
AN ASSESSMENT OF OPTIONS TO ACHIEVE FOOD SECURITY IN SOUTH AFRICA

Prof. P.J. Nieuwenhuizen
Department of Economics, Rand Afrikaans University

INTRODUCTION

The basic premise of this paper is that national food self-sufficiency and food security for each and every South African, or for that matter Southern Africa, is a fundamental condition for the realisation and maintenance of a workable socio-economic order.

The fulfilment of this critical pre-condition in the circumstances of the African continent with its harsh climate, poor and fragile natural resources, relative isolation from the world's markets, notably its funds markets, and a socio-ideological culture totally averse to the demands of modern technology, will require a macro-economic approach fundamentally different from what has been attempted since 1652, inclusive of the present Government's philosophy underlying the Reconstruction and Development concept.

A second premise of this paper is merely a re-statement of the general postulate that no developing country, especially a developing country such as South Africa with its very outspoken dualistic economy, can achieve sustainable economic growth and the upliftment of its people without the assistance of a strong, dynamic agricultural sector having as a major objective the preservation of its natural resources, especially its environment.

A third premise of this paper, emanating from the two postulated above, is that food security cannot be purchased from the outside world, even if such a world is stunted by its surpluses. Nowhere in the world has it been possible for a country to secure food security by relying on its gold or national currency to purchase such security in the world market. This is not to say that a country should be totally self-sufficient as far as its food and agricultural raw material needs are concerned.

The popular opinion often encountered in South Africa, sometimes also in official circles, that conditions for the establishment and maintenance

of a sound and viable agricultural industry are so adverse that it cannot survive, let to say flourish, outside the hot house of Government or the grace of the tax payer/consumer, has no merit. Economic development, also of a country's agricultural industry, is not dependent on what can be obtained from the outside world but on what is being done with the means at hand. No tariff protection or subsidy or hand-outs in the form of government grants or tax rebates is ever to the advantage of a country, the entrepreneur or the worker. Such initial favourable cost or revenue differentials as may emanate from the incentive or protective device are almost immediately being eroded by one or other of the production factors pocketing the state transfer, or its negation by in-efficient management or a monopolistic supplier. The negative implications of the mis-allocation of the community's resources by such favouritism are not only great and non-affordable, but very destructive of the environment, inclusive of the foreign investor and the agent of technology. Africa, with its fragile resources and environment, bears ample testimony to the fate befalling a continent averse to the needs of the investor and technology.

National food self-sufficiency and food security for all South Africans is only achievable, considering the severe climatic, soil and other natural constraints by the application of technology and scientific management. It is of course evident that the utilisation of large tracts of South Africa is in need of macro-management considering the desertification of the sub-continent and the implications of this process for human welfare and conflict, and the preservation of the eco-environment. Traditional farming, whether practised by the White or the Black entrepreneur, is simply non-affordable, considering its socio-environmental cost, let to say its negative output as far as national food self-sufficiency and security are concerned.

The collapse of the world's raw materials economy, i.e. its mining and agricultural economies, since the early seventies, would seem to

have had almost no impact on the industrial countries. The uncoupling of the raw materials economies from the industrial economies is a structural change of great significance, also for South Africa with its heavy dependence on agricultural and mining exports. The implications of this fundamental structural change for the economic future of South Africa has yet to be assessed. It is, however, evident that the erosion of the country's comparative strength, notably in the minerals field, may have far reaching effects on the rate of economic growth, employment, domestic strife and conflict, and, even more important, self-sufficiency and food security.

Import markets for food and agricultural raw materials have all but disappeared. The sharp decline in the terms of trade of agricultural products in the domestic and world markets have confronted the macro-policy maker as well as the entrepreneur with questions with very few answers.

As early as 1986 (Peter Ducker, 1989, p.7) referred to the policy dilemma faced by even the major industrial powers as a result of the fundamental shift in the terms of trade of primary products. "For two centuries, the United States has made maintenance of open markets for its farm products and raw materials central to its international trade policy. Does this still make sense, or does the United States have to accept that foreign markets for its foodstuffs and raw materials are in a long-term and irreversible decline? Conversely, does it still make sense for Japan to base its international economic policy on the need to earn enough foreign exchange to pay for imports of foodstuffs and raw materials? From now on, the fundamentals of economic policy are certain to come under increasing criticism in these two countries - and in all other developed countries as well. These fundamentals will, moreover, also come under increasingly intense scrutiny in the Third World countries. If primary products are becoming of marginal importance to the economies of the developed world, traditional development theories and policies are losing their foundations."

