulted in Proudly South African brands in cosmetics and tequila.



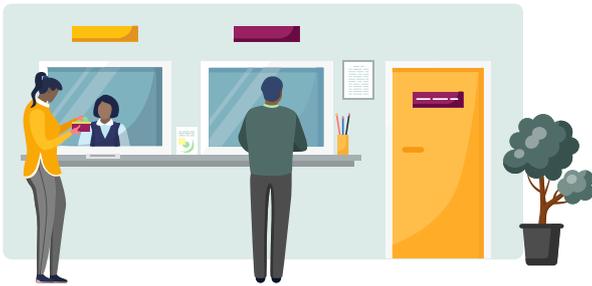
Community housing cooperatives, accessing state housing subsidies and finance from banks, become the main vehicles for meeting the housing backlog.

Some energy projects grew into large-scale projects while others were used as pilot studies by the Department of Minerals and Energy to determine their sustainability.



**By 2015, all communities in South Africa were energised by local power sources at relatively low cost. South Africa received a UN award for low-tech innovations that were widely used in the developing world.**

Development programmes including training, learnerships and the provision of targeted infrastructure provided opportunities for unemployed youth to engage in productive activity. The youth, accessing funding nationally through dedicated youth development agencies municipal development grants became the champions of community projects.



**Multi purpose community centres (MPCCs) were established in every municipality to disseminate information on plans and programmes of the local municipality and community groups as well as general information on government services.**

The MPCCs provided access to the latest ICT infrastructure and innovations, information on training, education, entrepreneurship programmes and services. They served as points of application for state and private sector credit schemes and venues for local markets.

Meanwhile in the first economy, the sector charters aimed at developing a Black Economic Empowerment and growth strategies were integrated into a unified industrial and growth strategy aimed at diversification of the economy.

**A range of sectors where South Africa has competitive advantage – such as health services, research and development, cultural industries, tourism, food processing, ICT, beneficiation, manufacturing and so forth were identified and supported by government.**

The Industrial Development Corporation, the relevant SETAs and universities working with research councils supported the sectoral strategies.

Initial investment by the private sector into the new strategy was cautious, but as increased public sector expenditure in the second economy grew the internal market, the private sector steadily increased its investment in the economy as a whole. Government assisted by creating incentives for the private sector in terms of training and skilling of staff. Further incentives and joint partnerships were created for new business development and government brought in more funding. The financial sector agreed to a policy of community reinvestment and met the initial targets agreed to as part of the financial sector charter.

“

*The youth, accessing funding nationally through dedicated youth development agencies municipal development grants became the champions of community projects.*







As people looked to their local councils and MPs for delivery in terms of priorities which they were part of setting, there was an increase in the sense of accountability between councillor and constituency. To take this spirit further, South Africa also adopted a mixed proportional representation and constituency based system at national and provincial government levels after the 2014 elections.

As the institutions of the state, including the criminal justice system and various oversight bodies, acted more visibly in the interests of ordinary people, confidence in these institutions grew.

The changes in South Africa were possible through the deliberate cultivation of a culture of dialogue, participation, responsibility and collective action that substituted the individualistic “get rich quick” culture.

**By 2020 South Africans of all ages, social status and national groups celebrate 25 years of freedom and positive change.**

The political miracle of the negotiated political settlement in the 90’s is followed by a social and economic miracle. It has eliminated the apartheid backlogs in social infrastructure, services, education and skills.

Poverty has fallen to 15% and GDP growth has doubled over two decades.

To live in a township or in rural areas is no longer a sentence to poverty and depravation. **The dual economy of old rich and poor became a dual carriageway, with the mix between formal and local community and cooperative sectors playing a complementary and reinforcing role, ensuring that all South Africans are on the train to prosperity.**

The President, in her state of the nation address in 2020, proudly announced that for the first time, not a single South African was living in destitution, that South Africa had at last won freedom from hunger and want for all.

**Based on a solid value system, South Africa had moved from a situation of poverty and inequality and stagnant growth to a country that had tackled distributive inequality and achieved economic stability through a structural transformation of the fundamentals of the economy.**

South Africans are proud to be building a just, non-racial and non-sexist society, where opportunities for a better life are within reach of all South Africans.



*The changes in South Africa were possible through the deliberate cultivation of a culture of dialogue, participation, responsibility and collective action that substituted the individualistic “get rich quick” culture.*

# The Future will be *What we Make of it*

## Four different endings, four different paths.

The group agreed that the extent to which we have bold, ethical, service-orientated and visionary leadership in all sectors and at all levels of our society will play an important role in determining the paths we chose and whether we succeed or fail as a nation.

National cohesion, we believe, can only flourish on a strong foundation of development, and the eradication of poverty, economic growth, social activism, democracy, solidarity and participation. A *conditio sine qua non* is the need for collective appreciation of the complex challenges facing our society and that to address them may require changing attitudes and direction. Without a shared appreciation of the challenges we face, partnerships will be difficult to build. We also appreciate that high levels of maturity will need to be exercised in arriving at the trade-offs that will inevitably need to be made.

We call for enduring partnerships seeking win-win solutions but we appreciate that the politically and economically strong will have to support the weak for the optimal development of our society. A caring society will only emerge if we forge such symbiotic partnerships based on social solidarity and a common desire to uplift our society and reduce its inequalities.

As a group, we hope that these scenarios will contribute towards debates as we look forward to our second decade of freedom. We hope our scenarios will force others, like the process did for us, to think outside the conventions and to examine innovative solutions to the immense problems that our society faces.

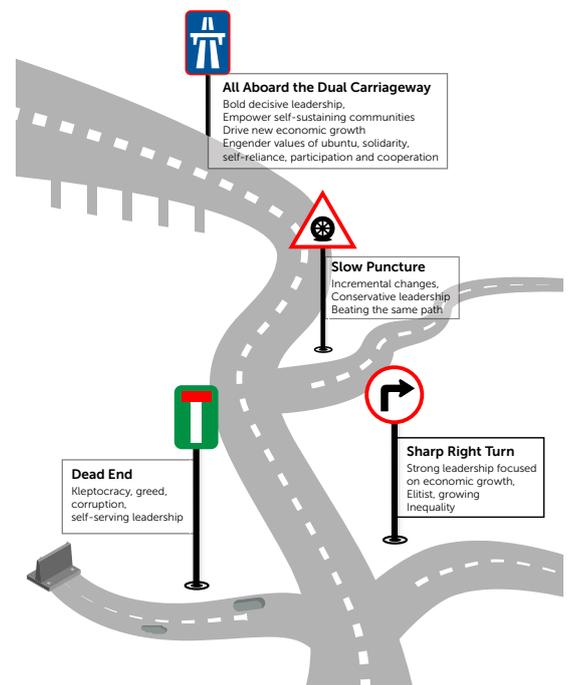
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*The extent to which we have bold, ethical, service-orientated and visionary leadership in all sectors and at all levels of our society will play an important role in determining the paths we chose and whether we succeed or fail as a nation.*

## More on the AFLI website

This document is the Summary of the SA2020 Scenarios. For the full report, PowerPoint presentation, and the short and long videos, please [visit the SA2020 page on the AFLI website](#).

Should you want to engage further, [please email us](#).



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 people who voluntarily addressed the  
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 thinking that went into the development  
 of the scenarios:

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### Hosts

**Mont Fleur Conference Centre**,  
 Stellenbosch  
*Nobody could wish for more caring  
 and helpful hosts, and such inspiring  
 surroundings in which to "create the  
 future".*