State-Civil Society Relations in Post-Apartheid South Africa

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The basic twin expectations of government are that NGOs will firstly, continue to act as monitors of the public good and safeguard the interests of the disadvantaged sections of society. This performance of this social watch role requires both transparency and accountability on the part of NGOs. The government’s second expectation is that NGOs will assist in expanding access to social and economic services that create jobs and eradicate poverty among the poorest of the poor. This requires cost effective and sustainable service delivery (Zola Skweyiya, Quoted in Barnard and Terreblanche 2001:17).

For many of the activists … working in different spaces and having different strategies and tactics, there was a binding thread. There was unmitigated opposition to the economic policies adopted by the ANC…. Activists spoke of how the right-wing economic policies lead to widespread and escalating unemployment, with concomitant water and electricity cut-offs, and evictions even from the “toilets in the veld” provided by the government in the place of houses. More importantly, there was general agreement that this was not just a question of short-term pain for long-term gain. The ANC had become a party of neo-liberalism. The strategy to win the ANC to a left project was a dead end. The ANC had to be challenged and a movement built to render its policies unworkable. It seems increasingly unlikely that open confrontation with the repressive power of the post-apartheid state can be avoided (Ashwin Desai, 2002: 147).

Two quotations, two very different visions of post-apartheid state-civil society relations. The articulators of these visions have as their goal the empowerment of, and service delivery to, the poor. Both individuals are located in different institutional settings. The first is a cabinet minister responsible for the Department of Social Development. The second is a civil society activist, one among many leaders in the new and emerging civic struggles that are challenging local governments in their imposition of a cost-recovery paradigm to the provision of social services. Which vision is appropriate for the conditions of post-apartheid South Africa?

Both quotations reflect at least one element of our post-apartheid reality. But the absolute and categoric character of their visions make them inappropriate models for a contemporary state-civil society relationship. Implicitly these visions imagine a homogenous civil society. They project a single set of relations for the whole of civil society. Is civil society, however, not plural by its very nature? And, should not this plurality infuse our understandings of state-civil society relations in contemporary South Africa?

This chapter takes as its departing point a definition of civil society that celebrates its plurality. It recognises that the set of institutions within this entity will reflect diverse and even contradictory political and social agendas. As a result state-civil society relations
will reflect this plurality. Some relationships between civil society actors and state institutions will be adversarial and conflictual, while others will be more collaborative and collegiate. This state of affairs should not be bemoaned. Instead it should be celebrated for it represents the political maturing of our society. Under apartheid, the adversarial-collaborative divide largely took a racial form with the bulk of ‘white civil society’ establishing collegiate relations with the state, and the majority of ‘black civil society’ adopting a conflictual mode of engagement. This racial divide began to blur in the transition period as significant sections of ‘white civil society’ began to distance themselves from the apartheid regime. In the contemporary era, the racial divide has all but disappeared with adversarial and collegiate relations extending across the entire ambit of civil society.

Elsewhere I have defined civil society as “the organized expression of various interests and values operating in the triangular space between the family, state, and the market” (Habib and Kotze 2002:3). This definition conceptualizes civil society as an entity distinct from both the market and the state. Of course traditional Hegelian definitions of the term include the market. I am, however, persuaded by Jean Cohen and Andrew Arato’s comprehensive and defining work on the subject, which makes a coherent case for why the market should be excluded from the definition of civil society. For Cohen and Arato, the actors of what they call ‘political’ and ‘economic’ society control and manage state power and economic production and this imparts to them a different strategic purpose and function from civil society actors. In their words, political and economic actors cannot “subordinate (their) strategic and instrumental criteria to the patterns of normative integration and open-ended communication characteristic of civil society” (Cohen and Arato 1992: ix). This then makes it essential for civil society to be analytically distinguished from “both a political society of parties, political organizations, and political publics (in particular, parliaments) and an economic society composed of organizations of production and distribution, usually firms, cooperatives, (and) partnerships...” (Cohen and Arato 1992: ix).

This chapter is divided into three separate sections. The first, which serves as a backdrop to the analysis, describes the set of relations between the state and civil society agencies in the apartheid era. This is followed by a description of the initiatives undertaken by the state, sometimes independently and at other times at the instance of other actors, to redefine the post-apartheid civil society arena. The chapter, then, analyses how different civil society actors have responded to these initiatives and to the challenges of the post-apartheid moment, and how this has informed their relations with the state. Finally, the conclusion reflects on current assessments of, and advances my own view on, contemporary state-civil society relations in South Africa.

