

Conclusions and Recommendations

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The **societal objectives** for determining how natural resource wealth is to be used to promote national wellbeing were set with relative clarity in the five years following the 1994 transition of power, and were given further precision thereafter. Such objectives were embedded in the Bill of Rights, translated into the Reconstruction and Development Programme, reflected in GEAR, the nation's macroeconomic strategy, and further clarified in sector-specific acts and policies. Clarity on those societal objectives has allowed policy-makers to shift their attention to determining what **principles** and **instruments** should be established to guide the use of energy, water and land in the construction of a new South Africa.

However, as the three summaries presented above amply illustrate, developing and implementing principles and instruments for these three resources have met with checkered success over the past years. For example, defining principles and instruments for the water sector has been the resource area where the greatest achievements have been registered thus far. The White Paper on National Water Policy (1996) and subsequent Water Law Principles (1996) had been promulgated into law and now form the basis of all policy-making. Development of principles for the use of water, for instance, has reached a level of clarity where primary attention has now shifted to improving specific instruments, notably pricing instruments, and to supporting the creation of appropriate sub-national institutions such as the Water Management Areas and Catchment Management Agencies.

As regards energy, similar clarity has now emerged concerning the principles or boundary conditions that should guide structural change of the energy sector and expansion of energy generation and distribution. Principles for guiding the development of each sub-sector, ranging from electricity and liquid fuels to renewables, have been established and reflect broader objectives of promoting access, improving governance and ensuring environmental quality while promoting growth and diversification. However, more ambitious plans to translate those principles into effective programmes and refine specific instruments have run into problems primarily on the level of resource availability. Given that subsidies from the national budget are required to extend services to the poor, diversify energy sources and

shift to environmentally sensitive energy sources, delays in pursuing those objectives are anticipated in coming years.

Of the three resources considered above, it is the land question that poses the most serious challenges to fulfilling the societal objectives agreed upon. It is certain that general principles have been established regarding promoting access and ownership of land; moreover, three specific policy instruments, restitution, redistribution and tenure reform, have been identified to implement societal objectives. As the summary presented above documents, the instruments have fallen far short of delivering the promised outcomes. On one level, the lack of financial resources for implementing the instruments more widely has severely eroded prospects of fulfilling established objectives. Even more fundamental, however, is the political difficulties in pursuing those policies, which may be so high that the government will remain unwilling to promote the agreed-upon instruments. The land issue is testing, and will continue to test, the priorities and commitments of the ANC government with regards to the distribution of this asset on which the wellbeing of millions of rural poor depends.

Below, the authors of the sections on water, energy and land offer specific recommendations that have to be implemented in order to move forward in fulfillment of the societal objectives established during the post-1994 period.

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ENERGY

Most of the energy policy changes are well in process, although a few are awaiting the results from pilot projects. The most important policy gaps at this stage are considered to be the following:

- A level playing field for decision-making must be established at the national level by including external costs as shadow costs for all planning and decision-making. If this is not done, decisions on future supply capacity, that will have to be taken in the near future, will favour coal-fired electricity generation. It is recommended that these external costs be implemented immediately for national decision-making purposes. Actual external costing can be implemented progressively over the medium term of say ten years in the form of an environmental tax.
- Dedicated policies for renewable energy, energy supply diversification and energy efficiency by end users must be developed and implemented, and have to be funded in part by environmental taxes.
- Increased resources and more focused attention from government agencies must be given to integrated energy planning, including for the collection of suitable data and effective communication. Although the management of the health and environmental impacts formed one of the five policy objectives of the White Paper on Energy Policy, no visible progress has been made in this regard. The implications for increased health and environmental costs differentially distributed among the population are clear and disturbing.
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- The poor thermal performance of low-income dwellings and the availability of suitable low-cost appliances must be addressed with urgency. The implications are the continuation of the higher than required expenditure on energy and local air pollution for these low-income households. It is recommended that the policy discussions be accelerated and that an appropriate policy be developed and implemented as soon as possible. This needs to incorporate the actual electricity demand side benefits that need to be established by means of suitable research.
- Greater resources must be directed to providing an integrated supply of appropriate forms of energy, appliances and user education for rural areas. This includes the faster rollout of the solar home system project, the sustainable supply of firewood production and use and the supply of thermal sources of energy and their appliances at low cost.

