

CHAPTER 3

THE INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVE ON FURTHER EDUCATION AND TRAINING POLICY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Vocational Education and Training (VET) has become the term that is often associated with economic development. Various international organizations such as United Nation Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the International Labour Organization (ILO) have always associated VET with economic development. During its 2002 General Conference UNESCO recommended that VET “should be a vital aspect of the education process in all countries, and in particular should ...contribute to cultural and economic development”. Vocational Education and Training is used somehow as an umbrella term that includes various derivatives such as Vocational Education, Technical Education, Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) and Further Education and Training (FET) in the South African context. In this chapter the term VET will be used to encompass all these terms.

The global community is increasingly depended on VET for economic development and growth (Keating, Medrich, Volkoff & Perry, 2002). After all VET is the only system of education that can meet the continuous changing needs of learners, employers and national economies (McGrath, 2005). Concerns from various stakeholders attest to this. National governments are concerned about the performance of VET institutions and employers are concerned about labor productivity and both these are linked to VET. Keating, et al., (2002:16) cites Australia as a country that now and then uses VET to intervene in their economy when it is not doing well. Wolfe (1998) indicates that this tendency is also evident in the UK.

Most of the countries associate VET with skills development for economic growth and labour productivity (Keating, et al., 2003:13). VET is also associated with labour productivity. The International Labour Organization (ILO) is the structure that advocates this notion at all its platforms (ILO, 1989). Skills development is one critical aspect that is always attached to VET in order to increase productivity in workplace. In addition VET is seen as a vehicle to address issues such as youth unemployment and poverty. Countries in Africa have used VET mostly to fight the scotch of poverty in the continent and to some extent have succeeded. According to Atchoarena & Delluc, 2001:185 those countries in Sub-Saharan Africa like Botswana have developed VET policies that drive skills development. People who have skills are in the first instance employable and can therefore compete in the job for employment.

The biggest challenge for governments in VET is the development of policies in order for counties to benefit from VET provision (Worldwide Voice of Vocational Training, 2006:11). Whilst many countries especially in Africa are battling with the development of policies that will address economic development and growth, poverty and skills development Blanco (2002) indicates that this should not be the case. Blanco (2002: 5) refers to a term 'policy migration' as a solution to developing sound VET policies. According to Blanco (2002: 5) countries can now learn from each other on areas of excellence and be able to influence growth and development. Those countries that are battling with policy can import VET policies from countries that have developed good policies in the areas in which they are battling. However care should be taken that contexts of countries will differ and modifications will be required by the importing country.

3.2 VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING POLICY DEVELOPMENT: AN INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVE

Various organizations have been in the forefront of the development of VET at an international level. The World Bank is one such organization and has developed significant policy for VET as early as the 1970s. Subsequently a number of studies have been conducted and commissioned by the World Bank (Talik, 2002:14; cf.: Grerson, 2001:22; Gray, Fletcher, Foster, & King, 2004:8). International conferences and seminars have been held on the subject VET policy. For instance in 1989 the International Labour Organization (ILO) hosted a major international seminar titled '*Training for work in the informal sector*' (McGrath, 2005:2). The objectives of the seminar were firstly, to raise the profile of training in the informal sector and secondly to take formal, public VET providers and making them more responsive to the preparation for (self) employment in the informal sector (McGrath, 2005:2). It is McGrath's (2005:2) assertion that contributions at this seminar paved the way for many interventions that were emerging around the area of articulation at an international level between formal training systems and the informal sector.

Another important development in VET policy debate was the World Bank policy document. In 1991 the World Bank published a new policy paper on *vocational education and training* (World Bank, 1991). This was a new strategy for the World Bank on vocational education. While in 1989 the ILO seminar focused on making public VET provision responsive to the needs of the informal sector and self-employment, the World Bank in its 1991 strategy focused mainly on the role of private provision. McGrath (2005:3) indicates that in this policy the World Bank assumed that private provision was always likely to be more efficient than public and that training should always be left in the hands of employers. Atchoarena (2001:18) indicates that indeed policy for public provision has not been able to drive skills development as effectively as private providers.

Issues such as lack of relevance, lack of attention and support to change attitudes of public providers and the reluctance to pay sufficient attention to globalization, has caused public provision to lack behind.

It is in this light that the World Bank policy is now placing a strong emphasis on the reform of public providers. McGrath (2005:3) indicates that the World Bank strategy enjoined colleges to become more responsive to the labor market while also making a strong call that more control to be given to employers during the design and development of training (Atchoarena, 2001:18). In short the 1991 World Bank policy made a call that training for skills should be *demand-led*. Employers should take the lead in terms of the design and development of training materials and public colleges were expected to train people based on the needs as identified by employers.

Another key player in the area of VET is UNESCO. This organization has played a critical role in VET policy development internationally. . According to Tilak (2002:5) UNESCO started contributing to the development of VET as early as 1974. Tilak (2002:5) indicates that in 1974 UNESCO adopted an all important recommendations concerning VET. This recommendation argued that VET should be an integral part of general education as a means of preparing people for an occupational field. Secondly in 2000 it was UNESCO that suggested that Bangladesh prepare its overcrowded population for the labor market. This suggestion was further emphasised by the World Bank in 2002. Lastly to show its commitment to VET UNESCO has established a division within itself that deals directly with issues of VET and this is called 'Division for Secondary, Technical and Vocational Education (STV). This STV division is based at UNESCO Headquarters in Paris. According to Rwambula (2003:183) the STV division is responsible for standards setting in VET globally. It can therefore be argued that VET has and is receiving international attention because of its potential to development human capital.

There are also other internationally acclaimed organizations that have contributed to the development of VET and such includes the International Vocational Education and Training Association (IVETA) and Danish Aid Agency (Danida). According to Atchoarena and Delluc (2001:67) Danida is dispensing money to various countries including South Africa for the development of VET policies. Therefore the status and importance of VET globally cannot be overemphasized if organizations such as the UNESCO, IVETA, the Commonwealth and many others find themselves still allocating resources to advance and promote it. For instance the European Union (EU) has a strongly supported VET policy throughout Europe (Donor Policies, 2001:28). It is argued that the main focus of the EU policies has been on industrialization, regional cooperation and international trade, poverty alleviation and employment (Donor Policies, 2001:28). Most global regions are actively involved although this area is not their priority, in the promotion and support for VET and these include America, Africa, East Asia; Europe; and Latin America and the Caribbean, among others

3.3 THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY AND SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

In September 2001 a declaration called “Declaration on skills development” was formulated and developed during the Interlaken conference on ‘Linking work, skills and knowledge’ from the 10th to the 12th September 2001 (Rwambulla, 2003:180). According to Rwambulla (2003:180) the purpose of the declaration was twofold. Firstly it was to send a strong signal to all stakeholders that skills development was an important development issue and secondly to also serve as a reconfirmation by the global community of the need to improve linkages between education and training, knowledge and skills.

