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A PEOPLE'S STATE OF THE NATION ASSESSMENT 2017

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Background

The State of the Nation Address (SONA) is delivered at the annual opening of Parliament, by the President of the Republic of South Africa. The President addresses a joint sitting of the two houses of Parliament namely, the National Assembly (NA) and the National Council of Provinces (NCOP). The address focuses on the current political and socio-economic state of the nation based on government assessments. Therefore, we cannot assume that the address fully incorporates the views of the ordinary people of South Africa. Consequently, there is a gap during SONA event in terms of the articulation of the views of the wider South African society. This People's State of the Nation Assessment (PSONA) report seeks to fill this gap by collating the perceptions of ordinary South Africans, who were surveyed by the Institute for Justice and Reconciliation (IJR) South African Reconciliation Barometer (SARB) and the Afrobarometer.

Where does the information come from?

The 2015 SARB surveyed 2 219 South Africans - in the 11 official South African languages - on matters relating to reconciliation, social cohesion, social justice and democracy. The Afrobarometer has surveyed 2,400 South Africans, across all nine provinces and in six languages (SeSotho, SePedi, Afrikaans, SeTswana, Tshivenda, Xhosa, Zulu and English) - on a broad range of issues relating to politics, the economy, society and international relations.

How reflective of the people's views are these findings and recommendations?

This People's SONA does not claim to speak for the whole South African society, however, it is a representative national sampling of a cross-section of our country, and is an important contribution to the debate relating to the State of our Nation.

Structure of this Report

This PSONA Report is structured into four parts which will each focus on a specific issue. The four sections will address: i) the State of Politics; ii) the State of the Economy; iii) the State of Society; and iv) the State of International Relations. The Report will conclude with a Summary which will draw out the key findings, recommendations and proposal for improving the State of the Nation.

The State of Politics: Debilitating Fragmentation

The fallout from South Africa's biggest political drama of 2015, the firing of then finance minister Nhlanhla Nene, the subsequent short-lived tenure of his successor, Des van Rooyen, and the latter's hasty replacement by former finance minister Pravin Gordhan, has spilled over and continued to dominate the country's political scene in 2016. The dramatic chain of events that played out in December 2015 has resulted in the clearest crystallisation to date of ANC factions under the administration of President Jacob Zuma. While the organisation, like most other political formations, is no stranger to factionalism, allegiances within the party now squarely seem to centre on the person of Zuma, superseding other historical cleavages within the organisation.

Despite Van Rooyen's embarrassing recall, the torrid time the president has been given by the opposition whenever he set foot in parliament, a Constitutional Court ruling determining that Mr Zuma had forsaken his presidential duties, a Public Protector's report that raised serious questions about

Amid these tensions, social polarisation, particularly along the country's historical racial fault lines, continues to intensify.

the Gupta family's influence over his administration's decisions, and a significant electoral setback in the local government elections in August, Zuma remains firmly at the helm of government and in a powerful position within his own party. Opinion on the aforementioned controversies and others that have followed, such as the so-called Absa Lifeboat saga, which also has broader bearing on speculation about the continued role of white monopoly capital in the country's political life, continues to diverge neatly along the pro- and anti-Zuma lines.

In the meantime, whilst this fierce battle for power rages unabatedly, the country's underperforming economy continues to shed jobs and real incomes are declining against a backdrop of rising living costs. As a result, many households across the country are experiencing increasing levels of distress. As marginalised citizens have, in their desperation to be heard, resorted to violent strategies that make municipalities ungovernable, university campuses have become battlefields in the fight for more affordable education. Amid these tensions, social polarisation, particularly along the country's historical racial fault lines, continues to intensify. While South Africa has to date been fortunate enough to escape the fate of emerging market peers Turkey and Brazil, whose credit ratings have seen a downgrade courtesy of the major international ratings agencies, the country may not be as lucky in 2017. Should such downgrades become reality in the course of this year, the ruling party, distracted by internal warfare, will find it increasingly difficult to meet the needs of South Africans.

The existence of this adverse environment has far-reaching implications for public confidence in the functioning of the democratic state. It is already known that confidence in democracy and its related institutions has in recent years followed a downward trajectory.