**Historical Context**

There are two distinct phases in the evolution of contemporary civil society in South Africa. Before identifying these, however, it may be useful to note that contemporary civil society is distinguished by the fact that it not only reflects the demographic realities of South African society, but also transcends the racialised form of the adversarial-
collaborative dichotomy that typified civil society relations with the state in earlier epochs. In any case, the diverse racial profile of contemporary civil society has its roots in the early 1980s when there was a phenomenal growth in associational life in this country. Indeed, the distinctive feature of this period is not only the longitudinal growth of the sector, but the formal emergence, or at least the surfacing in the political sphere of a significant part of it, namely black civil society actors who had hitherto been either banned or prevented from operating in the public arena. The second phase dates back to 1994 when the character and operations of a significant part of the civil society, once again anti-apartheid black civic actors, fundamentally changed as a result of new opportunities and challenges. Both phases of course neatly coincide with key moments in the evolution of the political system: the first with the liberalization phase, and the second with the democratisation phase of the transition. Civil society has thus influenced and been moulded by the political transition in South Africa.

Prior to the liberalization in the early 1980s, the dominant element in civil society were organizations and institutions that were either pro-apartheid and/or pro-business. Agencies critical of the state and the socio-economic system were either actively suppressed or marginalized from the formal political process. The major political contest within civil society seemed to be between pro-apartheid institutions like the Broederbond and N.G. Kerk and liberal oriented pro-business organisations like the Institute of Race Relations and the National Union of South African Students (NUSAS). To be sure, as the 1970s approached anti-apartheid NGOs like the unions and the array of organizations associated with the Black Consciousness Movement (BCM) began to make the presence felt (Marx 1992). But constant harassment from the State and miniscule resources ensured that they really served as a sideshow to the more formal contest and engagement within civil society and between it and the state.

This all changed in the 1980s. The anti-apartheid elements within civil society resurfaced and within a few years became the dominant element within the sector. Two developments underpinned this growth in anti-apartheid civil society organizations. The first was the liberalization of the political system unleashed by the P.W. Botha regime in the early 1980s. This involved reform of the more crude aspects of Grand Apartheid, the attempted political cooption of some sections of the disenfranchised communities, and allowing the emergence of some civic activity within, and representation of, the black population. It is indeed ironical that credit for facilitating the reemergence of civil society, the agencies responsible for the destruction of apartheid, should go to the one of South Africa’s most authoritarian political leaders. But such are the quirks of history.

In any case, the reform of the political system in the early 1980s did indeed enable the reemergence of anti-apartheid civil society. The Soweto revolt in 1976 and the more general upsurge in protest including union activity throughout the 1970s created a struggle between reformers and Conservatists’ within the heart of the state. The former wanted to reform apartheid, make it compatible with the modernizing imperatives of the economy, and coopt some elements of the black population by giving them a stake in the system. The latter wanted a recommitment to the traditional project of Grand Apartheid. The success of P.W.Botha and his reformist coalition in the leadership succession dispute
of the National Party (NP) and thereby the South African State in the late 1970s created the opportunity for the promulgation of the reformist project (Sparks 1990). A series of institutional reforms followed, a significant component of which included the recognition and legalisation of independent black unions and the establishment of a political space that permitted the reemergence of anti-apartheid civil society. Moreover, the state provided the rationale for mobilizing this sector by proposing a reform that attempted to coopt some, and marginalize other elements of the black community. Anti-apartheid civil society was thus enabled by and provided the rationale for mobilization by the state’s liberalization initiative.

To be sure, not all of this scenario was positive. In fact, very soon into the reform program the state began to actively repress elements within the anti-apartheid camp. But despite this repression, which became quite severe under the state of emergency, the anti-apartheid civil society retained its popular legitimacy. This enabled it to reemerge very quickly when De Klerk took over the leadership reins in a palace coup that replaced P.W. Botha as President, and reintroduced and even extended, the state’s liberalization initiative. The ultimate result was that by the 1990s the anti-apartheid camp had become the dominant element in the civil society sphere.