There is sufficient evidence that indicates that there are many countries that have developed VET to levels of effectiveness. Keating, et al. (2002:12) indicates that indeed many countries have developed VET policies to enhance skills development. Atchoarena and Delluc (2001:185 – 199) show that Botswana, Ghana and Mauritius have succeeded in their attempts to develop VET. In Botswana for an example Atchoarena and Delluc (2001:185) argue that because of having developed VET policies, Botswana is on its way to using VET to eradicate many of the ills associated with unemployment, poverty, and HIV/AIDS. However, it cannot be argued that VET has reached a satisfactory level in terms of its value. Many countries are battling to adopt international trends in their efforts to train people in skills necessary for livelihood.

3.3.1 Vocational Education and Training policy development and globalization

Keating, et al. (2002:16) argues that the global economic change has been the main driver of the increased policy activity within VET in recent decades. They (Keating, et al., 2002:16) argue that governments and industry worldwide see VET as a major factor in the drive to be internationally competitive, through its contribution to labour productivity. Talik (2002:3) says that if well developed, VET can contribute to the progress of a country by reducing unemployment. Therefore government policy should open opportunities for VET to be able to influence the skills training of people who will enhance productivity in the labour market and consequently enhance the economy. VET is a global phenomenon and therefore a country that needs to understand, develop and implement policies that will address its economic problems need to adapt to international trends in VET.

Blanco (2002:5) says that the effects of globalization have resulted in what is termed ‘policy migration’. Blanco (2002:5) says that in the 21st century VET policies and practices are no longer constrained by national boundaries. Technological advances allow countries to learn from one another and choose to adopt, and frequently adapt, the knowledge and practice of others.

Technology is a vehicle through which sustainable development and economic growth can be achieved (Rwambulla, 2003:178 – 179). Keating et al., (2002:13) points out that some of the leading economies in East Asia have used VET to their benefit. According to Keating et al., (2002:13) the past two decades has been characterized by aggressive growth in the economy of most East Asian countries. Japan for instance is one of the leading economies in East Asia although Keating et al (2002:13) say that there are questions being raised about the flexibility of the training system and its graduates. Australia is another acknowledged leading country most notably in VET reforms and many countries have looked up to it in this area (Blanco, 2002:5). In other words it is the flexibility of the education system to respond to the needs of the country and the quality of graduates who are produced by this system and join the labor industry that are responsible for this rapid economic performance.

According to Keating, et al. (2002:16) governments internationally have shown a willingness to adopt and adapt VET programmes and innovations from other countries. Atchoarena and Delluc (2001:57) cite as an example the German Dual System of Apprenticeships. The apprenticeship system has been the subject of many studies and has been used to inform innovations such as apprenticeships in France and the Youth Training Scheme in the UK. Also China is looking towards Germany, the UK, Canada and Australia for its reforms of VET (Keating, et al., 2002:16). Thus the use of globalisation by many countries to their advantages so that they can be able to participate and learn from each other on issues that can improve the quality of lives in their respective countries. Therefore governments are under intense pressure to develop VET policies that will enable their countries to participate meaningfully in the global community on issues of global interest more particularly in VET.

Global trends can impact upon policy and practice in a particular country and developments of VET in a particular country can have value for other countries (Blanco, 2002:5).

Although it is important to note how VET policy processes and practices emerge from other countries and Blanco (2002:5) says that ultimately it is the government of a particular country that must develop policy taking into account the circumstances of the home country. Technological advances result in ever-increasing potential for countries to learn from each other and implement broad global policies and practices capable of adaptation to meet local requirements (Blanco, 2002:5). This implies that contexts and the purposes of VET have an effect on the type of policies that should be developed. For instances, there are views that developed countries will develop policies that are different both in purpose and magnitude than the developing countries. In its strategic plan for VET 2005 – 2008 Australia has emphasized that VET should be developed to the level where it should support business competitiveness, innovation and growth (Board of Vocational Education and Training, 2005:6). Developing countries will also have differing agendas for their countries to address different issues.

3.3.2 Skills development approaches

Internationally the apprenticeship system has been used as a strategy to develop trade skills. Many countries view the apprenticeship system as an important component of VET with Australia and Germany leading in this regard (Keating, et al., 2002:13; cf. Board of Vocational Education and Training, 2005:12). With the apprenticeship system an apprentice works for an employer and attends a training institution over a period of three to four years (Marks, McMillan & Ailnley, 2004:9). In Australia research was conducted to establish the effectiveness of their apprenticeship system as a strategy for skills development. Marks, et al. (2004:9) indicates that although apprenticeships have been used for skills development, the research established that there have been limitations in using them. Marks et al., (2004:9) says that these limitations include such things as inflexibility, a limited range of occupations, old technology, lack of access for women and declining numbers and according to Marks, et al., (2004:9) these are not in line with international expectations.

The Board on Vocational Education and Training (BVET) contradicts this view in the New South Wales strategic plan that it developed in 2005. According to BVET (2005:12) apprenticeships in New South Wales had growth significantly in the period 2000 to 2004. According to BVET (2005:12) participation in apprenticeships will have to be maintained as it was established that it is an effective approach to skills development. It follows then from the research findings that the approach of the apprenticeship system is inadequate in certain areas. New South Wales is located within Australia and has shown the popularity and effectiveness of the apprenticeship system of skills development.

After identifying the limitations of the apprenticeship system through research Australia abandoned the apprenticeship approach and introduced another approach known as 'traineeships' as a new approach to skills development. Traineeships involve a one-year programme with an employer incorporating on-the-job and off-the-job training, mostly in office-based or retail industries (Marks, et al., 2004:9). According to Marks et al (2004:9) the apprenticeship system took a much longer period to produce skilled workers than the traineeship. However Marks, et al. (2004:9) further indicate that more recently Australia has changed its approach again. According to Marks, et al. (2004:9) apprenticeships and traineeships have been integrated as part of a more unified entry-level training system. Apprenticeships are associated more with lower rates of unemployment in youth cohorts and substantially higher levels of full-time work whilst traineeships are also beneficial but to a lesser extent (Marks, et al., 2004:9). It follows then that the Australian model of skills development for the trades was adapted from time to time to meet skills development requirements. At one stage apprenticeships were used and at another the traineeships were used. If the assertion by the BVET (2005) is anything to go by, then the apprenticeships and traineeships are still being used in Australia for skills development.