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WATER

The most important issues are:

- The water sector needs to pay attention urgently to the development of capacity: at the operational level, the capacity to further develop and administer the new policy and regulations, and at the strategic level, the capacity to refine and adapt policy as we learn from implementation, or as social, economic and environmental imperatives change over time.
- Stronger links need to be made with other sectoral policy processes through better integrated planning at national and provincial levels, in particular with the agriculture, land reform, water services and local government sectors. While the Integrated Development Planning process potentially provides the vehicle through which to achieve this, the capacity to understand and apply the IDP principles correctly is limited.
- Education and awareness programmes, reinforced by appropriate pricing strategies, need to be aggressively pursued to generate an understanding of water scarcity and the value of water. While at school level, there has been significant success with education and awareness, the same cannot be said of society in general.
- In order to avoid potential conflict and expedite planning and development in shared river basins, equitable trans-boundary agreements should be pursued that encompass shared local development, as well as social and economic objectives.
- Planning for the impacts of climate change on water availability has not been given sufficient attention at national, provincial and local levels. This needs to be underpinned by reliable scientific information.
- The development and support of management capacity at local



government level will be the key to success and sustainability of water services and the free basic water initiative.

- Public-private partnerships between government and industry, beyond those associated with the delivery of water services, would help to support water resources management functions through provision of capacity and data. Partnership approaches should promote self-regulation on a sectoral basis, to ease the administrative burden on under-resourced regulatory agencies.

LAND

The South African land reform programme has not lived up to its promise to transform land-holding, combat poverty and revitalise the rural economy.

As stated above, the South African land reform programme has not lived up to its promise to transform land-holding, combat poverty and revitalise the rural economy. The cautious and conservative approach taken by the South African government since 1994 is unlikely to achieve these objectives within the foreseeable future. Land reform inevitably raises fundamental issues of economic political power, and there is no historical precedent anywhere in the world for a consensual, market-based land reform of the kind being attempted in South Africa. The very limited potential of the current policy raises the question of what might be the consequences of perpetuating the present (or even deteriorating) social and economic conditions in the rural areas.

In order to avoid an escalation of rural conflict, a number of policy changes can be recommended, all within the current constitutional framework. These can be divided into three broad categories—provision of land, agrarian reform and an increase in budgets. It is not suggested that the state must take it upon itself to provide all of these on its own, but there is an unavoidable duty on the state to use its authority and resources to ensure that these objectives are achieved.

Provision of Land

Provision of land on a large scale, within a reasonable timeframe, will require a specific, centrally co-ordinated strategy for land acquisition, that goes beyond the limits of the 'willing-seller, willing-buyer' approach. Innovative ways will have to be found to facilitate the transfer of substantial areas of land in places of highest demand and in parcels that meet the needs of a variety of land users. In addition, much more effective means have to be found to protect people's rights to land that they already occupy, both on commercial farms and in the former homelands.

Large-scale transfers of land will require much greater involvement than hitherto by a range of actors, including provincial and local government, landowners, non-governmental organisations and landless people themselves. It will require a more interventionist approach

by the state, both in the acquisition of land and in the design of viable land-use projects. Such an interventionist approach could involve the state in earmarking land in areas of greatest need, negotiating with local landowners for an orderly transfer of land, with appropriate compensation, and acquiring sequestered properties from the Land Bank and other financial institutions. This does not necessarily require expropriation, but the failure to consider the use of expropriation to further the ends of redistribution ensures the perpetuation of the current piece-meal approach to land acquisition and rules out the co-ordinated approach to development and resettlement that is so urgently needed.

Specific measures will also be required to provide land for particular categories of users. Farm dwellers may require expropriation of existing dwellings and additional agricultural land on the farms on which they reside. Residents of the former homelands will require access to state land within and around the homelands, and to private farms in adjoining areas. Indeed, there is a strong argument for the systematic purchasing of all suitable farms adjoining densely populated areas. In peri-urban areas, there is a strong argument for the expansion of the municipal commonage programme (currently restricted to just a few of the more rural provinces), in order to give township residents access to small garden plots or grazing land on a rental basis. Where necessary, the state must also be prepared to subdivide acquired farms into appropriately sized parcels, something that has not featured in policy to date. Finally, the state should reduce the highly complex processes of beneficiary selection and project planning, and its insistence on commercially oriented agriculture. Land should be made easily available to a wide range of users, including subsistence producers, and not only those able to come up with a 'business plan'.