Table 1: Key public opinion findings on the state of political governance in SA

South Africans who believe democracy to be preferable above any other form of government (SARB 2015)	62%
South Africans who believe government not to be acting in the country's best interest (SARB 2015)	66%
South Africans with trust in the Office of the President of the Republic (AB 2015)	34%
South Africans who believe government to be underperforming in the fight against corruption (AB 2015)	80%
South Africans who doubt the impact of their vote on national policy processes (SARB 2015)	48%

SARB – South African Reconciliation Barometer; AB – Afrobarometer

According to the 2015 Afrobarometer, 66% of South Africans believe that government is not acting in the country's best interest. Conversely, 62% of respondents felt that democracy is preferable to any other form of government. This figure is markedly lower than the 72% that was recorded in 2011, however. Equally concerning is the 19% decline in respondents who regarded South Africa as a full democracy, down from 67% in 2011 to 48% in 2015.

The 2015 SA Reconciliation Barometer (SARB), also conducted by the IJR, asked respondents whether they trust their elected representatives to act in their best interest. For two thirds of respondents (66.3%), the short answer to this question is 'No', while a further 20.1% were undecided. Only 11.8% were unequivocal in their opinion that political leaders actually are concerned about what they have to say. Not only do a majority of South Africans feel that politicians don't care about their plight; most also sense that they have no influence over the decisions that are made in their name. Almost six out of ten respondents (56.9%) agreed with the statement that they don't have a say in the way political leaders and politicians conduct themselves.

According to the 2015 Afrobarometer, South Africans are particularly perturbed by issues related to economic governance, with two thirds (66%) responding that the national government is doing 'fairly badly' or 'very badly' in terms of running the economy, while the corresponding figures in terms of job creation and the narrowing of income inequality were 77% and 78% respectively. The combating of corruption was another area that received a particularly adverse evaluation from respondents: 80% of South Africans felt that governmental efforts fell short in this regard.

In light of the above, it should not come as any surprise that the most recent Afrobarometer shows general dissatisfaction with elected leaders' performance. Only one third (34%) of South Africans said they trust President Zuma 'somewhat' or 'a lot,' down from 62% in 2011, while fewer than half of respondents (42%) trusted members of parliament. For local government councillors, this figure is even lower at 36%.

Findings from the 2015 SARB show these sentiments have an impact on the perceived utility of citizens' votes. The most recent survey showed that almost half the South African population (48%) doubt the impact their vote has on broader decision-making processes in the country. It should therefore also be of concern that in the same survey, a quarter of respondents indicated that they had either used, or were willing to use violence as a means of political expression when all other strategies fail.

Recommendations for 2017

In December 2017, the ANC will conduct its national elective conference to select a new leadership for the 5 years to follow and, importantly, to lead the party into the 2019 general elections. Given the deep fragmentation that has emerged within the party and within the broader Tripartite Alliance in recent years, and the fierce contestation for control of the levers of power within the organisation, this is likely to be one of the fiercest ANC leadership contestations since the unbanning of the organisation in the early 1990s.

Both the Polokwane (2007) and Mangaung (2012) elective conferences provided clear evidence of factional manipulation of state institutions to further the cause of particular political slates. This abuse of office has done immeasurable damage to the integrity of public institutions that, instead of focusing solely on the public interest, have in several instances become battlefields for party patronage. As it prepares for the 2017 conference, it will be incumbent on the ANC to conduct itself in a way that looks beyond self-preservation to ensure that state institutions do not become collateral damage of the party's own internal conflict.

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Failure in this regard will have consequences, also beyond the limits of ANC rule. Indeed, a scenario where the ANC loses power in an upcoming national election no longer seems entirely implausible.