The findings in this research is that apprenticeships improves employment prospects but that vocational education, in general, does not substantially improve labour market outcomes and this is in stark contrast to views held by many. Many reasons are cited for this phenomenon but Atchoarena & Delluc (2001:234) associate this lack of improving labour market outcomes to the notion that apprenticeship programmes do not emphasis the skills know-how. But Mishra (1993:58) disputes this and argues that in India the apprenticeship system has been used to meet the requirements of skilled workers in industries. Mishra (1993) attests the point that participation in apprenticeship programmes can equip the already skilled workers with new practical knowledge or skills. Anderson (2003:3) says that it is a self-evident truth that the purpose of VET is to promote economic growth through the development of human resources which directly enhances productivity and profits for industry. Mishra's argument is that improved skills result in improved performance on the job. Marks, et al., (2004:9) argue against this popular view and say that this finding that VET does not improve the labour market productivity is consistent with other work in Australia and similar to findings in other countries internationally. According to Mishra (1993:59; cf. Rwambulla, 2003:187) in spite of this view many countries and organization still believe that VET is fundamental to skill development and increases chances for employment.

The process of globalization and rapid technological changes point to the emergence of more knowledge-intensive work that point to a new approach to skills development. According to Rwambulla (200:187) globalization and technology highlight the need to link education and training better. For instance China has recently experienced rapid economic growth and Keating et al., (2002:13) points out that the former system of state-owned enterprises and company-based training is being dismantled and new approaches to VET and its relationship to the mainstream education system are being sought. What this point suggests is that skills development is complex and no one approach will be adequate in any particular.

The case of Australia comes to the fore in this instance. Australia uses a variation of skills development approaches in order to meet the needs of its citizens (BVET, 2005:12). Integrating education and training is another attempt to improve on skills development.

Another important concept in skills development is life-long learning. According to Blanco (2002:6) life-long learning takes place throughout all phases of life, work-related and non work-related and refers to this as the emergence of the concept 'knowledge society'. According to UNESCO and ILO (2002:2) as economic, social and technological changes continues people in the global community need to develop their knowledge and skills to be able live and work meaningfully in the knowledge village. In the same light VET systems will have to develop policies and training programmes that will develop the knowledge and skills that will help the workforce to become more flexible and respond to the needs of the workplace (UNESCO & ILO, 2002:2). According to Blanco (2002:6) sustainable economies of the 21st century will have to embrace sustainable education, that is, knowledge that is continuously updated. In this times where change is a constant, skills and knowledge become obsolete faster. Therefore VET systems will have to respond accordingly to ensure that skills always match the needs of the industry. The learning needs of individuals and societies will have to be met in new ways to further the idea of the knowledge society through investing in people and skills, at both national and global levels (Blanco, 2002:6).

3.4 VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING POLICY AND THE INFORMAL ECONOMY

Enterprises of the formal sector of most developing countries are by no means in a position to absorb the increasing demand for employment. The majority of people will have to make a living in the informal sector.

According to the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development in Germany (2001:8; cf. Grierson, 2001: 22) VET systems must react to this situation in a more positive way. In fact according to Rwambulla (2003: 179) more initiatives are required for existing training institutions especially VET colleges to address a greater variety of target groups, particularly the more disadvantaged. Integrated approaches and programmes in VET are necessary to prepare individuals for employment or self-employment in the informal sector as well as participate meaningfully in economic development of the country (Grierson, 2001: 22).

Tilak (2002:3) indicates that because of the limitations of the formal sector in absorbing skilled workers into formal jobs, the informal sector need to be developed as it has been established that the sector has the potential to serve the majority of the people. A typical example in this regard is Bangladesh. When it was established that Bangladesh could not offer job opportunities to its masses, UNESCO (2002) suggested that the government in that country shift its VET training focus to the informal sector. Courses that are oriented towards self employment were used to prepare people for the purpose of creating their own ventures. In spite of the shortcomings of the apprenticeship system as depicted by the findings of several studies Fluitman and Haan (2001:24) argue that apprenticeships will be more relevant if their attention was focused equipping people in the informal sector. In short governments should develop policies that will promote self employment.

McGrath (2005:148) indicates that Africa has had less focus on the informal economy than other countries of the world. McGrath (2005:148) further indicates that this lack of focus on the informal economy in Africa could be caused by among others lack of understanding of the type of skills required in the informal economy and a lack of systematically addressing skills needs of both those already in the informal economy and those likely to enter it. The informal economy is the likely destination for many VET graduates as it also creates self-employment.

In South Africa, those in informal work are estimated to be as many as four million, or approximately one-third of the total labor force (McGrath, 2005:149). The European Union is also increasingly emphasising training for the informal sector (self-employment) (Donor Policies, 2001:28). In Sweden for example job creation in both public and private enterprises does not match the number of graduates from the school system. For these graduates an alternative would be self-employment (Donor Policies, 2001:14). This notion is coupled by a growing shift away from a focus on the employment of graduates to the notion of employability (McGrath, 2005:3).

Ways of preparing these graduates for self-employment is by including a certain range of skills in their preparation at college. Therefore it is important that TVET policy becomes explicit when it comes to self-employment. Policy should afford learners opportunities for self-employment. Programmes should have some elements of entrepreneurship that can prepare these learners for self-employment. As an example someone who studies to be a Motor Mechanic must be taught all the competencies and the theory he/she need to qualify as a Motor Mechanic. A further component of how to start a business, how to manage a business, etc should be incorporated into his/her training.

3.5 A VISION FOR VET

The vision for VET will have to be located within the international perspective because it is an international phenomenon. This vision for VET can be clearly articulated through the World Bank as an organization that has led the development of VET for a long time. In both its policy papers of 1970 and 1991 the World Bank advocates diversified skills development for economic development (World Bank, 2002:11). McGrath (2005:140) indicates that VET systems internationally base their vision on two main elements. The first element is the problem of youth unemployment and the concept of self-employment within the informal economic sector which has been seen as a

solution to this problem (Tilak, 2002:3; cf. Atchoarena & Delluc, 2001:35; Fluitman & Haan, 2001:24).

The second element pertains to “skills development geared to current and projected economic opportunities and challenges” (McGrath, 2005:140). This element is tied to the issue of a globalized knowledge economy that requires the integration of education and training (Anderson 2003:1). McGrath (2005:140) cites the election campaign speech of the United States of America President Bush in which he mentioned that the re-skilling of people should be seen as an investment for the new knowledge economy. Therefore it is important that VET systems address the elements of unemployment, skilling and re-skilling of people. High levels of unskilled people result in high levels of unemployment and this makes people to be inactive in the development of the economy. Thus national VET policies should address unemployment and skills development as their vision.

In addition to McGrath’s two elements on the vision for VET various other authors have suggested other elements that are key to the vision of VET globally. These elements are outlined in the following paragraphs:

3.5.1 Poverty

Poverty is an important key element that must be addressed through VET. According to UNESCO and ILO (2002:3) education and training is a tool through which people can escape poverty. When people are provided with skills and knowledge they are able to raise their output and generate income for themselves. McGrath (2005:4) indicates that lack of skill at an individual level is widely seen as a major cause of poverty.

