

SOUTH AFRICA

Economic classification:	Middle Income economy	
Oil exporter or importer (net):	Importer	
Annual per capita income:	US\$ 2,440	year 1982
Annual per capita GNP	US\$ 2,300	year 1980
Average annual growth 1960-80	2.3%	
Annual inflation rate 1970-80	12.5%	
Annual inflation rate (current)	12.4%	
Volume of imports	18.4 billion US\$	year 1982
Of which food	4.0%	year 1982
Principal foreign exchange earning export:	Gold	
Debt service as % of exports	6.0%	year 1982
Population	32.0 million	year 1981 est
Annual population growth	2.9 %	years 1980-2000

I. GENERAL INFORMATION

1. Crop Situation and Outlook

Maize: The crop harvested in late 1983/early 1984 was the lowest in recent history being some 4 million tonnes below the reduced crop level attained in 1982/83. The drop in production is solely due to an extended period of drought which has influenced production over the past two years. South Africa, for the first time in many years is a substantial importer of maize rather than an exporter. Given good rains the 1984/84 maize crop could reach 9 million tonnes. This should be sufficient for local requirements and also provide a margin for stock replenishment and limited exports.

Wheat: Some 400,000 tonnes of Australian wheat is being imported in 1984 as stockfeed material to replace more expensive yellow maize from the United States. This importation has occurred due to a shortfall in maize production, rather than that of wheat. A slight tendency for maize producers who have borne the brunt of the drought, to move into wheat is apparent and acreage planted over the past three to four years has increased by approximately 15%. It is not South Africa's intention to become a wheat exporter but rather to achieve self sufficiency in the commodity. Crop prospects for 1984 look good at present with a harvest of 2.2 million tonnes anticipated, a 25% increase over 1983. This is sufficient for domestic requirements.

2. Foreign Exchange Situation

A favourable balance of payments situation exists but the external value of the Rand has fallen and a hard currency surplus has been created by a drop in imports and increased earnings for commodity exports such as gold and coal. Because of the drought, foreign exchange is being made available for imports of basic agricultural commodities.