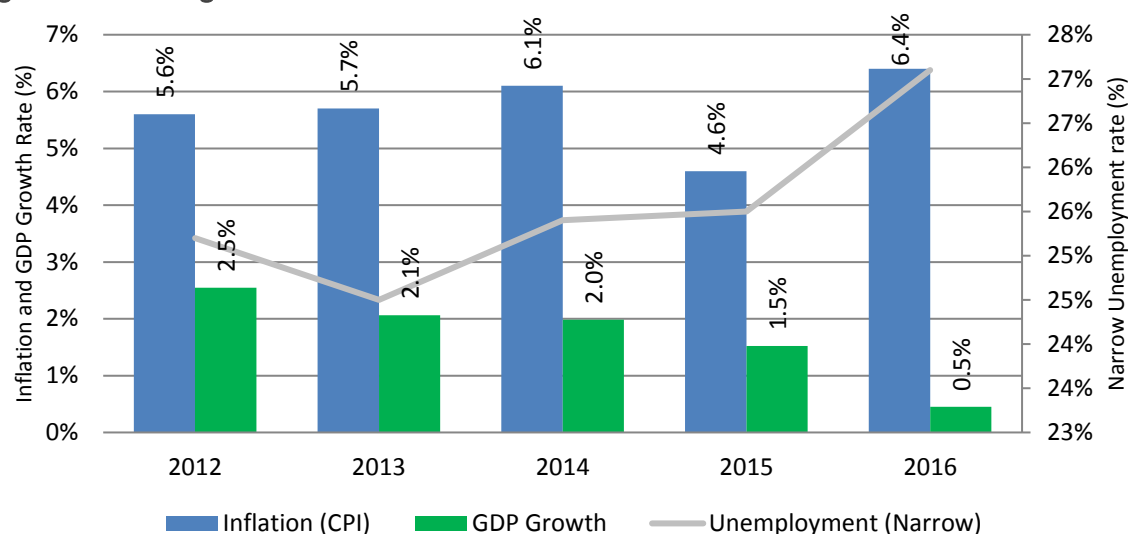
In the current fragile economic climate, which will in all likelihood see further material pressure on households, the potential for deepened social polarisation is real. Factional politics within the ruling party can exacerbate this, but so too can the opportunistic exploitation of critical national issues by opposition parties to the left and the right of the ANC. While it is the responsibility of opposition parties, such as the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) and the Democratic Alliance (DA), to scrutinise, challenge, and hold the ruling party to account, they should do so responsibly and desist from pursuing short-term goals that may have negative long-term consequences with regard to public confidence in the system of governance. This year will be a difficult one, as these parties will continue to pursue the prosecution of President Zuma on 783 corruption charges, and square up against the ruling party on the contents of the Public Protector's report on state capture. At stake, however, is public confidence in —and the very integrity of— the broader governance infrastructure that allows for democratic contestation. Responsible leadership is therefore demanded from across the political spectrum to strengthen and enhance its capacity to continue to serve and empower the South African people. Our own public opinion research seems to suggest that public confidence in our system, although still at acceptable levels, is declining at a rapid rate. Also waning is the confidence citizens have in leaders who are regarded as custodians of this system.

The State of the Economy: Continuing Vulnerability

While 'growth at all costs' may now, rightly, have become the discarded mantra of an era fast approaching its end, there is no denying that without a robustly expanding economy that creates jobs, South Africa's future remains in the balance. The threefold challenges of poverty, inequality, and unemployment continue to place the country's social fibre under severe strain, as evidenced by the country's characteristically violent society, lacking social cohesion, polarised along historical racial divisions. A weak economy that makes livelihoods more precarious will exert further pressure on an already volatile society.

The National Development Plan (NDP), upon its adoption in 2012, proposed that the country would need to grow at an annual rate of 5,4% until 2030 to ensure that it reached its key developmental targets, which include an unemployment rate of 6%, the elimination of poverty, and a reduction in inequality from a Gini coefficient of 0,69 to one of 0,6. This growth target has consistently been missed since the NDP's adoption in 2012. Average annual growth for the four years from 2012 to 2015 stood at 2%, and according to the latest projections for 2016 from National Treasury's Mid-term Budget Policy Statement, the country will have recorded its lowest GDP growth rate (0,5%) since its brief dip into recessionary territory in 2009. Add to this other dispiriting statistics from the final quarters of 2016, like an unemployment figure of 27,1% —the highest in 13 years— and a rising inflation rate of 6,8% (translating into higher prices for the nation's already cash-strapped citizens), which is also well outside of the Reserve Bank's 3% to 6% target band, and it is clear that the country is nowhere near the progressive achievement of its targets.

Figure 1: Sketching South Africa's macroeconomic environment



As reflected in the 2015 Afrobarometer and noted earlier in this document, public opinion on the government's economic track record has been decidedly scathing. The findings, presented in Table 1 below, suggest substantial public dissatisfaction with government performance in key priority areas. Majorities at that time disapproved of government's general management of the economy and its attempts at improving the living standards of the poor. With regard to containing inflation (keeping prices down), reducing income gaps, and creating jobs in particular (where more than half of respondents —51%— indicated that the state is doing a 'very bad' job), sentiments suggest that there is significant room for improvement. The only performance area where a majority of respondents did approve of government's performance was its distribution of welfare payments. In light of the latest growth, unemployment, and inflation figures for the third and fourth quarters of 2016, which signify a further deterioration in the economic circumstances of millions of South Africans, and added concerns around delays in the appointment of a distribution agent for government grants by the South African Social Security Agency (SASSA), we are expecting a commensurate decline in approval ratings in the 2017 Afrobarometer that will be conducted towards the second half of this year.