McGrath (2005:4) argues that individuals without skills to sell on the market, or to make a viable living in subsistence or self-employment activities, are far more likely to be in poverty. Rwambulla (2003:179) argues that VET can assist in poverty alleviation and sustainable development. In short developing skills at an individual level will assist individuals find employment for them or create their own employment, hence push back the frontiers of poverty.

3.5.2 Youth Unemployment

VET is linked to the growing problem of youth unemployment. According to McGrath (2005:4 & 5) the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) countries have expected that VET systems could solve mounting youth unemployment. The Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development (2005:10) indicates that VET is used by developing countries to reduce high rates of unemployment. According to ACFID (2005:11) appropriately targeted VET could help reduce burgeoning/escalating youth unemployment (ACFID, 2005:11). Rwambulla (2003:179) argues strongly on self-employment. According to him (i.e. Rwambulla) the only sure way for employment of the youth is through self-employment. Opportunities should be created for self-employment of young people. This implies that VET could be used to fight unemployment especially among young people.

3.5.3 Accessibility

Public VET systems are widely seen as having a duty to provide access to all citizens especially girls (International Institute for Educational Planning for the World Bank, 2001:40; cf. McGrath, 2005:48). For example racial barriers in Namibia and South Africa, spatial inequalities in access in Mozambique, gender biases in access to VET and gender stereotyping in enrolment in particular courses need to be dealt with by policy (International Institute for Educational Planning for the World Bank, 2001:40; cf. McGrath, 2005:148) are some of the barriers that inhibit the expansion of VET. Access by all is important and VET should facilitate this.

3.5.4 Flexibility

Flexible learning is another concept that is fast gaining momentum in VET. Blanco (2002:2) indicates that flexible learning forms an integral part of vocational education and training because "... it allows for the adoption of a range of learning strategies in a variety of learning environments to cater for differences in learning styles, learning interests and needs, and variations in learning opportunities (including on-line)". The British Council (1998:1) indicates that flexibility in VET is critical as this allows constant revision in order to develop policies and programmes that should meet the needs of various stakeholders. Further Blanco (2002:3; cf. McGrath, 2005:148) indicates that flexible learning enables clients to access the training they want 'where, when and how' they want it. Blanco's arguments present two new policy concepts in VET i.e. flexible learning and accessibility. While it is important to emphasize the needs of the learners in VET, the needs of the country are important. How well the economy of the country is doing should be a cause for concern for the nation therefore the education system especially VET should also be used as a vehicle to address issues of national interest.

It is increasingly evident that flexible learning is not a separate entity but an integral part of the VET mainstream (Blanco, 2002:7). This point is evident in a study report by Mr Rolf Nordanskog in Australia (former manager of education and training at Volvo, appointed by the government) that proposed that vocational education and training should be based on the principle of flexibility (Lindell, 2004:264). The report focused on the lack of tertiary vocational education emphasizing workplace-based learning, which resulted in a short supply of specialists in several sectors of the Sweden labour market (Lindell, 2004:264). In this regard VET should be based on flexible learning.

3.5.5 HIV/AIDS

Most recently, VET systems have been called upon to respond to the HIV/AIDS pandemic in Southern Africa. According to McGrath (2005:5) HIV/AIDS was found by international agencies to be more prevalent amongst skilled workers. Public providers are viewed as important social institutions and are therefore expected to the responsibility to seek to address the issues of HIV/AIDS education and prevention (International Institute for Educational Planning, 2001:40; cf. McGrath, 2005:5).

Therefore VET policy should articulate statements that workers need to be educated on HIV/AIDS matters.

3.6 ARTICULATION BETWEEN VET AND THE BROADER EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Keating, et al. (2002:14) indicate that there should be a direct relationship between education and training but they cite as an example the opposite of this relationship in the American system. They (Keating, et al. (2002:14) point out that the enormous strength of the US economy is in stark contrast of the overall performance of its education system, which has very high levels of educational failures and dropouts associated with economic exclusions. Furthermore Keating, et al. (2002:14) point out that the capacity of the US industry to generate the necessary skills for a highly advanced economy has been impressive. In South Africa the purpose of the FETC is to help participants 'acquire practical skills, applied competence and an understanding necessary for employment in a specific occupation (RSA, 2005:6). This qualification is intended to empower participants not only to acquire certain skills but also understand principles underpinning those skills.

The emergence of National Qualification Frameworks especially in Africa seem to be the answer to many questions asked around issues such as appropriate education levels at which VET should be offered, the appropriate configuration of entry and exit points between VET and general education,

and many other issues (McGrath, 2005:143). McGrath (2005:143) argues that the development of NQF's should be in line with international standards in order for a country to compete globally in terms of education, skills and economy. In South Africa for instance the NQF was developed for the purpose of holding together education and training (integration of education and training) in other words building the 'bridge' between education and training (Akoojee, et al. 2005:112).

In 2001 the DoE and DoL initiated a study to review the performance of the South African NQF. The report of this review was released in April 2002 and it clearly indicated that the NQF was not serving the intended purpose satisfactorily (Akoojee, et al. 2005:112) in terms of quality and efficiency. This implies that the integration of education and training is not always easy to achieve as South Africa is still battling to resolve the NQF issue and South Africa is viewed by the international community as a leader in the NQF is the region (IVETA, 2005:4).

3.7 SKILLS DEVELOPMENT IN AFRICA

Whilst there are a number of international organizations and agencies on VET, Africa as well has organizations and agencies such as the Commonwealth Association of Polytechnics in Africa (CAPA) that deal with VET policy issues. Rwambulla (2003:178) indicates that CAPA was established in 1978 by the Commonwealth to advance and promote VET in Sub-Saharan Africa. According to Rwambulla (2003:178) after independence from colonialism most of the African governments realised that VET can play a significant role in producing proficient workers for industrial development and to make education more responsive to both social and economic requirements of individual nations. Furthermore these African governments saw VET as a source of national development and an engine for economic growth (Rwambulla, 2003:178). Quoting Dr Omoloyole one of the Education Ministers in Commonwealth Africa, Rwambulla (2003:178) indicates that

most developed nations of the world are those that use their human resources most efficiently and give most financial support to vocationally oriented education. It follows that governments can use VET policy to promote education and training that produces proficient workers for economic development.

According to the Worldwide Voice of Vocational Training (2006:11) VET has served to focus the attention of African governments on the urgent need to improve the productivity of labour as well as the economic competitiveness of the region. Therefore like other international countries such as Australia one of the leading in VET, countries of the African region have always put at the forefront the importance of VET in the development of the workforce and economic competitiveness. However these African countries have been faced with challenges to establish and develop responsive training and qualification systems (Worldwide Voice of Vocational Training, 2006:12).

