

Editorial

South Africa is convening a Growth and Development Summit, currently scheduled for 14 May 2003. The Summit follows years of mobilisation by workers and the poor *against* job losses, increased privatisation and productive dis-investment, and *for* strategies of job creation, basic service delivery and productive investment.

The Summit could be one of the most important events in this country for the next few years, forming the basis for a social agreement that puts South Africa firmly on a path of accelerating economic growth and social equity. In this scenario, all the main constituencies (including government, labour, business and community) will grasp the importance of this opportunity and put mandated and evidence-based proposals on the table. Each constituency will accept that there is some 'give and take' and that the important thing is an effective overall package.

The second scenario, equally likely, is that the Summit will suffer from a lack of preparation from some constituencies, who also enter the Summit not wishing for anything other than the satisfaction of narrow self-interest or an exercise in image management. With growing unemployment, income poverty, HIV/AIDS – and a worsening global economic and political environment – constituency leaders would be failing in their collective responsibility if they went this route.

As this *Policy Bulletin* suggests, there is a lot that can be done. South Africa has an enormous pool of local capital, the public sector can be made to work and there is a lot of energy on the ground to make a change. Whether South Africa can show real evidence of being able to replicate its so-called 'political miracle' in the socio-economic arena remains to be seen, however.

*[Ravi Naidoo
Director, NALEDI]*