Consider the South African economy with its mineral wealth becoming more and more marginalised in a global context, and the other primary sector, namely agriculture, becoming more and more eroded by climatic adversaries, deteriorating terms of trade and experimentation by an ideology having as an objective affirmative action in a field known for its harshness and great risk.

SOUTH AFRICAN AGRICULTURE IN A WORLD AGRICULTURAL MARKET IN DISARRAY

South Africa can obviously no longer hope to finance its development by means of food and other raw material exports. It will also only have access to development funding by the World Bank on condition of its overall development policies conforming to criteria laid down by the real powers in the World Bank, i.e. supranational decision-making. The advent of the global economy has thus resulted in the national economy being no longer autonomous as far as decision-making is concerned. Economic analysis and decision-making is no longer the exclusive domain of the individual nation state.

Peter Drucker (Idem, p. 13) suggests that: "From now on, any country - but also any business, that wants to prosper will have to accept that it is the world economy that leads and that domestic economic policies will succeed only if they strengthen, or at least do not impair the country's international competitive position."

An important characteristic of economic growth is that as economic growth occurs, the forces that result in such growth are as likely to affect agriculture as they affect the rest of the economy (D.G. Johnson, 1991, p.86). Agriculture therefore tends to become more like the industrial sector of the economy. Land as a factor of production and a restraint on the expansion of output declines as mechanical power replaces human and animal power, as fertilizers substitute for land and as animal production improves because of better disease control and better understanding of the principles of nutrition breeding and general care. Important is especially the fact that agriculture has adopted new inputs at a rate equivalent to the rate of adoption in the rest of the economy. Growth of demand for food in the industrial economies is so slow that only a moderate expansion of output is required in order to maintain stable farm prices. The moderate expansion in output does not require employing more labour in the circumstances prevailing in more and more countries, inclusive of South Africa. As elsewhere in the economy the pressure on agriculture to function with less and less labour is a phenomenon that cannot be reversed. This is true of agriculture on the micro as well as the

macro level. No government policy can reverse this trend without damaging national food self-sufficiency.

Of great concern to the macro policy maker is the ostensible anomaly between national food self-sufficiency and food security; the latter being a function of personal or family purchasing power, i.e. employment and/or the ability to earn income in a productive capacity. Deficient food security because of purchasing power constraints should be seen as a phenomenon threatening the whole of South Africa, especially under the auspices of the political order of democracy and communal decision-taking; i.e. a political order characterised by a much greater area of non-decision-making.

A feature that has also become of great concern to policy makers as well as the agricultural entrepreneur, is the speed at which changes take place in agriculture in response to the large and numerous adjustments introduced in the global economy by technology and the internationalisation of the world's money and capital markets. Policy makers and entrepreneurs who fail to recognise the scope and speed of adjustment in agriculture are at great risk with very little, if any, backup. The ability of a country's agricultural industry to adjust to changing conditions is a highly desirable feature despite the fact that this very ability may negate governmental efforts to improve farm incomes. This very feature of the ag-

ricultural industry could add greatly to the cost and risk of maintaining South Africa's food self-sufficiency and food security by introducing large numbers of small farmers into the industry.

An important source of growth in labour productivity in agriculture has its origin in the increased purchasing of inputs from the rest of the economy. From Table 1, it can be seen that intermediate inputs in agriculture in the European Union countries and the USA increased significantly over the period 1950-52 to 1986.

Of even more significance is the growing use of capital goods and even advanced technology in agriculture⁸.

Johnson emphasised the fact that: "there is all too little recognition in the formulation of agricultural policy that the labour and land supplied by farm-operator families are receiving less and less of the farm output value." South African agriculture is no exception to this rule (compare Figure 1).