Lindell (2004:257) argues that effective provision of VET through skills development is commonly regarded as highly significant in the context of globalisation and the need to maintain international competitiveness in order to maintain and enhance the skills and competencies of the country's workforce, enabling national competitiveness and economic growth. Equally an effective provision of VET is perceived necessary, supporting many different people in their everyday struggle to find an appropriate work/life balance by providing both education packages for those already working, to basic skill courses for less advantageous groups, preventing social exclusion. In short VET creates an enabling environment for African countries to address skills development and the social upliftment of a country's citizens. Effective VET programmes in Africa should be able to address both skills development and skills enhancement

McGrath (2005:1) says that two main suggestions for VET reform in Africa in the 1990s came from two of the multilateral agencies. These agencies are the ILO and the World Bank. These two organizations or agencies approached VET reform policy from two different angles. On one hand the ILO focused on training for the informal economy while the World Bank focused on the role of private providers in VET.

Akoojee (2005:9) cites Botswana as one of the economic success stories in Africa and suggests that this could be attributed to a unified VET in that country. Gewer (2005:55) supports this view and further points to the fact that the Botswana's Vision 2016 underpins the national policy context in Botswana. This vision sets out to improve the relevance, quality and accessibility of education and highlights the need to 'empower citizens to become the best producers of goods and services' and to 'produce entrepreneurs who will create employment through establishment of new enterprises' (Presidential Task Group 1997:5).

Another African country that is regarded as a success story is Mauritius. The World Bank classifies Mauritius as an 'upper-middle income country' in Africa. Gewer (2005:47) indicates that from 1990 to 2001 its average GDP growth was 5.6 per cent and GDP per capita growth of 4.4 per cent annually. The Ministry of Training, Skills Development, Productivity and External Communications in Mauritius oversee the development and implementation of the VET system. This Ministry was introduced in 2000 and according to Gewer (2005:47) this reflects the emphasis of the government on the development of human capital to drive productivity and economic growth.

3.7.1 National governments and FET policy development

Johanson and Adams (2004:na) indicate that the development of workers in Africa has never been so critical. Johanson and Adams (2004:na) emphasize the point that Vocational Education and Training policies should embrace skills development through education and training in order to grow the economic as this will help create jobs and reduce unemployment especially among the youth. It is Johanson and Adams's (2004:na) contention that if the workforce is developed on skills the impact of social problems such as unemployment and the impact of HIV/AIDS can be minimized.

McGrath (2005:4) takes the debate on the development of VET policies a little further and says the VET is seen as a crucial tool for economic development. According to McGrath (2005:4) policy-makers internationally have seen the development of better technical skills as a key element of improving economic performance for countries. McGrath (2005:142) points out that these economies are affected by unemployment and the lack of skill exacerbate unemployment. The difference between Mauritius and South Africa can be attributed to their difference in unemployment rates. According to McGrath (2005:142) unemployment in Mauritius stands at 10 percent whilst in South Africa these rates are as high as 30 percent.

VET should prepare people; especially young people should be prepared for employment in both the formal and informal sectors argues McGrath (2005:142). This implies that the economy can grow if people, especially young people can be able to participate meaningfully as employees in both the formal and informal sectors of the economy.

The impact of HIV/AIDS on the human resources is taxing on the economy and this has resulted in the decline of “Human Development Indices in several countries” (McGrath, 2005:142). It is McGrath (2005:143) assertion that national VET systems should reflect such challenges and opportunities that are presented by these types of economic responses.

3.8 FURTHER EDUCATION AND TRAINING IN SOUTH AFRICA

The whole process of transforming the FET system (formerly known as technical education) was informed by the work of the National Committee on Further Education (NCFE) appointed by the Minister of Education in 1996 (Akoojee, et al., 2005:107). The report of the NCFE was based on research it conducted based on its mandate and this report informed the Green Paper on Further Education (RSA, 1998), the Education White Paper 4 (RSA, 1998a) and eventually the Further Education and Training Act (1998b) (Akoojee, et al., 2005:107).

In August 2001 a process of addressing the transformation of technical colleges started with the release of ‘A new institutional landscape for public further education and training colleges’ (Akoojee, et al., 2005:107). The result of this process was the merger of the previous 152 technical colleges into 50 multi-site ‘mega’ Further Education and Training colleges. According to Akoojee, et al. (2005:107) this process was aimed at better utilization of resources. VET systems globally are designed to meet the ‘shifting’ needs of learners, employers and the national economy (McGrath, 2005:140). The General Secretary of the SACP Blade Nzimande acknowledges that the South African FET policy makes provision for skills development to meet the needs of learners and the country although these policies are not being religiously implemented at colleges (Rademeyer, 2005:11). Nzimande argues that FET colleges in South African should emphasize skills that are necessary to equip young people to find a place in society (Rademeyer, 2005:11). What this implies is that the relationship between VET institutions and the industry can improve the quality of **programmes offered by** colleges to future employees.

Employers will be able to inform the design of programs as they are in a better position to know what industry want at that particular time. Glen Fischer (2005) indicates that even with the management of colleges, industry has better experience than people from the education system. He further indicates that South Africa has missed the opportunity of strengthening colleges by failing to appoint as principals of FET colleges people from industry.

In South Africa skill development has been placed under the Department of Labor through the Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs) (RSA, 1998c:7). There is a perceptions or opinions that skills provisioning through the (SETAs) in South Africa has fallen short of its intended purpose. The Minister of Trade and Industry in South Africa is echoing these sentiments also in support of Mr Blade Nzimande. According the Minister, Mandisi Mpahlwa what South Africa needs is to revive the apprentice system of training in order to be able to provide skills necessary to fight the high levels of unemployment (Sunday Times, 2006: 1).

The Minister indicates that the apprenticeship system was scrapped in favour of learnerships that are less effective (Sunday Times, 2006:1). Mr Mpahlwa argues that apprenticeships should be revived in order for the country to curb skills shortages.

McGrath (2005:142) argues that the core business of VET internationally is to prepare young people for the world of work. Various initiatives are implemented to meet this goal but McGrath (2005:142) argues that the biggest challenge for VET policies is to prepare someone for the world of work (skills development (McGrath, 2005:142). In South Africa for instance the Further Education and Training Certificate (FETC) was designed to lead learners to ‘acquire practical skills, applied competence and an understanding necessary for employment in a specific occupation [integration of education and training as well) (RSA, 2005:6).

Furthermore the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA, 2005:1) emphasizes this point and says that the FETC is primarily meant to equip learners with the knowledge, skills and values that are necessary for them to participate meaningfully in and offer benefits for the society as well as providing the basis for further learning in higher education, and enable learners to be productive in the workplace.

