

Press Release



SOUTH AFRICAN
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SA development index records third successive rise

The third quarterly release of the South African Development Index (SADI) for 2011 showed that development trends in the country continued to improve.

The SADI is an initiative of the South African Institute of Race Relations (SAIRR). It is a composite index tracking levels of human and economic development for South Africa across 26 indicators spread across six policy areas.

The index was benchmarked to a score of 100 in the third quarter of 2010. The first quarterly release of the index for 2011 recorded an increase in the score to 101.66 points. The second quarterly release saw the index improve to 101.95 points and this third update of the index saw South Africa's development score increase to 102.96 points.

The Institute developed the index in order to evaluate overall levels of human and economic development in South Africa.

A major contributor to the latest rise in the index came as a result of crime data released by the South African Police (SAPS) in September 2011. The index tracks the total number of serious crimes per 100 000 people and the total number of murders per 100 000 as indicative of levels of crime and violence in the country. Both these indicators have fallen substantially.

Also updated in this release of the index were a number of health indicators, including life expectancy and child mortality. Each of these indicators also recorded pleasing improvements. Improvements were also recorded in the number of public sector doctors per 100 000 people and the number of public sector nurses per 100 000 people. These figures are regarded as indicative of the resources available to South Africa's health sector.

The greatest disappointment in this update of the index was a rise in South Africa's unemployment rates. Researcher Catherine Schulze, said that, over the long term, recording significant improvements in levels of development under this index would require a substantial lowering of South Africa's unemployment rate.

She said, "We anticipate that the index will emerge as an excellent indicator of long-term development trends in South Africa. Such an indicator is extremely important in trying to gauge the progress that South Africa is making as a young democracy in improving the lives of its people."

"Too often in our experience South Africans are able only to grasp elements of the whole when looking at development trends in the country. As a result questionable claims are often made about South Africa as a country of phenomenal successes or disappointing failures. We anticipate that this index will come to stand as a bridge between these two extremes in order to present an accurate and balanced picture of development in the country."

The index is updated four times a year with the latest available economic and development data at the time of the update.

The index is available on the Institute website as a free service in the interests of promoting development in South Africa. It is sponsored by the Royal Netherlands Embassy.

The next update of the index will be released in December of 2011.

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