

NATIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION LOOKS AT BUILDING BLOCKS FOR A BETTER FUTURE

9 SEPTEMBER 2025

The [National Planning Commission](#)'s (NPC) quarterly plenary meeting on 6 September 2025 was largely dedicated to having in-depth discussions on selected issues which are critical for national planning processes beyond 2030.

These included the role of artificial intelligence in such areas as cyber (in)security, communication and in the shaping of the future of work. Of noteworthy importance to the NPC was the absence of clear and strong governance and regulatory frameworks – nationally and internationally – for AI development and deployment. In this regard, the development of sovereign AI states within and alongside nation-states was highlighted as an important objective for countries in the global South. The NPC noted that AI should no longer be discussed romantically: The impact of AI on environmental sustainability, its increasing role in 21st-century warfare, and its potentially negative impact on human industry and creativity were carefully considered.

The second issue emerged as the NPC received a briefing from the UNDP on progress with the crafting of the Cooperation Framework. The framework will outline the UNDP's strategy for working with, enabling, and encouraging national stakeholders to meet their SDG commitments in a comprehensive and integrated manner with due regard to human rights and other international standards. For the UNDP's Cooperation Framework to work, it must be nationally-owned, and anchored in national development priorities such as South Africa's National Development Plan ([NDP](#)) Vision 2030, the 2030 SDG Agenda and the principles of the

UN Charter. It is envisaged that the framework will be finalised later this month with the aim of tabling it for adoption by Cabinet in October 2025.

The third issue was gender mainstreaming, the proposal for a feminist approach to national planning and the implementation of national plans. The NPC noted, with regret, that NDP 2030 is generally gender-blind, to the point of being gender hostile. This means that women's interests are addressed as an afterthought rather than infused throughout the objectives in the document. To adduce evidence for this diagnosis, several research papers on gendered policy making and their findings were tabled at the NPC meeting. To this end, it was resolved that all state planning and policy must be informed by a comprehensive feminist and gender-centred approach in future.

The NPC agreed that its work and engagements would incorporate these future-facing issues, specifically as it continued working on the diagnostic report for the country's next long-term plan beyond 2030. As the term of this current Commission ends at the end of 2026, they reiterated the importance of ensuring that a solid basis is laid for the next long-term plan, so that the subsequent NPC can build on it.

In addition to these in-depth discussions, the NPC approved the release of advisory notes on the following topics:

- The National Planning Summit Report
- Inputs into the White Paper on Local Government
- South Africa's response to the Seville Commitment on Financing for Development.
- The question of the political administrative interface in relation to state capacity
- Proposals to improve the implementation of sector Masterplans.

These advisory notes are being finalised and will be made publicly available in the next few weeks on the NPC [website](#).



Vision 2030: Our Future, Make it Work

As an independent advisory body appointed by the President, the NPC is the custodian of South Africa's NDP: Vision 2030. The primary role of the NPC is to advise government and Parliament on matters pertaining to the implementation of the NDP. It also has the responsibility to mobilise the whole of society, including the private sector, around the objectives of the NDP, which remains the only cross-cutting long-term plan for national development in South Africa.

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