The second development facilitating the reemergence of anti-apartheid civil society was the increasing availability of resources to non-profit actors in South Africa. Two types of resources are crucial in this regard. The first, Human Resources, increasingly became available in the early 1980s as university students and graduates politicized by the activities of the 1970s, and political prisoners, many of whom were released in the early 1980s, came together in myriad of ways to not only organize community and political activities but to also establish non-profit institutions to support these mass struggles. The second, fiscal resources, initially emerged from private foundations and foreign governments who were moved to act largely due to the fact that the June 16 revolt and its consequences made its way to the televisions screens in the advanced industrialised world. The increasing tempo of struggle within the country, however, also gradually compelled local actors, particularly corporates and churches to begin to underwrite anti-apartheid non-profit activity in South Africa (Stacey and Aksartova 2001). This increasing availability of resources, both from foreign and domestic sources, then, established the second plank that enabled the reemergence and growth of anti-apartheid civil society in South Africa.

Two points need to be underscored in this very brief and cursory history of the emergence of contemporary civil society. First, the historical overview provides support for two theories of social movements: political opportunity structure, and resource mobilization. The Political Opportunity structure theory emphasizes the opening of political opportunities in explanations of the rise of social movements and social struggle (Tarrow 1994). Resource mobilization theories, on the other hand, explain the rise of social formations through a focus on resources and their availability to different social groups (Tilly 1978; McCarthy and Zald 1987)). The explanatory variables emphasized by both theories, then, are crucial for understanding the emergence of contemporary civil society.
The second point that needs to be stressed is that, despite the fact that the anti-apartheid civil society was borne within the womb of the state’s reform program, state–civil society relations tended to take an adversarial form throughout the 1980s. This is because the liberalization initiative was not democratic and enabling. Indeed, like all liberalization initiatives in transitional societies, it must be conceptualized in relative terms. Thus, anti-apartheid civil society maintained its distance from, and was treated with suspicion by, what was still an apartheid state. The legal environment, including the tax regime, while allowing anti-apartheid NGOs and CBOs to emerge, was nevertheless still hostile to their operations. Similarly, the political and security environment remained repressive and became even more so after the State of Emergencies were declared in 1985 and 1986. This hostile environment, then, ensured that state-civil society relations took an adversarial form in the first decade of the anti-apartheid CSOs. This was to change only in the middle of the second decade when South Africa entered the democratisation phase of its political transition.

Civil Society in the Democratic Era

Regime change can have significant impacts on society. And, this is all the more so if it occurs in an era of globalisation. Nowhere is this more evident than in South Africa where the transition to democracy and globalisation have fundamentally transformed the society. In the process civil society has itself been remoulded in significant ways, the effects of which are only now becoming evident. Eight years after the transition the most obvious outcome of the remoulding process is the evolution of civil society into three distinct blocs, each of which is a product, to different degrees, of separate transitional processes.

Establishing an Enabling Environment

The first bloc, which comprises formal NGOs, has largely been influenced by the political restructuring which the democratic state undertook in order to create an enabling environment for civil society. Three initiatives were undertaken in this regard. First, the security environment was reorganized in significant ways. Repressive legislation was repealed and a political climate permitting public scrutiny and protest activity was established. This was in no way unqualified. Indeed, in the last eight years there have been occasions when security officials and even some politicians reacted to legitimate scrutiny and protest in reminiscent of their predecessors. But any overall assessment would have to conclude that the security environment is far more enabling now than it has ever been in this country.

Second, the post-apartheid regime moved quickly to pass legislation and adopt practices to reorganize the political environment. Thus, a Non-Profit Act was passed that officially recognized civil society, created a system of voluntary registration for its constituents and provided benefits and allowances in exchange for NGOs and CBOs undertaking proper accounting and providing audited statements to government. A Directorate for Non-Profit Organisations was established in the Department of Social Welfare to coordinate the
above processes. In addition, NEDLAC, the country’s premier corporatist institution, was established with four chambers, the last of which was to cater for representation from civil society. Most important in creating a new political environment, however, was the state’s willingness to partner with NGOs in the policy development and service delivery arenas. This opened up a whole new avenue of operations for NGOs and fundamentally transformed their relations with the state.