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Agrarian reform

In order for land reform to result in sustainable livelihoods for the mass of the rural poor, provision of land will have to be supported by a wide-ranging programme of agrarian reform. This should address key areas such as access to inputs, restructuring of produce markets, agricultural extension services and training, provision of transport and ploughing services, provision of credit, development of rural infrastructure and support to farmers organisations and co-operatives. Such a range of reforms cannot be brought about through the free market alone, and will therefore require a greater degree of state intervention, and investment in the economy than has been the case since 1994. Ways must also be found of pressuring the private sector to redirect resources towards previously neglected areas, and to empower farmers organisations and emerging black entrepreneurs to run their own services. Such intervention must include direct support to small farmers—in the form of subsidised credit and ploughing services—and cannot be expected to leave the established structures of the broader agro-economy untouched. This will require a degree of political will, and a reversal of free-market ideology, that is not currently in evidence. Some priority areas can be defined. These should be:

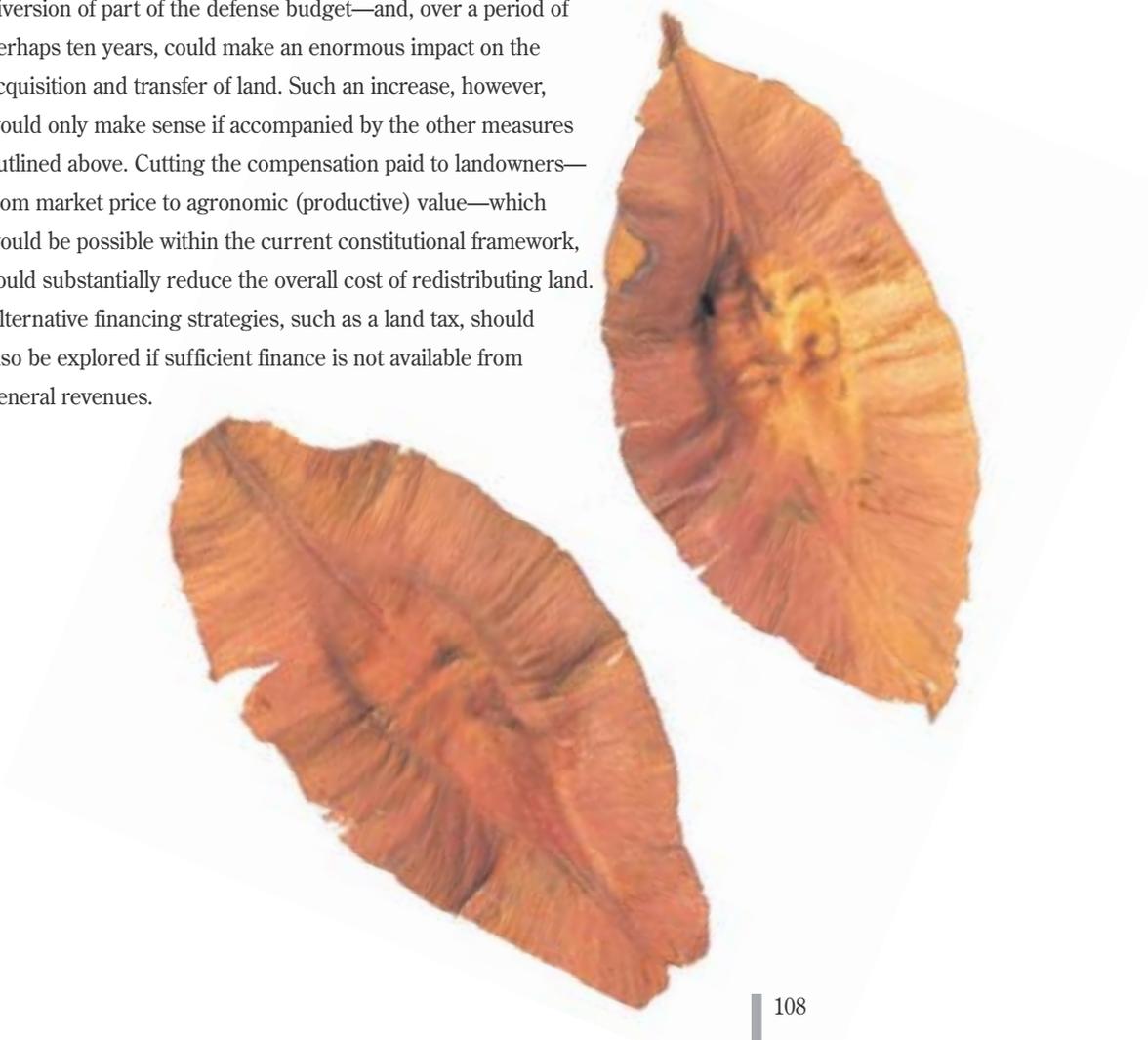
- reversal of the recent cuts in agricultural extension services inside and outside the former homelands;
- support to rural entrepreneurs wishing to provide mechanical services;
- access to irrigation water and infrastructure at below market rates (at least for a limited period);
- wider availability of credit at reduced rates; and
- restructuring of the large, monopolistic agri-businesses in order to meet the needs of small-scale farmers in previously neglected areas.

