



Professor Shirley Walters
Chairperson

The National Qualifications Framework (NQF) has come of age. The second phase of the NQF Impact Study shows that the NQF has become imbedded in the consciousness of the general public and there is strong support for it. SAQA has facilitated major changes in the transformation of the education and training landscape. While a great deal has been achieved, the time is ripe to re-look at some of the modalities in order to ensure that there is maximum effectiveness in achieving the principles of the NQF. The NQF is a key instrument to attain lifelong learning. Together with other key constituencies we need to begin to assess how far the culture of lifelong learning is being realised.

The relationships between socio-economic development and lifelong learning are beginning to be recognised as crucial to the future well-being of the nation, SAQA is a key player in this arena and the NQF is a key instrument to help facilitate these relationships.

Since the promulgation of the SAQA Act, it is evident that despite the achievements, much still needs to be done to consolidate the culture of learning. Issues of uncertainty which presently exist around the NQF need to be addressed urgently so that we can proceed unhampered towards our vision of building a learning nation. The process of reviewing the implementation of the NQF is currently being handled at Ministerial level. I trust that the Ministerial Review which will eventually be issued will indicate to us how to address these uncertainties. In the meantime I am encouraged by the proactive approach that is being adopted by SAQA.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Ministers of Education and Labour for their continued support for SAQA and the NQF. I am also grateful for the assistance we receive from the Departments of Education and Labour in executing our mandate. To the Executive Officer of SAQA and his staff, we appreciate your hard work and commitment to the implementation of the NQF. To role players and stakeholders in the NQF, thank you for your valuable support.

To Dr Mokubung Nkomo and members of the Second Authority who served under him, we appreciate and thank you for your dedication and commitment to realising the vision of the NQF. You have set a high standard to be emulated by the new Authority.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Shirley Walters". The signature is written in a cursive style and is underlined.

Professor Shirley Walters
Chairperson



*S Walters and Minister Pandor
at the first meeting of the
Third Authority*



Dr Mokubung Nkomo
Chairperson

The Second Authority worked hard to ensure that the legal mandate of SAQA was adhered to during our term of office that ended in October 2004. In our efforts to fulfil SAQA's principal function, that of developing and implementing a National Qualifications Framework (NQF), we encouraged a culture of lifelong learning that would help to extend fundamental democratic rights to all South Africans.

The various goals of the NQF help to extend these rights, principally the creation of an integrated national framework for learning achievements and the facilitation of access to education, training and career paths together with mobility and progression within these arenas. The NQF's other objectives are to enhance the quality of education and training, to accelerate the redress of past discrimination in education and training employment opportunities, and to contribute to the full personal development of each learner and the social and economic development of the nation.

During the term of the Second Authority, SAQA initiated discussions on the need to conduct a self-assessment exercise that would provide a foundation for improving the NQF. This was felt to be necessary to make sure that the NQF was in line with the transformation in the country. These discussions resulted in the Report on the first cycle of the NQF Impact Study. The Report indicated that some adjustments to the NQF were necessary to cultivate its healthy maturation. Only a mature system will be able to deliver wholesome benefits. We hope all stakeholders involved in the development, implementation and repositioning of the NQF will realise and appreciate its role in the socio-economic transformation of South Africa.

In South Africa, as in other countries, the NQF will not yield the desired results overnight. Stakeholders such as government, business, labour and other key social partners, need to provide the resources that will make it a success. The results of such an investment may not be visible immediately, but will form a foundation for the immense benefit of future generations of South Africans. Education is the seed from which a flourishing South African society will germinate.

Learners in South Africa - both children and adults - can no longer wait for empowerment through education and training. Yet, more time invested in the NQF could well help to produce a learning society with the requisite skills to make South Africa a competent global player, capable of meeting numerous internal social demands.

I am proud of the work done by members of the Authority during my term of office. We faced numerous challenges but managed to deal with them as professionally as possible. I would like to thank the Ministers of Education and Labour for their leadership during this period. The role of government in ensuring the success of the NQF is critical and will determine its future. To our donors and all other strategic stakeholders in the NQF community, our work would have been more difficult had it not been for your support and co-operation. To the Executive Officer of SAQA and his staff, I appreciate your dedication and commitment to the NQF and I wish you everything of the best for the future.

A warm welcome is extended to the new Chairperson of SAQA, Professor Shirley Walters and the members of the Third Authority. I am positive that your leadership will consolidate the work around implementation of the NQF and take it to another level.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mokubung Nkomo'.

Dr Mokubung Nkomo
Chairperson



Minister Mdladlana (left), S Isaacs and M Nkomo at the Q-Africa Conference