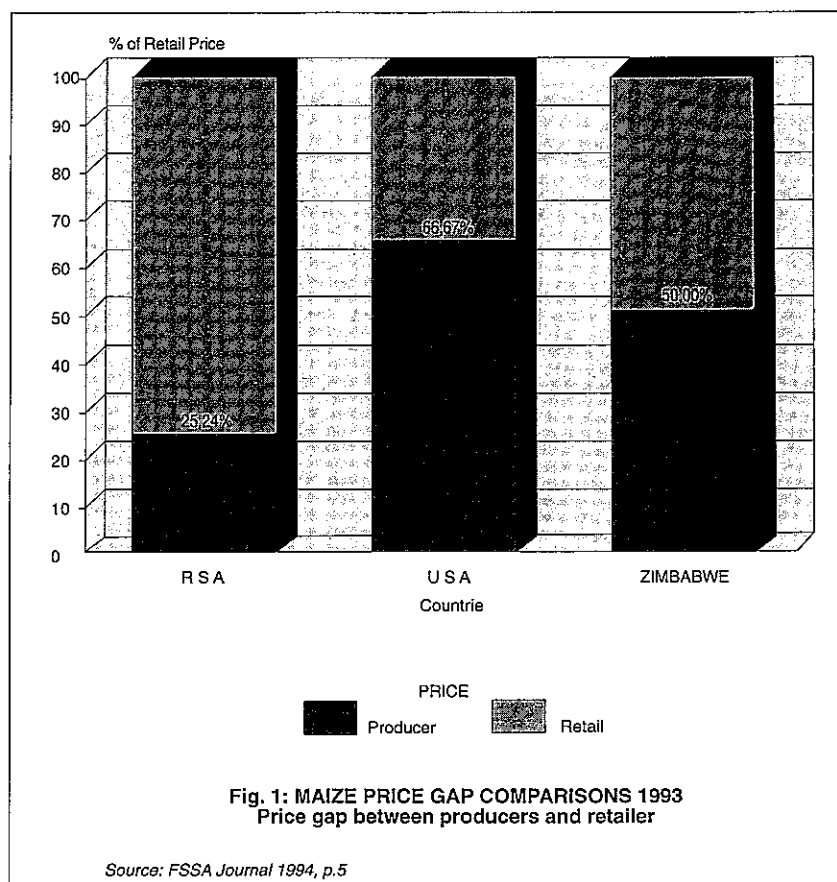
Johnson is of the opinion that: "A serious defect of the agricultural policies of the industrial countries has been that the education of farm people has not been an important component of such policies." This very aspect is at the base of many, if not all, of South Africa's problems through the economy. Solving this problem will not only tax the economy to the utmost, but the solution will

Table 1. Intermediate inputs as a percentage of gross agricultural output in the European Union and the USA (current prices), 1950-52 to 1986

	1950-52	1958	1968	1977	1986
Belgium	21,6	33,3	42,3	58,5	57,8
Denmark	37,3	-	-	51,0	49,7
France	18,5	23,4	29,1	39,0	43,0
West Germany	27,2	33,1	43,8	51,4	52,3
The Netherlands	32,8	40,7	45,2	50,0	48,9
United Kingdom	-	-	-	57,2	54,0
Italy	12,2	15,1	23,3	28,6	28,0
USA	39,4	44,8	49,5	51,0	47,4

Source: Exclude depreciation of equipment and buildings and interest paid. (Johnson D.G., 1991, p.60)

8. Farming has become a highly sophisticated production process depending on fertilizers, tractors, electric and electronic gadgets, hydraulic devices, pesticides, herbicides, vitamins, hormones, anti-biotics, synthetic proteins, advanced genetic techniques, and, to an increasing degree computers and even satellites. Equally important is the growing need for marketing and processing expertise, i.e. the ability to be ahead of the whims of the consumer. As elsewhere in the economy, knowledge of modern finance and taxation is vital for an industry working on ever shrinking margins.



probably only come after many years in spite of the hunger for knowledge and learning. The scarcest and most expensive agricultural resource in South Africa is obviously farming know-how and management expertise.

Underlying the Uruguay-round with its drawn-out negotiations has been the realisation that lower prices were the only economically logical solution for the growing global tendency towards over-production. The state measures responsible for it, were high prices on the domestic market and low prices for exports.