Table 2: Key public opinion findings on the state of political governance in SA	
South Africans who believe government's management of the economy to be 'fairly bad' or 'very bad' (AB 2015)	66%
South Africans who believe government's attempts at job creation to be 'fairly bad' or 'very bad' (AB 2015)	77%
South Africans who indicate that government is not doing a good job improving the living standards of the poor (AB 2015)	70%
South Africans who believe government to be performing 'fairly badly' or 'very badly' in terms of keeping inflation down (AB 2015)	76%
South Africans who believe that government has performed 'fairly badly' or 'very badly' in terms of narrowing income gaps (AB 2015)	76%
South Africans who indicate that government is doing a good job distributing welfare payments (AB 2015)	81%

Much of the country's subdued growth over the past eight years can be attributed to a global economy that has failed to regain momentum in the wake of the global crisis of the latter part of the previous decade. Commodity exporters like South Africa were hit hard by a slump in global demand, particularly from China. The mining sector, in particular, was recovering from a five-year-long global slump in mineral prices (roughly over the period from early 2011 up to the first few months of 2016), with figures only starting to stabilise throughout 2016. Slowed growth also impacted on other sectors of our economy. Manufacturing growth

remained stagnant to marginal, whilst the Agricultural sector suffered the effects of a severe drought (after measuring in 2015 the lowest annual rainfall since records began in 1904). Looking forward, the stabilisation and uptick in global commodity prices, accompanied by the expectation of better rainfall levels, provides some respite for the South African economy with regard to external factors. However, at this point, there is little prospect of any external stimulus that could dramatically alter our domestic growth prospects. Compared to a decade ago in 2007, when global economic growth stood at 5,4%, preliminary IMF figures show that the commensurate statistic for 2016 stood at 3,1%, with a similar figure (3,4%) predicted for 2017.¹

There have arguably also been self-inflicted domestic factors that have contributed to the current sense of gloom. Ever since the country's political transition in the 1990s, it has experienced a lack of macroeconomic policy consistency. Starting with the tensions between the Redistribution and Development Plan (RDP) in 1994 and the Growth, Employment and Redistribution (GEAR) strategy of 1996, through the adoption of the New Growth Path (NGP) in 2010 and the National Development Plan (NDP) in 2012, follow-through has always

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occurred at the mercy of factional power shifts within the tripartite alliance, which, in turn resulted in watered down implementation of concrete strategies, designed to achieve concrete targets. While the NGP hardly receives mention in government communications anymore, many feel that the toughness of the rhetoric around the NDP is yet to be matched by any degree of robustness in its implementation.

In 2016, the impact of this apparent lack of policy cohesion and continuity was exacerbated by the internal fragmentation of the Tripartite Alliance, and the debilitating factional struggle within the ANC between the pro- and anti-Zuma factions, which, in turn, is linked to the broader debate around state capture. The Public Protector's report on the latter, titled The State of Capture, has raised serious questions about the extent to which key state-owned enterprises (SOEs) have been compromised by external interests in their ability to contribute to economic development. Potentially the most worrying aspect of the report, however, relates to what seems to be a relentless battle between the National Treasury on the one hand, and various state entities, such as SARS, SAA, and Eskom – all aligned to the Zuma faction – on the other, for control of the country's purse strings. While Treasury may have ceded most of its influence over economic policymaking during the latter years of Trevor Manuel's tenure, it has over the years forged a reputation for excellence and integrity in the management of the country's finances, under very challenging circumstances.

While the country has always had to grapple with pressing developmental challenges that had the potential to threaten social stability, it could rely on strong institutions to manage and address these tensions. The events of 2016 have now also raised serious questions about these institutions and the functions they perform. With the country's credit rating teetering on the brink of sub-investment grade (or "junk" status), ratings agencies have consistently singled out institutional instability and the related lack of regulatory certainty as key areas of concern that will influence their decisions on the country's investment status. Yet, amid the turmoil of a weak economy, growing impatience, and limited fiscal space to stimulate growth and provide a buffer for the most vulnerable in society, the ruling party mostly seems fixated on its own internal struggles instead. It has therefore become critical to reach a speedy resolution to this conflict, which is increasingly holding our economy to ransom. The country simply cannot afford a repeat of the completely avoidable and borderline farcical events of 2016.