Third, an enabling fiscal environment was created to enable the financial sustainability of this sector. This was in part forced onto the state very early on in the transition as NGOs confronted a financial crunch when foreign donors redirected their funding away from CSOs to the state. Again legislation was passed and institutions were established to facilitate a flow of resources to the sector. The 1978 Fundraising Act which limited NGOs capacity to raise funds was repealed. Institutions like the National Development Agency (NDA) and the Lottery Commission were established with a mandate to fund legitimate non-profit activity. And, a reform of the tax regulations was promulgated in 2000/2001 to grant registered CSOs tax-exemption status, and to encourage a philanthropic culture in the country.

The net effect of these legislative changes and restructuring has been the establishment of a fiscal, legal, and political environment that has facilitated the development of a collaborative relationship between the state and formal NGOs. The latter have increasingly been contracted by the state to assist it in policy development, implementation and service delivery. This has been encouraged by donors who sometimes fund such partnerships, and who regularly advocate the professionalisation and commercialization of NGOs. The positive result of this is that it has facilitated the financial sustainability of a number of these organizations. But it has come at a cost. The commercialization and professionalisation has blurred the non-profit/profit divide, and has led to questions around the lines of accountability of these organizations. As Habib and Taylor argue:

The existing literature of the non-profit sector is replete with suggestions that NGOs are institutions that service the interests of the poor and marginalized. But can one really argue this when NGOs have become so commercially oriented and dependent on the resources of donors and the government? … Can one really assert that (they are) community driven or answerable to marginalized sectors of South African society? (Habib and Taylor 1999: 79).

**Reaping the Costs of Neo-Liberalism**

The second and third constituent blocs of contemporary civil society are largely products of processes associated with globalisation and its particular manifestation in South Africa. South Africa’s democratic transition, like many the ‘Third Wave of democracies’ (Huntington, 1991), has been characterized by two distinct transitional processes, political democratization and economic liberalization. The goal of the former is representative government. The latter has as its aim the integration of South Africa into
the global economy. And, it is largely informed by a particular configuration of power in
the global and national arenas defined largely by the fact that the leverage of multi-
national corporations and the domestic business community has increased dramatically
vis-à-vis other social actors as a result of the technological transformations of the last
decade or two.3

This increasing leverage of multi-national corporations and the domestic business
community has translated in South Africa into the ANC government’s adoption of neo-
liberal economic policies (Habib and Padayachee 2000). Other than the odd commentator
or two who dispute this, or who every now and then on the basis of one or other
development, read a change of heart on the part of South African political elites
(Padayachee and Valodia 2001), most analysts across the ideological spectrum recognize
the neo-liberal character of the post-apartheid government’s economic trajectory. And the
effects of this neo-liberalism – read as the liberalization of the financial and trade
markets, the deregulation of the economy, and the privatization of state assets – have
been largely negative. Even by its own terms, the government’s macro economic
policies, codified in its program the “Growth, Employment and Redistribution Strategy”
(GEAR), have not done very well. Foreign investment, the enticing of which is the
primary rationale of GEAR, has not flowed into the country. Moreover, the prospects for
increased flows are slim given the problems of crime, HIV/AIDS, and Zimbabwe. The
problem is aggravated by the relaxation of exchange controls, which have enabled South
African companies and individuals to export capital resulting in substantial outflows from
the country. As a result the currency markets have been extremely volatile. Initially, the
Rand devalued, pressurizing inflation and forcing the Reserve Bank to increase interest
rates by four percentage points in 2002. Subsequently it strengthened by approximately
40 percent, but is expected in some quarters to again devalue once the American dollar
stabilizes. Finally, the state’s privatization program has not registered much success,4
although it has had the effect of ideologically polarizing the country and the ruling party
and its alliance partners.

The net achievement of this program has been the realization of the state’s deficit targets,
but at the cost of employment, poverty and inequality. Massive job losses have occurred
in almost all sectors of the economy. Tighter fiscal constraints have compromised the
state’s poverty alleviation and development programs. State officials often claim credit
for having met the targets of the “Reconstruction and Development Program” especially
in the areas of water, sanitation, telephony and electricity. But the most comprehensive
independent study in this regard estimates that there have been approximately ten million
cut offs in water and electricity services because people have not paid their bills, and a
further two million people have been victims of rates and rent evictions (McDonald and
Pape 2002). Moreover, a number of other studies have shown that poverty and inequality
has increased in real and measurable ways. For example, Carter and May, in a study of
approximately 1200 black households in KwaZulu-Natal, demonstrated that poverty rates
increased from 27 to 43 percent between 1993 and 1998 (2000). Economic liberalization
has benefited the upper classes of all racial groups, and in particular, the black political,
economic and professional elites who are the primary beneficiaries of affirmative action
policies and black economic empowerment deals.5 But GEAR has had a devastating
effect on the lives of millions of poor and low-income families. As Habib and Padayachee have argued, “the ANC’s implementation of neo-liberal economic policies has meant disaster for the vast majority of South Africa’s poor. Increasing unemployment and economic inequalities associated with neo-liberal policies have also pushed even more of South Africa’s population into the poverty trap.” (Habib and Padayachee 2000:24).

