People before profits?
A review of development and social change

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Introduction

On 31 August 2002, under the banner of Social Movements United (SMU), over 20 000 red-clad activists marched from Alexandra to Sandton[1] in protest against the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD). Just two hours later, another march left Alexandra following the same route. This march, under the banner of the Global People's Forum, was smaller but no less significant when looking to understand growing social contestations in South Africa.

The SMU marched against the Summit, renaming it the World Summit on Sustainable Destruction (W$$D), and rejecting its framework for sustainable development. The march provided a platform from which local activists would draw attention to the continued and deepening crisis in the roll-out of services to the poor and the increasing poverty of South Africans at the bottom of the economic ladder. For many on the march, it was a return to the glorious traditions of resistance cooked up in activist laboratories in the 1980s. But the march also represented a break with the traditions of the old liberation movement, finding itself within an international community of activists struggling to find new ways of responding to neo-liberalism and corporate globalisation.

In stark contrast, the Global People's Forum march did not come to challenge, but rather to congratulate and celebrate. The gulf between the two marches was more than a clash between partisan loyalties or a difference in approaches. Rather, the conflict between the two represents the growing rift between the rulers and the ruled, between the old and the evolving, between the government's commitment to the Washington Consensus and the people's desire for that other world of possibilities. It is, at its core, representative of the growing contestation of notions of development and social change that have characterised this review period.

We begin this chapter with the WSSD because it speaks so clearly, and recently, to the position of the South African state and to civil societies within the current neo-liberal world order, highlighting most importantly the differences with regard to notions of, and approaches to, social change and development. While we examine the nature and extent of social delivery within the state's development through export-led, market- and private-sector-driven growth, we also look at the arguments made by social movements that any delivery within a neo-liberal macro-economic framework is of necessity limited, since it cannot deliver the extensive resource mobilisation necessary for far-reaching economic redress, social justice and equity. In this light, we argue that government's continued mobilisation of the discourse of development and 'meeting the needs of the poorest and most marginalised' only

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[1]   Alexandra is a sprawling informal settlement on the outskirts of Johannesburg, Sandton a wealthy suburb less than 2km from Alexandra.

works to create the illusion of a commitment to rapid, far-reaching social change while the state is in fact extending the reach of the neo-liberal project. We also look briefly at the challenges that this poses for a civil society that has invested much time, energy and other resources in targeting the state for social change and development in the interests of the majority.

Our choices for discussion in this chapter have been determined not only by their currency in recent debates and discussions, but also by the fact that they are the daily, lived realities of the majority of South Africans being forced to engage with neo-liberalism in its many forms in their daily lives.

Rather than exploring issues of delivery individually within the context of how the state has addressed these, we explore the general trends that are evident across sectors; this will provide an assessment of the impact of the state's delivery on the nature and extent of poverty, both generally and specifically, and will also highlight the differences in approach amongst different sectors of South African society.

Setting the stage

The South African state's neo-liberal path was most clearly articulated with the adoption of the Growth, Employment and Redistribution Strategy (GEAR) in 1996. Based on the advice of the World Bank and a group of policy experts, GEAR became known as South Africa's 'homegrown structural adjustment policy'. It prescribed measures for enhancing exports, trade liberalisation, fiscal restraint in the interests of servicing the national debt, tax breaks for big business, cuts in social spending, cuts in the public service, privatisation of state assets, privatisation of basic services, the casualisation of labour, job-sharing, and lower wages for youth. Its framing argument was that development could only happen through increased growth, without making explicit the effects that such a prioritisation would have on the lives of the poor and the fact that increased growth does not necessarily 'trickle down' to those most in need of it.

