

# SOUTH AFRICA

NATIONAL LIBRARY OF SOUTH AFRICA

JOHN K TSEBE — CHIEF EXECUTIVE

## ANNUAL REPORT TO CDNL 2003 – 2004

*“The National Library of South Africa is the primary resource for South Africa's published heritage. We strive to be a world-class African knowledge institution.”* In terms of Section 4 of the National Library of South Africa Act, the Library is tasked with statutory functions all focused on building up a comprehensive collection of published documents produced in South Africa or relating to South Africa and the Southern African Development Community (SADC), and ensuring optimal access to the documents, nationally and internationally. The Library must provide reference and information services, nationally and internationally, as well as perform as the national preservation library, and provide conservation services on a national basis. In addition, the National Library promotes awareness and appreciation of the national published documentary heritage and of information awareness, and information literacy.

The National Library has continued to focus on collecting, recording, making available and preserving the national documentary heritage and promoting an awareness and appreciation thereof. A most welcome indication of the Government's commitment and support was the announcement in November 2002 that a customised building is to be erected for the Pretoria campus of the Library. The building will be ready for occupation at the beginning of 2007.

In the meantime, the previous Chief Executive, Dr Peter J Lor, has retired and Mr John K Tsebe, previously from the University of the North, was appointed as National Librarian and CEO of the National Library.

In each of the National Library's programmes and support departments the strategic directions are being performed in terms of concrete, practical actions, prioritised in the medium and short term. The Library continues to work toward four strategic directions and six closely interrelated strategic objectives, namely: Holding a mirror to the nation; Building a bridge to the information society; Levelling the playing field for access to information and Building a unified, dynamic, learning organisation.

The strategic objectives are: **Building the memory of the nation:** by creating comprehensive collections of documents in all media emanating from South Africa and supplementing these with a judicious collection of international materials about South Africa, by South Africans and in South Africa's indigenous languages. **Exploiting “knowletage”:** there is a unique synergy of knowledge and heritage resources in the National Library. The information is being interpreted and repackaged to meet knowledge and heritage experience needs. **Information and communications technology (ICT) enablement:** the Library's state-of-the-art web-enabled ICT systems are geared toward enabling multipurpose community centres, schools and individual clients to utilise its resources. The primary objective is to assist in eliminating the digital divide and provide access to Southern African information resources both in South Africa and the SADC countries. **Creating visibility and impact:** the National Library strives to become more visible through a range of services that will have an impact on a significantly larger proportion of the population. **Ensuring alignment and partnerships:** aligning the Library more closely with strategic initiatives of the Government and specifically the Department of Arts and Culture is vital for a more central position within the social, political and cultural milieu. It continues to seek partnerships with appropriate non-governmental organisations, parastatals and commercial entities. **Attaining integration and organisational development:** creating a unified, dynamic learning organisation is crucial for exploiting the potential synergy of the two campuses and the Centre for the Book.

A grant received from the Andrew W Mellon Foundation enabled extensive research into the feasibility of upgrading the other four Legal Deposit Libraries in South Africa and integrating their catalogues with the National Library into one common database. This will be at least a three-year project which will be reported on more extensively in future country reports.

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