Recommendations for 2017

A major positive development in 2016 was the pragmatic cooperation observed to have taken place between business, labour and (parts) of government in a time of crisis. This strengthened cooperation had its roots in

¹International Monetary Fund Website (2016): http://www.imf.org/external/datamapper/NGDP_RPCH@WEO/OEMDC/ADVEC/WEOWORLD, Accessed: 31/1/2017

the impending threat of a ratings downgrade by the major international credit ratings agencies (Moody's Investors Service, Standard and Poor's (S&P), and Fitch Ratings). Such a downgrade could not only be catastrophic for the economy, but also threatens to undo key developmental gains made over the past two decades. A response to this threat has gained even more urgency in the wake of the debacle surrounding the appointment and firing of Des van Rooyen as Minister of Finance in December 2015. This partnership has been sustained and was once again discernible in the united front presented by Team South Africa at the World Economic Forum's (WEF) gathering in Davos earlier this year.

But such collaborative engagement should extend into other spheres, such as labour relations, where long, costly, and often violent clashes serve as impediment to both productivity and development. The kind of partnership described here cannot only be responsive to crises; it must also be forward-looking in terms of finding lasting solutions to existing and developing problems. The challenge in the year ahead will remain one of building a social compact, in terms of which compromises that address the fears of all parties can be reached, even in the face of divergent interests, and where the costs of these agreements are also borne equally by all stakeholders.

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The uncertainty that haunts South Africa's macroeconomic environment is to a great extent self-inflicted, and will continue as long as political infighting in the ruling alliance remains at the order of the day. The threefold threat of poverty, inequality, and unemployment as it endangers the country's social fibre and the state's main constituents —the people of South Africa— should be enough to engender a decisive engagement on the part of (the whole of) government and its social partners. However, the ongoing 'capital strike' by local and foreign investors should also be noted in this regard. We require greater commitment from the country's major stakeholders in terms of forging a more inclusive economy. Concurrently, this will require a focused government that provides a degree of predictability and certainty with regard to policy.

Despite these ideals, Treasury will most likely have a tough task fostering Minister Gordhan's oft-mentioned 'green shoots' in the country's economy. President Zuma's recommitment to the pursuit of 'radical economic transformation', within a low-trust environment, and as part of an increasingly fractured governing alliance, continues to mount political pressure on a Treasury with the kind of very limited fiscal manoeuvring room available to institutions of this sort in a low-growth environment. These pressures on the fiscus are accompanied by continued calls for free higher education, the distractions and divisions that accompany the leadership race in the run-up to the ANC's elective conference, and the growing unrest of the expanding portion of the population that is unemployed, marginalised, and faced with growing vulnerability and rising food prices. Difficult trade-offs will need to be made in terms of reducing government expenditure and increasing revenue through tax measures, as recognised in Minister Gordhan's 2016 mid-term budget speech. In 2017, the stability that the institution of the Treasury provides will continue to be a crucial source of security for the South African economy and the South African people, and the country will continue to require prudent and responsible leadership in the face of mounting pressures from diverse and often obscure sources.

The State of Society: Fragmented and Frustrated?

During the course of 2015 and 2016, South African 'fallist movements' and their calls for transformation made apparent the multiple layers of advantage and disadvantage, access and non-access, and inclusion and exclusion that exist among and between various groups. Frustrations resulting from vast socio-economic inequalities found an outlet in national student protests for free higher education (and the de-commodification of education) under the Fees Must Fall banner. Prior to this, the Rhodes Must Fall student

movement —calling for the decolonisation of higher education— prompted debate about what an ‘Africanised’ society should look like, as well as engagement regarding the context in which tertiary institutions in South Africa operate, and their responsibilities in this context. Some ‘fallist movement’ protest actions, however, became physically violent, and public higher education institutions retaliated with heightened security measures in the form of a police and/or private security presence. The general public’s sentiment towards both violent protest action and the security measures implemented to contain protest action was polarised.

Prompted by the activities of the student movements – amongst other factors - and the arguments that surfaced within public debate, identity politics, racial tension, and issues surrounding gender power dynamics were brought to the forefront. This made it clear that there is a need for a much deeper understanding of individuals’ and various groups’ lived realities —in the context of higher education, and in South African society at large.