While those who operate within the economic policy frameworks of the state, such as the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU), argue that the adoption of GEAR has not meant the end of the debate around economic policy formulation in the country, in practice very little has shifted within this debate post-1996. Instead, GEAR has come to be the determining framework for all other policy discussions. In the words of Oupa Bodibe, co-ordinator in the office of the COSATU Secretariat,

> Let's not fall into the trap of an end of history – as if GEAR happened
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> in 1996 and nothing thereafter. Yes, it was a major setback. But
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> there have been some small shifts in the original framework of the

> GEAR adopted in 1996. The mere fact that the ANC cannot use words
> like GEAR, restructuring, privatisation – they have to say RDP, etc. –
> shows that even their own constituency has problems with it. The mere
> fact that government has been forced to come back to the table – I'm
> not saying that there'll be any major victories for the working class –
> to get consensus from broader society about economic policy is a sign
> that the pressures brought to bear on government from various forces,
> including the trade union movement, have paid off.[2]

While government made GEAR 'non-negotiable', it has allowed for some discussion in other areas, where parameters are already defined by GEAR. This limitation has been seen in relation to the discussions between government, labour and business around job creation, where government has only committed to increased job creation in the new sectors and forms of work encouraged by neo-liberalism, and has refused to engage on the kinds of job creation proposed by COSATU (for example, through greater public works programmes). This has also been the case with regard to privatisation, where labour has been reduced to winning concessions around retrenchments rather than fighting privatisation as an overall approach.

In spite of GEAR's commitment to creating over 400 000 jobs by the year 2000 (Khanya College, 1997:5), there have, in fact, been massive job losses recorded since its implementation. According to Haroon Bhorat,

> Since 1993 all sectors except the retail and finance sectors have yielded
> significant job losses. There could be three possible reasons for this –
> the onset of tariff and trade liberalisation; the greater adoption of new
> technologies and the restructuring of state-owned enterprises (Bhorat
> in *New Agenda*, Issue 4, Fourth Quarter, 2001:25).

By January 2001, the start of this review period, GEAR was well on its way to being fully implemented and its effects were being widely felt and responded to.[3]

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[2]   Interview in research presently being conducted by the writers as part of a project for the Centre for Civil Society (CCS), April 2003.

[3]   GEAR has been extensively written about, including by, amongst others, Patrick Bond, Hein Marais, Ashwin Desai and Khanya College.

Neo-liberalism, cost recovery and the struggle for basic services

One of the areas in which the greatest expectation for change exists is that of the delivery of basic services. With water, electricity and housing speaking to the interests closest to people, and defining the nature and quality of their lives, the privatisation of these basic services and the introduction of cost recovery policies in relation to their delivery have meant direct attacks on the quality of life experienced by many people. With the adoption of GEAR, the role of local government shifted from a redistributive one to an 'enabling' or 'facilitating' one (McDonald and Pape, 2002:4), with the responsibility of government being to put in place mechanisms for increasing access (for example, through creating suitable conditions for investment or the formation of private-public partnerships) rather than delivering access directly. Under this model, real access has come to be determined by market forces, and the state has been allowed to renege on its responsibility to provide free basic services to all.

While the period immediately after 1994 saw substantial gains being made in terms of infrastructure development, "cost recovery and bureaucratic inefficiencies" have led to the gradual demise of many such projects (McDonald and Pape, 2002:4). For example, while 2 million households may have gained access to water between 1994 and 1999, a substantial number of them have subsequently endured the pressures of cost recovery. According to McDonald and Pape,

> Cost recovery has already contributed to the perpetuation of poverty and inequality. Cost recovery has become far more serious than the early days of gentle arm-twisting under Masakhane. With cut-offs by remote control, and household invasions by Eskom's 'red ants', cost recovery threatens to unravel the very fabric of social and economic life in a democratic South Africa (McDonald and Pape, 2000:7).

At the time of the first democratic elections in South Africa, 12 million South Africans did not have access to clean drinking water, 21 million people did not have adequate sanitation, 10 per cent of the population did not have access to a toilet of any kind, a further third had to rely on pit latrines, and over 20 million people did not have access to electricity. By February 2002, government had provided 7 million people with access to clean, running water and 3.5 million people with electricity. Despite these advances, the last census results showed that only 72% of households use electricity for lighting and 51% of households use electricity for cooking; only 72% of households have access to piped water in the dwelling (on site or 200 metres away) with a further 12% having access to piped water further away; only two out of three households live in formal dwellings (an increase of six per cent from 1996);

and thirty-one per cent of households in the Eastern Cape do not have access to toilets as compared with four per cent in Gauteng (Statistics SA, Census 2001).[3]

With the number of those without access to services already high, the logic of cost recovery puts an end to access for those who cannot maintain payments for services, and makes gaining access for those without services even more difficult. What the review period has seen is the beginning of the restructuring or re-ordering of the lives of the poor based on affordability of services. For large sections of the unemployed, for example, seasonal or casual work does not always allow for long-term planning around services based on income.