In order to respond to this challenge, civil society has been reconstituted in two very distinct ways. The first involves the proliferation of informal, survivalist community-based organizations, networks and associations, which enable poor and marginalized communities to simply survive against the daily ravages of neo-liberalism. These associations, according to the recently published study of the Johns Hopkins survey on the shape and size of civil society in South Africa, comprise 53 percent of 98,920 non-profit organizations and thereby constitute the largest category of institutional formations within the sector (Swilling and Russel 2002). Care must be taken not to fall into the trap of much of the writings on the informal economy, and celebrate these associations as representing the energies and vibrancy of South African society. Indeed they should be recognised for what they are, which is survivalist responses of poor and marginalized people who have had no alternative in the face of a retreating state that refuses to meet its socio-economic obligations to its citizenry. And, as I have argued in the editorial introduction to the same study, anecdotal evidence suggests that these “informal, community-based networks are on the rise, particularly in the struggle to deal with the ever-increasing repercussions of the government’s failure to address the HIV/AIDS and unemployment crises.” (Habib 2002:viii).

The second bloc that has emerged within civil society in response to the effects of neoliberalism is a category of organizations that have been described by some studies as social movements (Desai 2000). This category is a made up of a diverse set of organizations, not all of whom actually meet the criteria of social movements. Some of them, like the Treatment Action Campaign (TAC) are more nationally based associations, and in this case focuses on challenging the state’s AIDS policy and enabling the provision of anti-retroviral drugs to AIDS sufferers. Others like the Soweto Electricity Crisis Committee (SECC) and the Concerned Citizens Group (CCG), are located at the local level, and in these cases organize against electricity cut-offs in Soweto and rates evictions and water terminations in Chatsworth and surrounding townships in Durban respectively. Nevertheless, when compared to the above category of associations, both of these types of organizations are more formal community based structures, which have a distinct leadership and membership, often supported by a middle class activist base. Moreover their mode of operations is fundamentally different. They are not survivalist agencies, but are more political animals. Indeed, they have been largely established with the explicit political aim of organizing and mobilising the poor and marginalized, and contesting and/or engaging the state and other social actors around the implementation of neoliberal social policies. As a result they implicitly launch a fundamental challenge to the hegemonic political and socio-economic discourse that defines the prevailing status quo.
These two very different blocs within civil society, which have emerged in response to
globalisation’s neoliberal manifestation in South Africa, have very different relations
with the state. The informal organizations and associations have no relationship with the
state. They receive neither resources, nor do they covet recognition, from the state. They
are preoccupied with the task of simply surviving the effects of the state’s policies.
Indeed, it is doubtful whether the majority of these associations even recognize that the
plight of the communities they located in is largely a result of the policy choices of
political elites. The second bloc of more formal organizations whose activists covet the
status of social movements, have an explicit relationship with the state. This relationship,
depending on the organization and the issue area, hovers somewhere in between
adversarialism and engagement, and sometimes involves both (Bond 2001; Desai 2002).
But even when engaging the state, this is of a qualitatively different kind to that of the
formal NGOs. The latter has a relationship with the state that is largely defined by its
sub-contractual role, whereas the former is on a relatively more even footing, engaging
the state in an attempt to persuade it through lobbying, court action, and even outright
resistance. The reconstitution of civil society in response to globalisation and neo-
liberalism, then, has led to the evolution of a plurality of relationships between civil
society and the post-apartheid state.

A Plurality of Relations: Marginalisation, Engagement, and Adversarialism

In sum then: the post-apartheid era has witnessed the ‘normalisation’ of South African
society in a neo-liberal global environment. Poverty, inequality and the attendant
problems of marginalisation and governance that the ‘Washington Consensus’ and ‘Third
Wave’ model of globalisation and democracy respectively, have wreaked on other parts
of the world, are now the hallmarks of South African society. The legacy bequeathed by
apartheid has not only not been addressed, but in fact, has in many ways been reinforced
and even aggravated. How to respond to and address this is the primary challenge
confronting South African civil society?