The implications of the Uruguay-round for South African agriculture will not only flow from the letter of the agreement itself, but from the surveillance and ongoing processing which has been engendered by especially the negotiating team of the USA.

The need to cope with sagging prices and rising costs is the farmer's curse. Such circumstances is especially hard on the small, full-time, non-productive farmer. Their incomes are in a process of continuous deterioration leaving them with no alternative but to exploit inputs, especially

female family labour and the environment. These low efficiency farmers are accustomed to relative poverty. It is often said that it is better and socially cheaper to subsidise farmers to stay on their farms rather than having them as unemployed in the city. What is not considered is the harsh effects of brutal subsistence farming on animal welfare and the environment.

The objective of national food self-sufficiency and food security cannot be reconciled with low food prices to city dwellers and high production prices to small farmers. The use of subsidies to reconcile the conflicts of interests is non-viable considering the many adverse elements referred to above, the magnitude and administrative problems of such programmes, the implications for the Treasury and South Africa's international obligations.

There is obviously a great deal of truth in the view that governments often fail to provide the same level of service to rural people as is being provided to urban areas. This is true of infrastructure, security, education, health services, agricultural research and auxiliary services. The resultant disparity in urban and rural know-how be-

comes even more evident when cognisance is taken of the fact that modern agricultural technology had its origins mainly in the industrial sector. The growth in agricultural technology is a dynamic process largely induced by external factors. The modern productive farmer has no alternative but to apply the most cost effective technology. The dynamics of this process has forced the farmer onto a treadmill. His quest for a cost advantage that will ensure continuity of his enterprise has tied him irrevocably to the merciless progress of technology and its specific risk profile.

Incumbent on the contemporary farmer is the fact that the effects of the deteriorating terms of trade can only be overcome by enlarging the post-harvesting value-added component of his output. The know-how and capital to do this, and the risk involved, adds a new dimension to agriculture, also in South Africa with its adverse production, marketing and socio-economic conditions.

This development promises to change the face of South African agriculture fundamentally, replacing the traditional risk perception of the industry as being mainly one of climatic variability by a new risk perception based on commercial or pure economic performance. This involves instilling a new competitive element into agriculture, not only with itself, but also with economic sectors such as manufacturing and mining.

The South African macro policy maker is faced, on the one hand, by the obligation to utilise the country's limited resource base as optimally as possible. He is, however, also faced by the fact that rural food security has been, and is, almost non-existent. Historic and cultural-ideological considerations makes it imperative to improve the food base of people in the rural areas of the country, or, as an alternative, to furnish them with a refuge elsewhere in the economy. This is obviously not a viable option considering the millions of unemployed in the country's cities and towns.

Turning the millions of rural people into viable farmers and effective consumers is going to be a mammoth task, considering their skills level, the adverse infrastructural circumstances and the highly variable climatic environment. Thousands, if not millions of rural South Africans, lack

the purchasing power to buy food at virtually any price. As elsewhere in the world accelerated agricultural growth presents the most obvious instrument to stimulate economic growth in general. Although agriculture will have a pivotal role to play in the reconstruction and development process, care will have to be exercised not to damage the country's precarious food base which will have to play a decisive role in improving food security in general.

An analysis of past trends in food production in Third World countries indicate that such growth as was experienced, was accompanied by a steadily increasing degree of production variability, mainly because of policies affecting the availability of fertilizer, fuel and rainfall. The reason for the more outspoken production variability being mainly the response of imported high production cultivars to variations in cultivation practices, climatic capriciousness and susceptibility to soil elements, inclusive of soil pathogens. Less attention to agricultural research, the training of experts or the neglect of industries supplying essential inputs may be very destructive of South Africa's agricultural base, notably its commercial food base.

OPTIONS TO ACHIEVE FOOD SECURITY IN SOUTH AFRICA

From Tables 2 - 4, it can be seen that South Africa is relatively self-sufficient in respect of field crops and horticultural produce. Wheat is the only field crop of importance giving reasons for concern.

Horticultural produce would also not seem to present reasons for concern as far as self-sufficiency is concerned (see Table 3).