Cut-backs in past development gains

One of the most recent surveys on service delivery in South Africa, released in July 2001, estimates that almost 10 million South Africans have had their water cut off for non-payment of bills. 10 million people have also experienced electricity cut-offs, and more than 2 million people have been evicted from their homes for failure to meet payments (McDonald, 2002:4).

Where families and individuals cannot afford to pay, the onus rests on them to prove indigency to allow for exemption from, or subsidisation of payment for basic services. The requirements and process for proving indigency have led critics to claim that "in the best of circumstances, indigent policies amount to harassment of the poor" (McDonald and Pape, 2002:5). In addition, there is no standard national policy for determining indigency, and municipalities have been left to develop their own criteria. Some municipalities have yet to develop such policies, which means that no policies for indigency currently exist, making the concession moot.

Indigent policies which are means-tested have also been shown to cost more as they require a whole bureaucracy to administer them. Research in Europe and North America suggests that, unlike universal benefits, discretionary welfare payments tend to have a lower take-up rate as bureaucratic procedures and social stigma discourage people from accessing entitlements. While various means testing methods have long featured in some European and North American welfare systems, the growing use of such methods is consistent with neo-liberal approaches to welfare. See, for example, the work of Esping-Anderson.

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[3]   http://www.statssa.gov.za/SpecialProjects/Census 2001

Local communities respond

The period under review saw increasing struggles for access to the basic services of water, electricity and housing, as the logic of cost recovery manifested itself in cut-offs, evictions and the attachment of people's personal belongings in communities across the country. At community level, several organisations and campaigns have emerged to fight cut-offs and privatisation of basic services. One such organisation is the Soweto Electricity Crisis Committee (SECC), which emerged in response to Eskom's cut-offs of more than 20 000 households per month in Soweto in early 2001 (Fiil-Flynn, 2001). It launched Operation Khanyisa ('To Light Up'), which unfolded in marches, demonstrations, pickets, illegal reconnections and manifestos. In October 2001, the SECC won a partial victory with a temporary moratorium on cut-offs. However, by the end of the review period, 87 members of the SECC were on trial for public violence and damage to property, as a consequence of protesting outside the house of the Mayor of Johannesburg, Councillor Amos Masondo, and demanding an end to cut-offs and a commitment to the delivery of free basic services to all citizens.

Similarly in Cape Town, the Anti-Eviction Campaign (AEC) emerged in September 2001 in Tafelsig when members of the community erected barricades preventing municipal officers from evicting people who were in arrears. It has since grown to include Delft, Elsies River, Lentegeur, Valhalla Park, Gugulethu, Phillippi, Mandela Park, Mfuleni, Athlone, Blue Downs, Lavender Hill, Vrygrond and Tambo Square, with members coming under increasing pressure from the state to restrict their activities through arrests and continued harassment. Similar struggles around evictions and the fight for free water took place in Durban prior to and during the current review period, most significantly during the 20 000-strong march at the World Conference Against Racism (WCAR) in Durban, South Africa in September 2001.

Demands for basic services coalesced around the WSSD, drawing attention to the fact that the sustainable delivery of equitable and adequate basic services to all people is further prevented by the neo-liberal development model on which the official sustainable development discourse is based.

Health before profits or profits before health?

Health, as a central component of quality of life, has not escaped the reach of neo-liberal restructuring in the interests of profit rather than the needs of people. This is reflected in the effects of other neo-liberal policies on the general health profile of the country, as well as in the policy shifts made within the national health system.

Privatisation of basic services has impacted negatively on the health profile of communities as standards of nutrition, cleanliness and hygiene – and thus professionalism – are compromised. Notable examples are the outbreaks of cholera in KwaZulu-Natal and Alexandra, Gauteng at the end of 2000 due to the lack of access by communities to clean, safe water. In KwaZulu-Natal, the National Department of Health figures show that 81 265 cases had been recorded by March 2001 (South African Human Rights Commission (SAHRC), 2002:124).