International experience shows that the small-scale agricultural sector is closely linked to the wider rural economy in terms of combining on-farm and off-farm employment, and in the exchange of goods and services. A successful agrarian reform will therefore require a substantial, national programme of rural development—something that has been entirely lacking in government policy to date.

Increased Budgets

The current annual budget for the Department of Land Affairs is in the order of one billion Rand, and the amount available for land redistribution and tenure reform combined is approximately one-third of this. A trebling of the DLA budget would amount to approximately one percent of the current non-interest annual budget of the South African government. Such an amount could possibly be found within the national budget—say by a diversion of part of the defense budget—and, over a period of perhaps ten years, could make an enormous impact on the acquisition and transfer of land. Such an increase, however, would only make sense if accompanied by the other measures outlined above. Cutting the compensation paid to landowners—from market price to agronomic (productive) value—which would be possible within the current constitutional framework, could substantially reduce the overall cost of redistributing land. Alternative financing strategies, such as a land tax, should also be explored if sufficient finance is not available from general revenues.

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FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

Policy Choices and Trade-offs

The prevailing public consensus has affirmed the criteria of equity, sustainability, and efficiency as those standards by which policies and instrumentalities must be designed in building a new social order. Indeed, the century-long experience of segregation and coercion demonstrates all too clearly the dead-end character of a government, economy, and social order that do not embrace and use those criteria in a dynamic, creative manner.

Despite agreement on and explicit use of those criteria, South African policy-makers have, nonetheless, a range of options from which they can choose as regards ways of strengthening particular social and economic groups in South African society as they implement their policy prescriptions. At this time, the essence of such policy decisions and trade-offs pertain to how the ruling party will try to expand or curtail the influence of major social and economic groups in South Africa, among which are included the white corporate elite, the black majority, and the emergent black economic elite. For example, rekindling growth and increasing internal and international competitiveness is the white corporate elite's primary concern at this time, particularly in light of anaemic growth rates and adverse external economic conditions that have undermined profitability in many economic sectors for an extended period of time. Thus, as long as political and economic reforms contribute to stimulating economic growth, a working partnership among the economic elite, the ANC, and the black majority can prevail and thereby contribute to social stability. Further, to the degree that redistributing resources and providing opportunities to the black majority contribute directly to strengthening internal demand and stimulating production over a sustained period of time, prospects for social peace can be reinforced.