Civil society’s response in South Africa to these developments has been similar to that of
the Third Sector in other parts of the world. In response to the effects and challenges of
democratization and globalisation, it has reconstituted itself into three distinct blocs, each
of which is defined by a different set of relationships with the state. On the one end of the
spectrum, you have a set of informal community based organizations, mainly in
marginalized communities, who have no relationship with the state. These organizations
are simply preoccupied with assisting people to survive the ravages of neo-liberalism. On
the other end of the spectrum, you have a range of more formal social movements and/or
community based organizations, which are actively challenging and opposing the
implementation of neo-liberalism. Although these organizations also engage the state,
their relations with the latter tend to often take on an adversarial tone. Finally, the third
and perhaps the most powerful bloc is a set of more formal service related NGOs, which
as a result of the more enabling environment created by the democratic regime, have
entered partnerships with and/or sub-contracted to the state. These organizations have
more engaging and collegiate relations with the state.
Of course, these distinctions within civil society are not as stark and rigid as they are depicted here. In the real world, there are many organizations that straddle the divide and blur the boundaries between one or more of these blocs. Some organizations, like the TAC, display adversarial relations with the state on one issue and more collegiate relations on another. Other organizations, like the Homeless Peoples Federation (HPF), challenge and oppose some state institutions but have established partnerships with others. What is important to remember of the contemporary era is that Democratisation and Globalisation, have facilitated the reassertion of the plural character of civil society and undermined the homogenous effects that the anti-apartheid struggle had on this sector.

This plurality of civil society is recognized by most activists, politicians, and government officials, at least at the rhetorical level. But in most cases, its meaning has not been internalized for had it been, we would not have the constant demands from these actors, as is evident in the quotations at the beginning of this chapter, for a single homogenous set of relations between civil society and the state. A recognition of the heterogeneity of civil society must as a corollary recognize the inevitable plurality in state-civil society relations. This, it should be noted, is beneficial for democracy and governance in the country. The informal based CBOs enhance democracy at the simplest level because they enable ordinary people to survive. The establishment of more formal relations between them and the state would subvert their character and thus compromise this role. The more formal NGOs collaborative relationship with the state is largely a product of the services they render for the state. And, in a society confronted with massive backlogs and limited institutional capacity, this role can only be to the benefit of democracy since it facilitates and enables service delivery to ordinary citizens and residents. Finally, the adversarial and conflictual role of new social movements and more formal CBOs enhances democracy for it creates a fluidity of support at the base of society. This can only be beneficial for it permits the reconfiguration of power within society, forcing the state not to take its citizens for granted, and effecting a systemic shift to the left which may create the possibility for a more people-centred, Keynsian-oriented developmental agenda.

These diverse roles and functions undertaken by different elements of civil society, then, collectively create the adversarial and collaborative relationships, the push and pull effects, which sometimes assist and other times compel the state to meet its obligations and responsibilities to its citizenry. The plurality of civil society and the diverse sets of relations that it engenders with the state is thus the best guarantee for the consolidation of democracy in South Africa.

References


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1 Following Guillermo O’Donnell and Philippe Schmitter’s four-volume study on the subject, it has now become common-place in the literature to distinguish democratic transitions into these two distinct phases. Liberalisation refers to the moment when authoritarian leaders open up the political system, whereas democratization is the period in which representative political systems become institutionalized (O’Donnell and Schmitter 1986).

2 To be sure some of the leaders of NUSAS were fairly radical and anti-business from very early on. However, the bulk of the organization tended to remain largely liberal in orientation until at least the late 1970s and early 1980s.

3 It is this power configuration that underpins the existing model of globalisation defined, and now increasingly questioned, as the ‘Washington Consensus’.

4 The privatization program is expected to pick up pace in 2003 and the year did start off with the successful listing of TELKOM in Johannesburg and New York.

5 This point has been made by a number of studies of, and commentators on, the South African political scene. For one of the earlier studies in this regard, see Adam, Slabbert and Moodley 1997. In recent months, however, a number of government officials, black entrepreneurs and intellectuals have responded to the charge by accusing critics of racism.