Animal products, notably beef and mutton have already in 1989 been in short supply. White meat, fresh milk, cheese, milk powder and butter are delicately balanced. The exception is egg production showing a great surplus.

In assessing the self-sufficiency indexes shown in Tables 2 - 4, cognisance should be taken, firstly, of the fact that 16,4 million of the country's population of 38 million, as in 1991, were indeed living below the poverty datum line. A second reason for concern is the fact that the population is expected to increase to 48 million in the year 2000 and 60 million in 2010. A further

Table 2. Production and consumption of selected field crops in South Africa: 1980 - 1989

	Production, 1980 - 1989		Consumption		Surplus '000 ton	Self-sufficiency index
	Total	Growth	Total	Growth		
	'000 ton	% p.a.	'000 ton	% p.a.		
Maize	8270,90	5,09	5921,70	-0,64	2349,20	139,67
Wheat	2313,40	10,67	2309,80	7,24	3,60	100,16
Lucerne and Hay	8270,90	5,09	5921,70	-0,64	2349,20	139,67
Sugarcane	18543,20	6,54	13710,72	3,54	4832,48	135,25
Tobacco	33,19	0,92	33,19	0,92	0	100,00
Sunflower seed	324,70	8,13	290,99	5,64	33,71	111,58
Groundnuts	128,50	10,80	80,97	17,89	47,53	158,70
Cotton	252,58	2,64	115,30	1,95	137,28	219,06
Dry beans	79,10	5,27	64,20	2,39	14,90	123,21
Grain sorghum	468,80	5,43	331,50	4,60	137,30	141,42
Soyabeans	41,10	12,53	34,68	19,20	6,42	118,51
Wattle bark	96,20	0,51	96,20	0,51	0	100,00
Barley	160,50	9,67	118,47	12,33	42,03	135,48
Compass	14,86	2,87	14,86	2,87	0	100,00
Chicory root	15,20	4,99	13,90	7,69	1,30	109,35
Oats	65,50	21,56	26,79	5,13	38,71	244,49
Rye	4,70	3,96	1,48	-0,04	3,22	317,57
Total field crops	39083,33	6,86	29066,45	3,33	9996,88	134,37

Source: Development Bank of Southern Africa

Table 3. Production and consumption of selected horticultural products in South Africa: 1980 - 1989

	Production, 1980 - 1989		Consumption		Surplus '000 ton	Self-sufficiency index
	Total	Growth	Total	Growth		
	'000 ton	% p.a.	'000 ton	% p.a.		
Vegetables	2746,89	3,50	1512,94	4,89	1233,95	181,56
Grapes	1374,70	1,79	1317,98	1,75	56,72	104,30
Apples	432,63	1,38	214,46	2,63	218,17	201,73
Oranges	509,92	-1,27	225,44	4,97	284,48	226,19
Figs	1,45	13,90	0,76	48,41	0,69	190,79
Pears	158,24	5,26	101,56	4,64	56,68	155,81
Bananas	142,70	7,29	55,44	7,48	87,26	257,40
Peaches	165,14	-1,51	151,29	-1,04	13,85	109,15
Pineapples	225,73	5,94	214,46	6,90	11,27	105,26
Avocados	28,40	7,04	10,36	6,83	18,04	274,13
Plums	14,31	6,43	5,60	5,24	8,71	255,54
Apricot	45,64	7,93	45,33	8,81	0,31	100,68
Grapefruit	63,72	0,59	30,69	12,68	33,03	207,62
Water-melons	69,22	2,50	51,10	3,28	17,12	132,86
Mangoes	17,89	24,52	11,50	22,02	6,39	155,57
Lemons	47,56	4,48	24,94	13,52	22,62	190,70
Naartjies	26,70	3,67	13,35	3,71	13,35	200,00
Pawpaws	22,29	-1,76	17,71	2,82	4,58	125,86
Strawberries	5,38	4,98	4,64	6,75	0,74	115,95
Guavas	26,68	1,99	25,21	2,36	1,47	105,83
Litchis	3,80	11,19	2,08	13,96	1,72	182,69
Grenadillas	1,09	1,83	0,93	1,90	0,16	117,20
Loquots	0,20	12,10	0,20	12,10	0	100,00
Total Horticulture	6130,28	3,80	4038,97	6,70	2091,31	151,78

Source: Development Bank of Southern Africa

reason for concern is the growing competition for water and the decline in storage capacity as a result of silting and evaporation.