According to figures released by the Director General of Local and Provincial Government, Ms Lindiwe Msengana-Ndlela (Rademeyer, 2005:11) in South Africa there is a shortage of skills such as engineers, surveyors, economists, accountants, to name but a few. According to Rademeyer (2005:11) the Director General says that FET policies should address the dwindling number of artisans in South Africa. Msengana-Ndlela further pointed out that maybe this situation has been created by the notion that government is responsible for skills development of its people. Msengana-Ndlela argues that skills development couldn't be the responsibility of the government alone, other role-players need to come to the party (Rademeyer, 2005:11). Employers for example can bring quality into the training and development of skills if they choose to participate in skills development. The implication of the above statements is that South African FET policies are falling short of realizing the vision of skills training and development.

One of the major goals of the Ministry of Education after 1994 was to establish a new FET system that will be responsive to the needs of the people of South Africa (RSA, 1998b:8). This is evident in the Department of Education publications and slogans. For instance the title of the Education White Paper 4 reads as: 'A programme for the transformation of FET'. This caption communicates the intentions of the department and implies that one of the purposes of Further Education and Training is to transform the sector into a responsive, effective and efficient sector that meets the needs of the country.

According to the Education White Paper 4 (RSA, 1998b:8) the FET system that was envisaged by the Ministry of Education was to be efficient, effective and accountable to its clients and stakeholders in the sector. It is further stated in the Education White Paper 4 (RSA, 1998b:8) that the Ministry of Education wanted to create an FET system that should contribute to a better life for all in South Africa.

Besides the Ministry of Education seeking to review and change the further education and training system, there were other key players who also wanted to see this sector changing. The business sector in South Africa together with other partners established a fund that was to be known as the College Collaborative Fund (CCF) and the purpose of this fund was to undertake research in FET in order to inform policy makers on issues that needed their attention. Consequently the National Business Trust was tasked to undertake studies commissioned by the CCF.

Indeed the NBI undertook several studies but the one significant for this study was commissioned in Gauteng. The National Business Initiative reports (1998) sought to inform policy decisions around FET in South Africa. This was the main purpose of the research that was conducted by the NBI in 1998.

Several recommendations that had far reaching implications for the FET system were made to various provinces. Most of the recommendations did influence policy imperatives as reflected in the Education White Paper 4.

3.8.1 Further Education and Training policy process in South Africa

The FET policy process in South Africa started to take shape in solemnly in May 1996 when the Minister of Education announced through a Government Notice that a National Task Team on Further Education had been established (National Committee on Further Education, 1997:(i)).

The brief of the NCFE was to investigate and make recommendations to the Minister of Education on FET matters. The National Task Team on Further Education (NTTFE) was later in November 1996 changed to the National Committee on Further Education (NCFE, 1997:i) and submitted its final report to the Minister of Education in August 1997.

The process of the NCFE culminated in the publication of the report that informed the Green Paper on Further Education and Training in April 1998 (RSA, 1998a: 1). The Minister of Education indicated when he released the Green Paper that this process was the first step in the formulation of policy for FET. Therefore it can be concluded that the Green Paper on Further Education and Training that was released in April 1998 set the wheels towards the development of a new policy framework for the FET sector in the new democratic South Africa.

It was within the boundaries of the above listed terms of reference that the initiation of policy for FET was set in motion. After “wide-ranging and extensive processes of investigation and consultation” the NCFE made recommendations that were later used to inform the FET policy (RSA, 1998b: 8; cf. RSA, 1998a: 1).

The Green Paper on Further Education and Training and the Education White Paper 4 released on 15 April 1998 and 25 September 1998 respectively were informed by the investigations and recommendations made by the NCFE (RSA, 1998a: 1; cf. RSA, 1998b:8).

Another important structure that played a key role in the initiation of the FET policy is the National Business Initiative (NBI). This structure represented the business sector. The NBI managed a fund that was established in 1999 and known as the Colleges Collaboration Fund (CCF) and this was a product of the public-private partnership between the national Department of Education and the Business Trust (NBI, 2004:2).

Through the CCF the NBI was able to conduct in-depth research into various issues on FET and this assisted the national Department of Education to make certain decisions that spelled out policy directions (NBI, 2004:3).

It follows then that the period between 1996 and 1998 was the three important years in the development of policy for the FET sector in South Africa. The establishment of the National Committee on Further Education, the release of the NCFE report in 1997 and the release of the Green and White Papers on Further Education in 1998 and the NBI report of the same are significant instances in the recent history of FET in South Africa. This process represented a critical period in the FET policy development in South Africa. The consultation and collaboration of the education and business sectors means that FET policy in South Africa takes the shape of the international trends. Consultation, communication and collaboration are means by which shared ownership can become a reality (Blanco, 2002:7). The collaboration of the two sectors also meant the strengthening of policy development and practices that are relevant to the needs of the country.

South Africa is following international trends with regards to vocational education and training policy debates. According to Akoojee, et al. (2005:107) international VET debates centres on transformation of colleges into autonomous, efficient and market-led (demand-led) institutions serving the needs of industry and emphasises learning, personal development and citizenship (of education and training) (quoting McGrath, 2004c). Akoojee et al. (2005:107) indicate that although policy talks about autonomy of public colleges, officials at both Provincial and National levels still insist on colleges accounting to them. If this is not addressed, the FET sector will only serve the aims of officials and leaving out employers who has knowledge of the needs of industry.

VET policy in South Africa aims at building responsive public colleges that should address education and skills development for both the industry and individuals (Akoojee, et al., 2005:110). According to Akoojee, et al. (2005:110) the FET policy sees FET colleges as the mechanism to deliver on these goals. It is clear from these policy goals that the government is serious about moving forward the FET sector in its delivery of quality and relevant education and training (Akoojee, et al., 2005:110).

Both the DoE and DoL in South Africa are in support of skills development for the Small, Medium and Micro Enterprises (SMMEs) that is in essence the informal sector. Furthermore Akoojee, et al., (2005:114) indicates that the Human Resource Development Strategy of the government of South Africa chose skills development for the SMMEs as one of its objectives and one of its seven priorities (Akoojee, et al. 2005:114). Through the transformation of FET colleges both the DoE and DoL envisaged ensuring that skills for SMMEs are developed. Both these departments argue that it is time that FET colleges becomes responsive to these needs and that these colleges are in a much better position to deliver on these skills (Akoojee, et al. 2005:114).

Therefore the informal sector presents an opportunity for VET colleges to develop skills programmes that will cater for the informal sector.

3.8.2 Building the new VET system

The Apprenticeship Act of 1922 made provision for colleges to provide theoretical training for those already engaged in practical, on-the-job learning in apprenticeships and this indicates that colleges were tightly aligned with the needs of industry (Akoojee, et al., 2005:106). Before 1994 in South Africa there was a formal provision for whites alongside the importation of skilled labour from Europe. It is also important to note that according to Akoojee, et al. (2005:106) before the Advanced Technical Education Act of 1967, blacks were excluded from apprenticeships. Akoojee, et al. (2005:106) say this was an attempt to manage a growing problem of white poverty and unemployment.