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Furthermore, various forms of media and types of media content came into sharp focus in South Africa and abroad during 2016. In South Africa, an ad hoc Parliamentary committee is currently investigating whether the SABC (South African Broadcasting Corporation) board are fit to operate. Also in the spotlight are private media companies and social media campaigns —with controversies surrounding alleged ‘white-controlled’ media, ‘Gupta-controlled’ media, Paid Twitter accounts, and fake news sources serving specific political narratives. These observations are not unique to the South African context, as allegations regarding the rise of fake news and the impact of social media campaigns’ driving specific political narratives are reported on elsewhere as well (as during the USA recent election). Citizens’ engagement with media content matters, as media content may influence political agency within a democratic society, as well as trust in various institutions (although the relationship is not necessarily deterministic). Citizens’ agency and their ability to engage with media content have become increasingly important in a context where specific political narratives can be driven through various media platforms, which may further existing (and/or create new) divisions in society.

In the midst of these dynamics, racist incidents added fuel to fire over the past year. Racist social media rants posted by South Africans, such as one penned by a former real estate agent who was subsequently fined a hefty sum by the Equality Court for comparing black people to monkeys, caused a furor. Racist incidents, however, were not limited to social media platforms. Outrage ensued time and again after many racially loaded incidents were made public over the past year. Examples include a video in which two (white) men assaulted a (black) man and placed him in a coffin; an incident during which a white waitress was reduced to tears when a member of the Rhodes Must Fall movement wrote on his bill, ‘We will give tip when you return the land’ at a restaurant; and, allegations of racism at Pretoria Girls’ High school relating to hair policies.

These incidents only partly reflect the reality of race relations in South Africa —as evidenced by the 2015 SARB (see Table 3)— but are symptomatic of low levels of trust and the existence of unresolved racial tension in society. Most South Africans feel that race relations in the country have stayed the same or deteriorated since the demise of apartheid in 1994. Most South Africans have also experienced racism, and do not trust South Africans from other racial groups than their own. However, most South Africans would like to interact with people from different racial backgrounds in ‘shared spaces’ (such as shops and places of work and study) and in ‘private spaces’ (such as at home and at social gatherings).

Table 3: Key public opinion findings on race relations in South Africa (SARB 2015)	
South Africans who feel race relations in South Africa have stay the same / deteriorated since 1994	61,4%
South Africans who have experienced varying degrees of racism in South Africa (All/most of the time, Sometimes, and Occasionally)	60,2%
South Africans with little or no trust in people of other racial groups	67,3%
South Africans who desire interaction with people from different racial backgrounds in places of work and study	69,3%
South Africans who desire interaction with people from different racial backgrounds in private homes	61,4%

Thus, although many structural, ideological, spatial, socio-economic, and cultural barriers exist to impede interaction between South Africans from different racial backgrounds, the desire to interact with people from different racial backgrounds also exists. Interactions, however, take place in a climate of distrust, which is a significant hurdle to overcome if the quality of interactions is to be of a certain level and if these interactions are to be conducive to working towards more cohesive and inclusive communities.

Events over the past year furthermore ignited a long overdue discussion surrounding sentiments that the post-apartheid reconciliation process has not delivered on its promises, particularly in terms of socio-economic inequalities. The movements also highlighted the view —held in particular by members of the younger generations— that the reconciliation processes pursued in the ‘Mandela era’ amounted to a ‘selling-out’ by previous generations. The ‘rainbow nation’ ideal, driven by leaders such as then Archbishop Desmond Tutu, seem no longer to hold much appeal for younger South Africans, who may have experienced political freedom, but still often feel excluded from the resources they need to advance their own lives. Furthermore, the idea of a drive for national unity has been questioned, given the alleged compromises made to strive towards this goal.

Nevertheless, the 2015 SARB shows that most South Africans believe that South Africa needs reconciliation (see Table 4), and that more than half the population have experienced reconciliation. Most South Africans also believe that the Constitution is important to our country and to their own lives, and that it is desirable and possible to create a united South Africa. Importantly, however, most South Africans also believe that reconciliation will be impossible for as long as those disadvantaged under apartheid remain poor. Making sense of the call for greater socio-economic equality and social justice – as trumpeted by the Fees must Fall movement— is thus integral to understanding the state and prospects of the reconciliation process in South Africa. Simply put, living better together will not be possible without a concerted effort to address the vast inequalities in opportunities and outcomes that still persist in society today.