As documented in the above analyses, most of the policy instruments currently being designed for energy and water encourage co-operation among these basic social groups in South African society. The considerable progress being made in designing policies and

instrumentalities for these two resources should be considered to be a reflection of the complementarity of these social groups' interests at this particular time. Extending access of the rural and urban poor to energy grids provides benefits for all sectors of society, despite possible differential pricing regimes and burdens. Moreover, as expansion of the liquid fuels and other energy sub-sectors as required by law could provide economic opportunities for the emergent black economic elite, redistribution of the currently concentrated economic wealth in this sector is not required and hence political opposition remains muted. Provision of water services to the black majority is likewise a proposal that will bring benefits to many groups in South African society, including to corporate interests. The difficult trade-offs in the redistribution of water access currently taking place are primarily a response to unsustainable policies formulated in past decades. Corrections now made clearly benefit the water-scarce country as a whole, despite specific sectoral dislocations and adjustments that must be made. It is the land question that brings into focus the divergence of interests among those three constituencies. White commercial farmers look critically at further efforts to redistribute land to the landless African poor; concomitantly, traditional homelands leaders, seeking to protect apartheid-era privileges, oppose tenure reforms and land redistribution. In favour of accelerated and expanded land redistribution are, of course, the millions of poor Africans, though still weakly organised and largely underrepresented, who are unable to survive on their current land and who cannot find employment in urban areas. Protecting the interests of the rural poor also requires a far more extensive investment programme in infrastructure, credit, technology and extension services that will accompany land redistribution initiatives.

While the emergent black economic elite may have no direct or tangible stake in the agricultural sector, its interests are, nonetheless, bound up with basic policy directions regarding land and agricultural development. The emerging elite's basic interest is tied to the fact that investing scarce financial resources to address the needs of the rural poor signifies reducing the resources available to create opportunities for the

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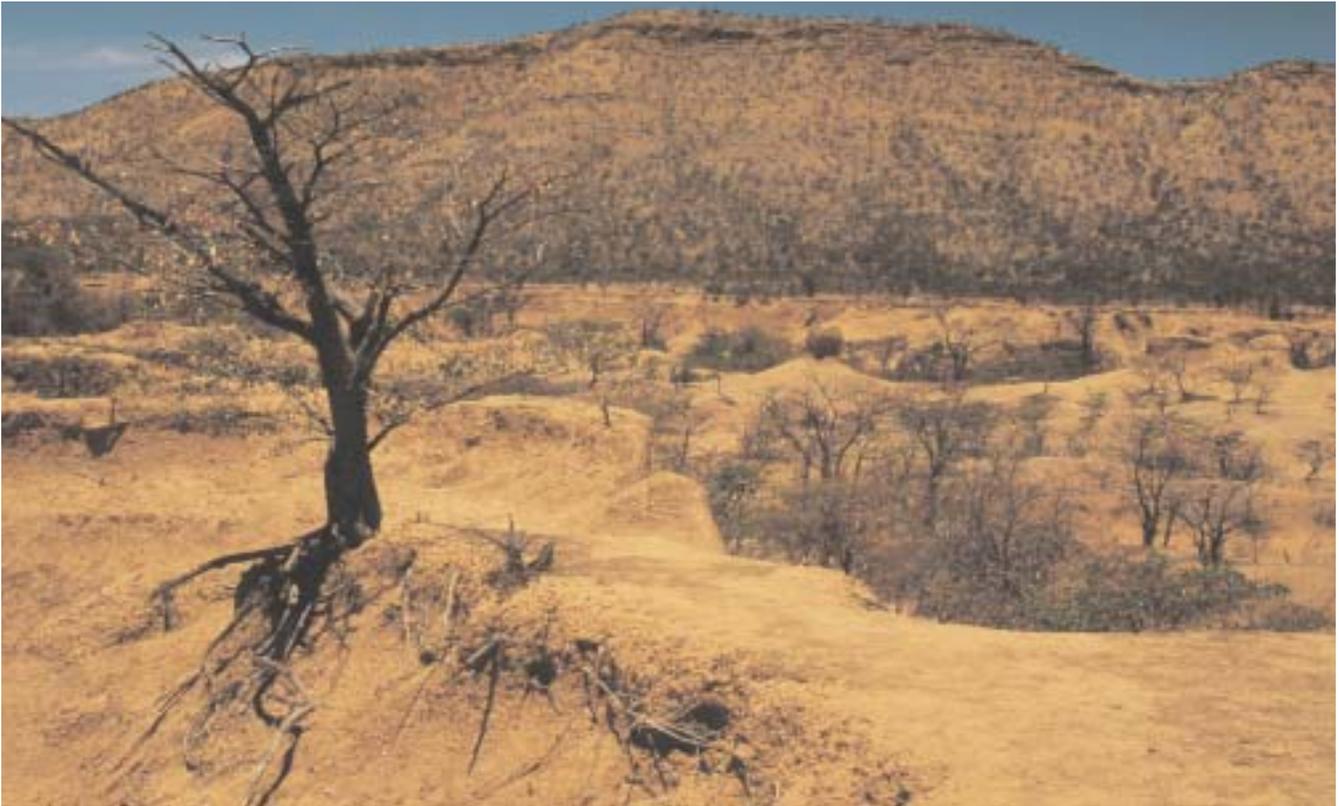
In virtually all other countries, however, the central role of overarching societal objectives in shaping the outcome of neoliberal policies has largely been left aside.