The de-linking of colleges from apprenticeships just after 1994 resulted in the decline of articulation with employers and the number of apprenticeships began to fall in the second half of the 1980s (Akoojee, et al., 2005:106 & 107;cf. Sunday Times, 2006:1).

Since the 2004 national elections in South Africa and the announcement of the recapitalisation process colleges were promised more attention (Akoojee, et al., 2005:110). Internationally in recent years there has been an increasing emphasis on the development of institutions to strengthen market linkages and to improve the quality, efficiency and relevance of training provided (Donor Policies, 2001:28). The introduction of SETAs indicates this approach. SETAs emphasize the integration of learning with competency-based training in the workplace (RSA, 1998c: 1). This approach is in line with international standards as indicated by Donor Policies (2001:28).

3.8.3 Skills Development Policies in South Africa

Since 1994 South Africa has achieved much in a way of transformation (Akoojee, et al., 2005:99). The government has identified skills development as crucial for accelerating social and economic challenges (Akoojee, et al., 2005:99).

The International Investment Council (IIC), a body that advises the President of South Africa on economic matters, recently emphasized this point at a briefing meeting. The IIC recommended to the President that South Africa need to ‘develop the ability to attract critical skills’ in order to boost the economy (Business Report, May 15, 2006:1). At this meeting the Minister of Trade and Industry also called for the private sector to start playing an increasing role in skills development. Minister Mpahlwa indicated that skills shortages in South Africa are hampering attempts to grow the economy of the country (Business Report, May 15, 2006:1). As noted from the IIC and Minister Mpahlwa assertions, it becomes increasingly important that FET policies are used as a vehicle to address skills shortages in South Africa.

3.8.4 The national development vision to 2014

In 2004 during the opening of parliament President Thabo Mbeki outlined a vision of four key areas of delivery up to 2014:

1. Halving unemployment
2. halving poverty
3. improving employment equity; and
4. accelerating broad-based black economic empowerment

The Department of Labour had already started with vision 2014 earlier. A Green Paper on skills development in South Africa was released as early as 1997 by the Department of Labour which subsequently informed the Skills Development Strategy of government (Akoojee, et al., 2005:111) which culminated in the National Skills Development Strategy (NSDS). The spirit of this Green Paper was echoed by the Minister of Education Ms Naledi Pandor at the National Consultative Conference in Durban in May 2005 (4) (Beeld, 2005/05/31). The Minister indicated that “there needs to be a more profound examination of policy and the impact it has regarding the economy and the current direction it is taking’.

She emphasized that perhaps South Africa “needs to take a look at a more flexible system and approach to skills development”. By such an account the Minister is emphasizing the importance of skills development in order to address poverty, youth unemployment and many other issues that are pertinent to the South African economy and social order.

3.8.5 Sector Education and Training Authorities and Learnerships

The Green Paper of the DoL called for new Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs) and the introduction of Learnerships. Learnerships were a model to succeed and extend the apprenticeships (Akoojee, et al. 2005:111). The whole process culminated in a Skills Development Act (RSA, 1998c).

South Africa has adopted the learnership approach as an alternative to the apprentice system. According to the Sunday Times (April 30, 2006) the Minister of Trade and Industry in South Africa indicates that the apprenticeship system in South Africa was scrapped in favour of the learnership system. With the learnership contract the employer has an obligation to commit to a period of employment for the entire duration of the learnership for the learner (Akoojee, et al. 2005:112), but not to subsequent employment.

In many ways the learnership contract implies that the employer will create opportunities for the participating learner to acquire certain skills during the contract period. Akoojee, et al., (2005:111 –112) indicates that whilst there are challenges with the apprenticeship system as indicated by Marks, et al., 2004 the learnership system as well has its challenges. They (i.e Akoojee, et al., 2005) indicate that in South Africa learnerships should be accessible to the previously disadvantaged and should be responsive to the identified needs and they should as well be able to equip participants with skills for self-employment.

The Skills Development Act in South Africa also makes provision for short skills programmes as a strategy for skills development. Short skills programmes do not constitute a full qualification but comprise of credits that if the learner accumulates a required number of credits, eventually lead to a full qualification (Akoojee, et al. 2005:112). This is in line with international trends where VET programmes should be flexible and should allow upward mobility for the learners.

The role of the SETAs included the evaluation of workplace skills plans and the development of sector skills plans, developing and registering Learnerships, quality-assuring training provision, and managing and administering the grants received through the training levy (Akoojee, et al. 2005:111). The Green Paper of the DoL introduced a levy-grant as a means to encourage employers to be involved and invest in the training of their workers (Akoojee, et al. 2005:111).

Learnerships are the core programme or curriculum for training in skills development located within SETAs (RSA, 1998c:7). Learnerships operates along the same lines as an apprenticeship system and it involves a contractual agreement for a fixed period between the employer, the learner and in a learnership system the provider is involved as well (Akoojee, et al. 2005:111).

According to Akoojee, Gewer and McGrath (2005:112) learnerships should not only serve the employed, but also the pre-employed and the unemployed people. According to Akoojee (2005:111) learnerships are located at the core of the Department of Labor (DoL) macro-strategy for skills development. In other words the learnership system is an integrated approach through which the government of South Africa wants to address the shortage of skills in the country.

The preceding paragraphs were outlining the development of VET policies both from an international and South African perspective. The essence of the paragraphs is that VET is meant to play a critical role in the life of any nation. From well-developed nations to under-developed VET will always be important. In America for instance President Bush has identified VET as a vehicle through which the knowledge economy could be developed. The following paragraphs now try to indicate the new direction that VET should take in this millennium.

3.9 THE FUTURE OF VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING

3.9.1 Challenges for VET

The needs of governments, employers, workers and learners are dynamic. They will always be shifting and therefore this will require that the type of VET that is on offer should be dynamic. The following are the critical challenges for VET in this millennium (Atchorena, 2001:2; cf.: Blanco, 2002:6; Rambulla, 2003:179):

- ◆ economic: meeting the needs of globalization and preventing marginalization, particularly the developing countries;
- ◆ educational: increase the capacity but also the diversity of education and training pathways. In other words policy should encourage access to TVET of disadvantaged groups like women and also create more opportunities for individuals who follow the TVET stream. Policy should for example allow people to exit the system at any particular level with credits or should create a pathway to join the industry or pursue further studies at Higher Education Institutions;
- ◆ political: youth unemployment and also provide responses to the growing number of out-of-school, out-of-work youth;
- ◆ knowledge: increased recognition of the role of knowledge in economic development;
- ◆ sufficient funding;
- ◆ institutional/college management autonomy and initiatives;
- ◆ colleges encouraged to set annual performance goals and to publicly announce their achievements. In South Africa the Minister of Education started announcing the results of College results in 2005;
- ◆ VET programmes should be of an internationally accepted quality and relevant to the development of the state;
- ◆ all concerned should recognize TVET as an important development investment;
- ◆ In the context of the emerging market economy, the strengthening of the demand side is arguably the major challenge (Keating, et al., 2002:13).