Table 4: Key public opinion findings on reconciliation and national unity	
South Africans who report that they and their families have experienced reconciliation (SARB 2015)	52,2%
South Africans who believe that South Africa still needs reconciliation (SARB 2015)	69,7%
South Africans who agree that reconciliation is impossible for as long as those disadvantaged under apartheid remain poor (SARB 2015)	61,4%
South Africans who believe that it is desirable to create a united South Africa (SARB 2015)	71%
South Africans who believe that a united South Africa is possible (SARB 2015)	64,6%
South Africans who believe that the Constitution is important (SARB 2016)	69,7%

Recommendations for 2017

After more than twenty years of democracy, the debilitating triad of poverty, unemployment, and inequality still holds serious implications for the fiscal stability of South Africa and the economic wellbeing of its citizens, and for any progress made hitherto with reconciliation processes. Socio-economic inequalities, and an inability to address the gaps between rich and poor in South Africa, work to the detriment of achieving social cohesion, encouraging democratic values, and guarding the country's reconciliation processes. As social relations among South Africans are further strained in a tough political and economic environment, understanding the difficulties South Africans experience in accessing the resources they need to pursue their goals becomes increasingly relevant to addressing inequalities (in both outcomes and opportunities). It is important that transformation and restitution processes address such inequalities in a manner that enables and restores trust in, and that includes the involvement of, public and private institutions.

Furthermore, even though most South Africans desire to live in a united, reconciled South Africa, the historical and structural legacies of apartheid continue to reinforce old patterns of socialisation and prejudice. Low levels of trust among racial groups and in public institutions limit possibilities for quality interactions between South Africans from different racial groupings, and thus hamper any possible progress in terms of social integration. That being said, most South Africans desire more interaction with people from different race groups. It is imperative that opportunities for quality interactions between people from different racial groups, communities, and backgrounds are created, and that engagement is facilitated in spaces where people feel that they are safe and supported in their interactions.

At the same time, the implications of discrediting media and government institutions, growing distrust in state media, the dissemination of false news, and the promotion of specific political narratives, are not to be disregarded. The role of responsible journalism in this kind of environment becomes increasingly important. Nevertheless, the agency South Africans employ in engaging with media content and when making decisions around different available narratives should not be underestimated. The responsibility of accountability, and engaging with information in a critical fashion, does not lie solely with the media. This capacity is also something to be fostered and developed in the broader public, to ensure that citizens engage with media content and political information critically. Furthermore, the obligation to work towards a society underpinned by the values of the Constitution —a document most South Africans feel is important to the country and in their own lives— does not lie solely with political leaders and state institutions, but also with those who keep leadership accountable. It is thus imperative that the agency and capacity of South Africans to keep leadership accountable in a constructive manner are supported and enhanced.

The State of International Relations: Negotiating our Pan-African Identity

Dr Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma's legacy during her time as chair of the African Union (AU) from 2012 to 2016 has its share of critics and supporters. From a strategic point of view, Dlamini-Zuma led on the adoption of the AU's grand vision Agenda 2063, and she was effective at foregrounding gender equality issues as well as at improving internal procurement processes at AU headquarters in Addis Ababa. However, Dlamini-Zuma's tenure did not necessarily translate into a greater sense of 'Pan-Africanness' within South African society. According to the Afrobarometer perceptions survey of 2014 and 2015, conducted in 33 African countries, South Africa ranks near the top in terms of intolerance toward foreigners. The Afrobarometer survey also indicates that three in 10 South Africans (32%) say they would dislike having a foreigner as a neighbour, whilst 28% say they would like it and 40% say they would not care. The survey further reveals that tolerance of asylum seekers fleeing political persecution increased slightly, from 38% in 2011 to 43% in 2014/2015, but that citizens remain almost evenly divided on the issue. The Afrobarometer findings suggest that post-apartheid South

Africa is still negotiating its Pan-African identity, and that its citizens need to be better informed about international affairs.

Recommendations for 2017

In 2016, South Africa's surprise announcement that it would withdraw from the International Criminal Court (ICC) raised eyebrows regarding the alignment of the country's foreign policy priorities. Supporters of the decision lauded South Africa's 'coming-of-age' as a continental leader in asserting Africa's right to be treated in a fair and equal manner. In its 15-year existence, the ICC has only issued rulings against Africans, while it is evident that war crimes have been committed across the world. South Africa's initiative demonstrated what could be the emergence of a more assertive approach to international relations in 2017.

