



Prof. Jakes Gerwel  
*Chair, HSRC Council*

## The HSRC on the march

The foregoing financial year has yet again been a period of significant achievements for the HSRC, and it is with a sense of pleasure and satisfaction that I write these words of introduction for the HSRC 2006/07 Annual Report.

The work of the HSRC is governed by three instruments: the Strategic Plan, which sets forth the vision, mission and programmatic objectives of the organisation; the Business Plan, which describes how the strategic plan will be operationalised; and the Shareholder's Compact, which is the agreement between the HSRC and the Minister of Science and Technology in which the HSRC undertakes to achieve specified outcomes and outputs, and the Minister undertakes to provide the necessary support in order to achieve those outcomes and outputs. In fulfilment of its oversight responsibility, the governing Council of the HSRC is guided by these three instruments in evaluating organisational performance.

Council takes pleasure in the significant achievements of the HSRC management and researchers during the period under review as summarised in this Annual Report. In the context of its fiduciary mandate, Council commends the HSRC for its successful mobilisation of the highest revenue since 2000/01, from both Parliamentary sources as well as from private contracts and grants, and for the prudent manner in which these resources have been managed, culminating in yet another unqualified audit by the Auditor-General. Council is not indifferent to the downside of the organisation's growing dependence on private sources of income in the last few years, but is satisfied that the organisation is taking the necessary precautions and measures to ensure financial sustainability over the long term. The HSRC has already demonstrated success in one of these measures, namely to ensure that a stated proportion of external income is derived from relatively large multi-year contracts.

Council's other primary oversight responsibility is to ensure that the HSRC serves the public purpose by generating research that informs and supports public policy relating to national priorities such as poverty, employment and growth, education, service delivery and HIV and AIDS. The HSRC has also been interested in interrogating the functioning of our democracy and serving as a resource for government in this regard, and has done sterling work to more directly benefit the lives of ordinary people – children, the youth and families. The HSRC's impressive endeavours in this regard are to be found in this Annual Report.

Council is also encouraged by the establishment of the Policy Analysis Unit (PAU) as a device to further serve the public purpose. The PAU was set up to analyse existing public policy to test its fitness-for-purpose, implementation and impact; to convene high-level forums involving the best brains in the respective fields for the interrogation of public policy with a view to contributing its effectiveness and impact; and to advise government and public entities on the best approaches to the priority challenges facing our country. The PAU has already begun to contribute in a significant way to productive public debate, and is making its presence felt in a variety of other ways.

South Africa is a leading proponent of African solidarity in the political and economic development of the people and countries of the continent. The HSRC has sought to parallel this trend, and Council salutes the HSRC's initiatives to reach out to scholars and researchers from other African countries to create partnerships for analysing and seeking solutions to common African socio-economic problems. This Annual Report documents various such fruitful collaborations in areas such as HIV and AIDS. The HSRC is further engaged in a variety of transcontinental alliances and partnerships, and in interactive relationships with NEPAD, SADC and other multinational bodies in the quest

for African social upliftment and the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals. Also praiseworthy is the initiative to bring visiting scholars from elsewhere in Africa to the HSRC for intellectual cross-pollination.

Council notes with satisfaction the HSRC's impressive contribution to new knowledge in the form of published work in peer-reviewed international journals, and the effort to inculcate scholarship in the younger generation of researchers.

All in all, Council is satisfied that the HSRC has been in substantial compliance with Council's expectations and with its own undertakings in the Business Plan for the period under review, and wishes to convey its congratulations to the HSRC CEO and her staff on the achievements of the period under review.

I take this opportunity to express my personal sense of obligation to my colleagues on the Council for their selfless dedication to the HSRC, taking time off their busy schedules to serve on the Council, its committees, and in a variety of other roles.

Finally, I wish to thank the Minister of Science and Technology, and the Director-General and his staff for their unflagging support and cooperation, without which the HSRC would be the poorer. For this, Council is truly grateful.



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