In addition to the above challenges for VET the ILO (unknown) suggests that there is a need for governments to continually notice changes and trends in the provision of VET. Old methods and outdated policies that used to work might not hold true now or in the future. Therefore new challenges and trends that are becoming common in this sector need to be acknowledged and practiced. In this regard the ILO (unknown) provides an overview of the differences between the old and new paradigms.

Table 3.1 The New Paradigm: Emerging Challenges for VET

Old Paradigm	New Paradigm
Supply-driven approach	Search for demand-driven approaches
Training for employment	Learning for employability
In-service training	Concept of continuing life-long learning
Training and focus of the teacher/trainer	Self-learning and focus on the learner
One-time learning	Continuing recurrent life-long learning
Education and training separated	Education and training integrated (a sound general education and broad based initial training are essential bases for life-long continuing learning)
Specialization in one skill	A search for multiskilling
Skill recognition based on training period and examination	Recognition based on competency and prior learning
Rigid and fixed entry and exit	Flexible and multiple entry and exit
Focus on formal sector	Recognition of the need to focus on both formal and informal sectors
Training for wage employment	Training for wage and self-employment
Centralized system	Decentralized system requiring both strong national and decentralized institutions
Policy and delivery dominated by state	Policy and delivery separate, market-driven
Governance dominated by the state	Participatory governance, recognition of multiple actors, social dialogue

In short the above challenges call for future VET policy to address flexibility of provision, diversity (different programmes), and employment (as well as self-employment).

3.9.2 Emerging Policy and research agenda for TVET

The following aspects are that are emerging as agenda for research in VET policy Atchoarena (2001:2):

- ◆ transition from school to work including the need to make TVET institutions more responsive to the needs of the labour market. This motivates the global interest for apprenticeship schemes and work experiences programmes;
- ◆ responsiveness, forming partnerships are key to TVET policy
- ◆ shifting the policy focus from inputs to outputs (through financing and certification mechanisms);
- ◆ involving social partners primarily employers in the governance of the TVET system;
- ◆ granting more autonomy to TVET institutions; and
- ◆ promoting private provision and competency-based training (like SETAs in South Africa) (Atchoarena, 2001:3).

The above-mentioned aspects indicate the direction of VET policies internationally. These should be addressed by policy if the purpose and intentions of VET of growing the economy, skilling workers and meeting diverse needs of society are to be realised (Keating, et al., 2002; cf. McGrath, 2005).

3.9.3 VET as a demand-lead approach

Active participation of employers in the planning and the delivery of TVET is sought to secure that training programmes correspond to the demand of the private sector (Donor Policies, 2001:8). For instance Danida considers the following elements important for an effective functioning TVET sector:

- training is organized according to needs (in other words – demand-led)
- stakeholders, including employees and employers' organization, are involved in the management of the sector,

- training can be shown to cater for both the formal and informal sectors (Donor Policies, 2001:5-6). This approach was tested in Tanzania by the government and results are encouraging (Donor Policies, 2001:6).

The expansion of demand and the linking of supply to demand are amongst major challenges for VET globally (Keating, et al., 2002:14). Keating, et al. (2002:14) say that interventions that have developed in Mexico for instance have been designed to increase supply with little attention being given to the demand side. According to Lindell (2004:257) Sweden VET has already undergone a transformation process moving towards a more demand-led mode of function. However Germany presents a scenario that is in contrast to that of Mexico and Sweden. In the 1980s the GTZ supported cooperation that was sought by the German government with future employers during training. The purpose of this cooperation was to ensure that training was oriented more explicitly towards the demand of the industry (Donor Policies, 2001:7). It follows that VET policies that creates opportunities for the linkage between training providers and employers are critical as this ensures the relevance of the training programmes.

3.9.4 Key issues for the future in VET

Key issues and discernible trends in VET include:

1. relating VET to the other sectors of education;
2. its relationship to the state and other elements of civil society;
3. the demand-side issues;
4. its mutability/uncertainty in the face of the new challenges of this century.

(Keating, et al., 2002:14)

3.10 CHAPTER REVIEW

Critical aspects that should not be ignored by those who intend to see the development of their countries globally juxtapose the development of Vocational Education and Training policy. The development of policies for VET should take into account the important role that VET can play in supporting social and economic development goals. Through VET countries are able to develop skills for labour productivity and also to create self-employment. When people are skilled they can participate meaningfully in either the formal or informal economy and the enabling environment can be created through clear VET policies.

VET is recognized by the global village as an important phenomenon towards the development of communities. The Commonwealth, UNESCO, ILO, CAPA, GTZ are some of the international organizations and agencies that recognize the importance of developing enabling VET policies for the economic development of individual and collective countries and regions. For instance the ILO advocates the notion of developing VET policies that will raise the profile of training in and for the informal sector (McGrath, 2005:2). In Africa VET reforms are ‘young’ and evolving and this has placed the informal sector on the back foot of development.

This chapter has outlined what should policies that enhance VET involve. It was indicated that there are many challenges faced by countries when developing VET policies. Aspects such as youth unemployment, poverty, HIV/AIDS cannot be ignored when developing policies. These aspects affect the performance of the economy of any country. Another important component of VET is skills development and the role that employers or industry should play during policy development was emphasised. It was indicated that VET policies should respond to the needs of employers while also not neglecting the needs for participants who might want to create their own employment.

Another issue raised in this chapter is articulation between VET and the broader education and training system. This chapter has indicated that this century will rely more on the 'knowledge economy' than anything else. The knowledge society is growing and therefore VET will have to respond positively to this economy in order to enable nations to be competitive in terms of both the knowledge and economy. This can be achieved if skills development is integrated with education and training. Skills development and education and training cannot continue to be treated as separate entities by national systems of education. The confusion in the apprenticeship system in some countries could be addressed by integrating VET with education and training.

Finally one issue that VET policy development should pay attention are the issues of accessibility, equity, lifelong learning and flexibility. Authors like Blanco (2002), Atchoarena (2001) and Donor Policies (2001) indicate that to combat the lack of skills development, poverty, and unemployment these values and principles will have to be incorporated in VET policies. Lifelong learning for instance is a global policy priority that should be incorporated in all education systems as indicated by Security 4 Women (na: 1). According to Security for Women (na: 1) lifelong learning is particularly important as the nature of work and technological advances keeping on shifting. Therefore it is important that policy development needs to take into account these important global policy imperatives.