National food self-sufficiency issues have been increasingly debated since the start of the nineties; the first concern being that there is a secular decline in the ability of the farming industry to provide the country's consumers and manufacturing industry with food and raw materials. The severe drought of 1991/92 has added to the concern that the country's food and raw material position may not be as secure as was generally believed.

White maize in particular, which is the major staple food in South Africa and the countries in the SADC region to the north, has, for a number of years, been supplemented by yellow maize in the milling industry. There is concern, therefore, when in common with the SADC countries grain imports on a substantial scale are necessary to meet human consumption needs.

The experience this year on account of the drought is even worse considering the magnitude of recent increases in the retail price of mealie meal, the amount of foreign exchange that will be spent on imports and the employment and hardship effects rippling through the grain producing areas.

Informal opinion is that the distress experienced by the country's grain farmers could well be indicative of a deep seated deterioration of the

country's agricultural industry, cognisance being taken of the vital interrelationships in the industry and the unsettling effects in the rural areas and the banking industry, to mention but two of the many ills caused by an industry in turmoil.

Pressures on a government to declare white maize a strategic product in order to build and maintain strategic reserves have so far elicited no response. Of more concern as far as the country's agricultural potential is concerned, is the loss of entrepreneurial expertise, notably of young highly trained persons that cannot be replaced that easily. Work done for a doctoral dissertation at Rand Afrikaans University suggests that the agricultural entrepreneur in field husbandry and horticulture will have to look much more carefully at the characteristics of his soils and the application of fertilizer in order to curtail costs and increase yields on those patches of land promising the best response. It would seem as if only five districts in the Transvaal and Free State fulfil the demand of having a risk profile warranting cultivation considering the present cost-revenue relationship. Obvious from the investigation is also serious balance sheet depletion suffered by maize farmers since the late eighties as a result of the droughts, high real interest rate, ceiling on the producer price and the weak export price. Indicative of the asset depletion suffered by farmers is the fact that the average age of the farming tractor fleet is presently in the neighbourhood of 15,2 years. Maintenance cost has increased significantly. The

Table 4. Production and consumption of selected animal products in South Africa: 1980 - 1989

	Production, 1980 - 1989		Consumption		Surplus '000 ton	Self-sufficiency index
	Total	Growth	Total	Growth		
	'000 ton	% p.a.	'000 ton	% p.a.		
Beef & Veal	604,95	-2,65	657,80	-2,04	-52,85	91,97
White meal	465,20	5,47	452,20	6,51	13,00	102,87
Fresh milk	1131,10	0,93	1099,25	0,93	31,85	102,90
Sheep, lamb, goat	186,99	-1,68	195,60	-0,73	-8,61	95,60
Eggs	277,00	4,50	156,80	5,52	120,20	176,66
Pig meat	104,99	3,42	101,10	4,39	3,89	103,85
Cheese	35,82	1,98	35,40	4,53	0,42	101,19
Milk.. & powder	60,51	-3,71	62,00	-2,64	-1,49	97,60
Butter	16,47	-0,29	16,80	6,17	-0,33	58,04
Total animal products	-	0,89	-	3,33	9996,88	97,20

Source: Development Bank of Southern Africa

only avenue open to the farmer to survive is often to cut back on chemical and labour inputs. Exploitation of the factors of production is, however, not without implications, firstly, for the farming operation itself, secondly, for the rural areas, and thirdly, for the economy as a whole.

Access to food in large parts of South Africa, especially those characterised mainly by subsistence farming, is not only now a very disturbing facet of the country's economic life, but promises to become even more so. Remittance payments from migrant labour, which have been

an important source of income for most households in the rural areas, are under pressure as a result of labour cutbacks, mechanisation and the phasing out of mines.

