

- 4 The language of the original Dutch settlers in South Africa still survives: Afrikaans. Would you say there is a future for Afrikaans?

I think the important point to make first of all is, yes. There, there is a future for Afrikaans. It is the second largest language in the country. It is spoken by at least six million people as a mother tongue. If you combine the second-language and foreign-language speakers, then the number rises to about ... thirteen, somewhere between thirteen and fourteen million people. OK, so it's a very important language. I think, another interesting fact to mention is that most of the money spent in South Africa at the moment is spent by Afrikaans-speaking people. If you start a company – now – in South Africa, and you do not address yourself to the Afrikaans part of the market, then to put it rather bluntly it's – I, I think that would be rather foolish, and many people realise this.

- 5 And Afrikaans is a sufficiently well developed language?

It is a well-developed language in the fullest sense of the word. It's a fully developed scientific language, for instance.

It is a language spoken in many areas, especially in the Western Cape, where I live, and in the Northern – North-Western parts of the country. So yes, I think it does have a future. At our university, for instance, we've already made the decision that the university will still be an Afrikaans university. Of course, you cannot ignore the other languages, especially English, being a world language. I mean that would be rather silly, so if we think of the task that we have – our task is to empower students by providing them with knowledge and certain instruments, if you like, with which they can go out in the world and do their thing.

- 6 Afrikaans and the other languages are bound to change as all languages are...

The languages of South A-, South Africa do influence one another. And make no mistake about that: English is also influenced, by the other languages and especially by Afrikaans. So we have a very special brand of English, for instance, that one might call South African English. We actually have a, a, a large dictionary unit dealing specifically with South African English. As far as the political position is concerned the position of Afrikaans has changed. Of course. I mean in the apartheid era, Afrikaans was one of two official languages. Now we have eleven. We cannot really afford ... eleven languages and almost automatically that would lead us into a position where English becomes rather dominant. But we do have laws that actually protect, you know, the cultures and the languages.

- 7 How, would you say, is the republic of South Africa doing at present?

Erm, we have a new political dispensation, it's been in place only for a few years, since 1994. We have a new government, and it's a largely black government now and ... it's, it's a democratic government, it's a government that has to deal with a lot of problems, among other things the economy, which is under a lot of pressure. We have a lot of problems with health. But within the larger African context, South Africa seems to be playing a rather, rather important leadership role and ... our own president has started a program and the program is actually designed in such a way that it should ... stimulate, if you like, a so-called African renaissance ... which is a rather tough call, to make of course. I mean Africa being what it is: it's very poor, a lot of problems.

- 8 In what way is South Africa's position different from the rest of the Continent?

I think South Africa should be seen as this very rare, strange combination of first and third world. So you do have, you do have a certain economic strength in the country. And part of the definition of the economic strength, is that there is a well-developed group of people if you like – they're not only white, there's quite a substantial shift at the moment from white rich people to a growing section of people from the black communities – and they are the people who keep the economy going, providing jobs and creating economic opportunities. But there's this incredible problem, the largest part of the economy is owned by the smallest part of the ... community. So the redistribution of wealth is something that ... we need to focus on. Quite a lot.