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State of the Future: A View from 2005 – A Response from South Africa

Rasigan Maharajh

Institute for Economic Research on Innovation

Presentation to South African Futures Society,
20th October 2005





Outline

- Introduction
 - SA Context
 - African Context
 - Rate of Progress
- Planning Challenges
 - Political
 - Social
 - Economic
- *New tools for old systems*
- Concluding thoughts ...





SA Context

- "While we stand ready to do more, our national circumstances must be acknowledged. Any future commitments for developing countries must be consistent with their capabilities, their sustainable development objectives, and take into account the current structure of their economies..."
- Such commitments must ultimately map out a proactive, sustainable and equitable growth path which meets our objectives to eradicate poverty while at the same addressing climate change.
- To assist South Africa in preparing for such commitments, Cabinet has approved a process of scenario-planning which will, within the next year, formulate and examine future scenarios to proactively shape our longer term domestic policy and capacity-building (challenges)." [DEAT: 2005]





African Context

- “Unless Africa shifts from being an exporter of primary raw materials to a more scientifically orientated culture, it has no chance of closing its economic gap with the world” [Millennium Project: 3: 2005]





Keeping Up?

- Print, film, magnetic, and optical storage media produced about 5 exabytes of new information in 2002
- **630, 000, 000, 000 Books**

- [www.sims.berkeley.edu/research/projects/how-much-info/]





Planning beyond the Horizon

- Political Challenges
 - Life-cycle
 - Electoral Mandates
 - Competing Interests
 - Conflicting Interests
 - Evidence-informed Policy Research





Planning beyond the Horizon

- Social
 - Anthropocentrism
 - Individual Life-spans
 - Inter-generational Issues
 - Community Matters
 - Norms, values, ethics and morality
 - Knowledge Generation





Planning beyond the Horizon

- Economic
 - Life-cycle
 - Business Cycles
 - Domestic Structural Constraints
 - dualities
 - Globalisation, Integration and Trade
 - Marginalisation & Subsidies
 - Technology and Knowledge





New Tools for Old Systems

- Updating the economic & institutional regime
- Upgrading education & learning
- Building information infrastructure
- Raise the technological level of the economy:
 - Actively diffusing new technologies throughout the country
 - Improving the Research & Development system
 - Exploiting global knowledge

World Bank advice to China in *Preparing for the Knowledge Economy* (2002)





Conclusion

- Support Nonlinear Thinking
 - Encourage Multiple Perspectives
- Determine Perspective
- Define Constraints and Enablers
- Understand Context
- Explore Dynamics of Change
- Translate Information into Knowledge
- Communication is part of utilisation





Thank You

- For more information, contact:
 - rasigan@antfarm.co.za