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black elite in other economic sectors. Strengthening the black economic elite requires considerable investment resources channelled through subsidies and investment opportunities of many kinds and provided over an extended period of time. Hence, decisions taken regarding the future access to land and investment resources in rural areas will have considerable consequences for key constituencies of the ANC and opposition parties for years to come.

The playing out of decisions regarding these natural resource sectors will reveal the longer strategic interests and economic blueprint of the governing party. Are the political leaders of the ANC willing to sacrifice the needs of the rural poor for the interests of pursuing economic designs for themselves and their close allies that do not figure explicitly in the programmes of the RDP? To what degree do those designs reinforce or diminish the dominance of the white corporate sector? And, to what degree do those plans require continued sacrifices for the poor black majority in coming years? From these questions flows the following: how long will the poor black majority be willing to absorb such sacrifices? Answers to all these questions will be years in coming but the deepening of economic difficulties may bring these difficult decisions more sharply into focus in the near future.



Lessons Pertinent to Taming the Neoliberal Model

While this publication has focused on the dynamics internal to South Africa as regards determining how natural resource wealth will contribute to the country's development, the reader should keep in mind that parallel processes are occurring throughout the world as neoliberal economic policies take hold in countries both North and South. In virtually all other countries, however, the central role of overarching societal objectives in shaping the outcome of neoliberal policies has largely been left aside. Instead, what has transpired in most countries is that the basic economic principles of the neoliberal regime—including privatisation, market liberalisation, opening borders to the flow of international capital, and export-led growth—have become the determinants of national economic policy. Consequently, other societal concerns and needs are subordinated to the pursuit of general tenets of what has now become neoliberal economic orthodoxy. Gone from the national dialogue is the basic question of how will trade liberalisation, privatisation and the diminished role of the state contribute to our national development process and our priorities?

Similarly absent is the question of whether expanded trade and privatisation will protect the nation's environmental resources and promote social equity? Instead of posing questions such as these, most governments are required by international financial institutions to demonstrate how far

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they have gone in complying with the implementation of strictures of the neoliberal model as a requisite for accessing capital markets.

Such is the case with neighbouring countries to the north, each highly dependent on natural resource wealth, that have undergone structural reforms over the past decades under the expectation that neoliberal policies would improve national productivity and generate more wealth for national development purposes. While governments of the region have pursued those reform programmes with varying degrees of discipline and commitment during the past 20 years, seldom has the question been posed as to what the unifying societal objectives of embarking on such reforms are. Even less frequently have responses been articulated that were agreed upon throughout society. Instead, complying with standards of fiscal discipline, privatising marketing boards, opening mining and tourism sectors to foreign investors and providing subsidies for export-led commodity production have become answers in and of themselves. Never mind the fact that the new economic discipline has promoted new relations of corruption and collusion between the national political elite and international economic actors, generating few if any benefits for the millions of urban and rural poor.

Without diminishing the staggering social and human costs required to bring about the political transformation of South Africa, an enduring benefit of the years of struggle is the very act of rendering explicit and transparent the societal objectives that will guide the construction of a new South Africa. As other countries are restructured in conformity with the tenets of neoliberal economics, the people and government of South Africa can ask and demand responses to the question as to how such policies will contribute to the fulfillment of the societal objectives agreed to by all sectors of the South African society. There is no doubt that the South African experience can provide invaluable lessons for policy-makers and groups from civil society as they struggle to formulate policies and principles that will promote the best interests of their own nation as the neoliberal model seeks to impose its own objectives and values in countries around the world.

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