Given its accumulated international experience and increased assertiveness, South Africa (working in tandem with fellow African countries) should now seek to become more assertive on the global stage in contributing to rethinking and redefining multilateralism. African countries were not

Government should improve its outreach to and engagement with broader South African society on issues relating to international relations.

adequately represented at the creation of the United Nations system. (Only 51 countries participated in the process.) Consequently, the UN system, and the UN Security Council in particular, is not designed to effectively accept and act on behalf of Africa's interests. The creation of a new global system for collective security, based on democratic representation, citizen participation, and international legitimacy, is now a much more urgent task than ever before, given the rising surge of nationalistic and isolationist right-wing populism in the USA and Europe. South Africa should work with a coalition of progressive countries to lead the creation of new institutions tasked with international relations, and the dismantling of old and obsolete institutions such as the UN.

Government should improve its outreach to and engagement with broader South African society on issues relating to international relations. In particular, the South African Council on International Relations (SACOIR), which is an advisory body to the Department of International Relations and Cooperation (DIRCO), should convene public dialogue meetings across the country to increase its engagement with fellow citizens on key issues affecting our country, such as questions surrounding our relationships with the AU, the Southern African Development Community (SADC), and the rest of the world. Government should also make use of print and social media to explain its foreign policy positions and to solicit input and ideas from South African society at large.

South Africa and the rest of Africa are actively working to improve the lives of their citizens, and South Africa's international relations should contribute towards this agenda. International partners should avoid utilising South Africa as a launch pad for their own myopic agendas on the continent. International partners should strive to identify areas of convergence with South Africa's foreign policy and actively work to collaborate rather than impose their own agendas on our government and people. Fellow progressive countries should actively work with South Africa to rethink and redefine old ideas, and to create new institutions for global collective security in an age of rising populism in the USA and Europe.

In conclusion, South Africans should strive to inform and educate themselves about the important historical role other African countries played in the liberation of our country. Citizens should also seek to understand the political and security crises affecting our neighbouring countries and others across the continent. Citizens should strive to find ways to engage fellow Africans from across the continent living in South Africa, in order to collectively define and articulate what it means to be a Pan-Africanist in the twenty-first century.

About the SARB:

The South African Reconciliation Barometer (SARB) is a public opinion survey conducted by the IJR. Since its launch in 2003, the SARB provides a nationally representative measure of citizens' attitudes to national reconciliation, social cohesion, transformation, and democratic governance. The SARB is the only survey dedicated to critical measurement of reconciliation and the broader processes of social cohesion and is the largest longitudinal data source of its kind globally. The 2015 SARB survey was conducted during August and September 2015. The survey employed a multistage cluster design whereby enumerator areas (EAs) were randomly selected, and, within each of these, households were randomly selected with a view to visiting such households. At each household, a systematic grid system was employed in order to select the specific respondent for an interview. The final sample of 2 219 respondents was then weighted so as to adequately represent the adult population of South Africa. In addition to the 2015 South African Barometer Survey, IJR launched a mobile survey at the beginning of November 2016. The sample consists of 911 respondents, and is representative of the South African adult population in metro and non-metro areas, and of race groups. The data were weighted for gender and provinces.

About the Afrobarometer:

Afrobarometer is a pan-African, non-partisan research network that conducts public attitude surveys on democracy, governance, economic conditions, and related issues across more than 30 countries in Africa. Five rounds of surveys were conducted between 1999 and 2013, and Round 6 surveys are currently under way (2014-2015). Afrobarometer conducts face-to-face interviews in the language of the respondent's choice with nationally representative samples of between 1,200 and 2,400 respondents. The Afrobarometer team in South Africa, led by Institute for Justice and Reconciliation and Plus 94 Research interviewed 2,400 adult South Africans in August and September 2015. A sample of this size yields results with a margin of error of +/-2% at a 95% confidence level. Previous surveys have been conducted in South Africa in 2000, 2002, 2004, 2006, 2008, and 2011.

About the IJR:

The IJR is a civic organisation, based in Cape Town, South Africa that was established to work on building fair, inclusive and democratic societies across Africa and elsewhere around the world. IJR works with governments, inter-governmental organisations and partner civil society networks to influence policy formulation and development, transfer knowledge and skills through training and facilitate community-level dialogues with a view to addressing the socio-economic injustice of the past as a means to bridging the divisions within deeply divided societies. IJR is a recipient of the UNESCO Prize for Peace Education and its Patron is Archbishop Desmond Tutu.

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