Transfer payments from the state to the poor are not always reliable. While South Africa is one of only two countries in Africa which have universal pension rights, the funds allocated for pensions fall short of fulfilling all such obligations. The main reason for food insecurity in large parts of South Africa is, of course, unemployment. From Table 5, it can be seen that less than 50% of South Africa's active economic populations is either un-

Table 5. Relationship between the South African workforce (15-64 years) and formal and informal employment, 1960-1991

Year	Economic active work force	Formal employment	Number of unemployed and people working in the informal sector	Column 4 as a % of column 2
1	2	3	4	
1960	6 900 983	4 652 000	2 248 893	32,6
1961	7 085 488	4 852 000	2 233 488	31,5
1962	7 275 025	4 961 000	2 314 025	31,8
1963	7 469 636	5 012 000	2 457 636	32,9
1964	7 669 457	5 190 000	2 479 457	32,3
1965	7 874 627	5 440 000	2 434 627	30,9
1966	8 085 291	5 608 000	2 477 291	30,6
1967	8 301 592	5 724 000	2 577 592	31,0
1968	8 523 685	5 845 000	2 678 685	31,4
1969	8 751 724	6 023 000	2 728 724	31,2
1970	8 984 946	6 164 000	2 820 946	31,4
1971	9 282 679	6 269 000	3 013 679	32,5
1972	9 590 278	6 326 000	3 264 278	34,0
1973	9 908 072	6 597 000	3 311 072	33,4
1974	10 236 394	6 809 000	3 427 394	33,5
1975	10 575 598	6 942 000	3 633 598	34,4
1976	10 926 042	7 078 000	3 848 042	35,2
1977	11 288 099	7 145 000	4 143 099	36,7
1978	11 662 152	7 176 000	4 486 152	38,5
1979	12 048 601	7 298 000	4 750 601	39,4
1980	12 453 108	7 450 000	5 003 108	40,2
1981	12 829 600	7 649 000	5 180 600	40,4
1982	13 200 496	7 803 000	5 397 496	40,9
1983	13 582 203	7 757 000	5 825 203	42,9
1984	13 975 035	7 832 000	6 143 035	44,0
1985	13 376 990	7 788 000	6 588 990	45,8
1986	14 759 603	7 798 000	6 961 603	47,2
1987	15 139 734	7 858 000	7 281 734	48,1
1988	15 529 657	7 958 000	7 571 657	48,8
1989	15 929 624	8 013 000	7 916 624	49,7
1990	16 341 194	8 055 181	8 266 013	50,0
1991	16 723 821	8 092 363	8 631 458	51,6

Source: Development Bank of Southern Africa

Table 6. Change in the economic active workforce and employment in the formal sector, 1960-1991

Year	Average annual addition to the work force	Average annual addition to the informal employment	Average annual absorption capacity of the formal sector
1960-1965	194 747	157 600	80,9
1965-1970	222 064	144 800	65,2
1970-1975	318 130	155 600	48,9
1975-1980	375 502	101 600	27,1
1980-1985	384 776	67 600	17,6
1985-1989	388 159	56 250	14,5
1990	391 570	42 181	10,8
1991	402 627	37 182	9,2

Source: Development Bank of Southern Africa

employed or hammering out a meagre existence in the informal sector. Table 6 reflects the fact that less than 10% of new entrants into the labour market is not absorbed into the formal labour market, compared to more than 80% 30 years ago.

More work will obviously have to be done on food security issues at household level. The effects of the present drought and the lay-offs of large numbers of people all over the country are matters affecting every South African. Systems should be put in place to identify and assist the vulnerable and hungry. What is also urgently needed, is the establishment of an early warning system that would more readily identify and quantify the ferocious droughts and other calamities sweeping the country and the sub-continent from time to time.

SUMMARY

As far as the future is concerned, cognisance should be taken of the rapid rate at which urbanisation is going to continue throughout

South Africa, and, for that matter Southern Africa. Large tracts of the country will become less densely populated within the next decade shifting the phenomenon of food insecurity from the rural to the urban communities. The creation of employment opportunities for the millions of South Africans (and Southern Africans), flocking to the metropolitan areas is a mayor challenge for the present and future governments.

The greatest constraints as far as the rate of economic growth is concerned, is obviously the precarious position of the current account of the balance of payments and the dismal performance of productivity.

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