The Health Systems Trust, in its Health Reviews for 2001 and 2002, draws attention to the fact that the noble goal of equity within the health system is continually compromised by budgetary constraints and the general motive to adopt neo-liberal policies. It speaks specifically to the pressures brought to bear in transforming the system by continued disparities between the private and public sectors as well as the impact of private-public partnerships (PPPs). The Health Review for 2001 states that

> public-private partnerships in their very nature are premised on a system
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> which, whilst providing the same quality of care, offers differential amenities
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> to patients and thereby undermines the aim of promoting equity.

It is also not clear whether 'differential amenities' does not also translate into 'differential quality of care'.

PPPs also have the effect of establishing competing goals and objectives for managers of health institutions, on the one hand demanding the determination of all approaches by market forces while on the other expecting redress and equity. This is reflected in the move by many public hospitals to privatise parts of their institutions in an effort to subsidise the running of the public services through potential profits. PPPs serve only to reinforce the development of a two-tier health system with far-reaching differences in terms of equity.

GEAR's fiscal constraints have also meant that budget allocations are inadequate for meeting the needs of a decentralising health system, and this has been exacerbated by an unequal distribution of resources across provinces. For example, while the Gauteng Department of Health spent an average of R6 million in 2001 and 2002, the Limpopo Department of Health spent only R2 million (SAHRC, 2002:19).

The National Health Bill, tabled in 2001, sought to provide a

> national framework for the delivery of health care by creating closer
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> co-operation between the three spheres of government. It is designed
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> to improve access to health care facilities, and improve quality of care
>
> by building capacity of health professionals... The objective of the

national framework is to establish a national health system which encompasses public, private and non-governmental providers of health services (SAHRC, 2002:103).

What the Bill fails to acknowledge, however, is the different and competing interests of these actors and the potential for profit motives and budgetary restraint to compromise the goals of increasing access and delivery.

By the end of the review period the Bill had still not been passed, with the Health Systems Trust commenting that this has left a "legislative vacuum for establishing the district health system" (SAHRC, 2002:103). The Health Review for 2002 notes that, in the absence of the National Health Bill, four of the nine provinces have passed their own Acts and three others have Bills that will need to be amended and finalised after the National Health Bill is passed. It would seem that substantial progress still has to be made before the full realisation of the District Health System.

Gains in health care provision

Within the limited existing framework, government has made many gains since 1999, and these include:

- the roll-out of prevention of mother-to-child-transmission (PMTCT) of HIV/ AIDS programmes at 18 pilot sites in four provinces;

- the provision of anti-retroviral therapy (ARV) to survivors of rape;

- the establishment of voluntary counselling and testing sites (VCTs) as pilots for the treatment and prevention of HIV/AIDS;

- home-based care (HBC) for HIV/AIDS patients and orphans, shifting chronic care to families and communities;

- a successful 'Beyond Awareness Campaign', promoting awareness, support and prevention of HIV/AIDS through the distribution of 250 million free condoms;

- a successful Victim Empowerment Programme for the prevention of violence against women and children; and

- a new mental health policy promoting the de-institutionalisation and rehabilitation of patients in families and communities, freeing up hospital beds for other patients (SAHRC, 2002:101).

However, it was only after concerted action on the part of civil society organisations under the banner of the Treatment Action Campaign (TAC), that concessions were made on the roll-out of the PMTCT programmes, the VCT pilots and the provision of ARVs to rape survivors, and even with these gains, there have been problems.

The roll-out of PMTCT programmes has been characterised by an ongoing lack of co-ordination between the various levels at which health policy implementation occurs at the provincial level; reported inefficiencies in the provision of ARVs to rape survivors; along with problems in other parts of the health system that impact negatively on this provision (for example, in Orange Farm, the community organisation 'Let Us Grow' reports that its members have sometimes had to transport rape survivors in wheelbarrows to the nearest hospital, Baragwanath in Soweto, almost 10 kilometres away, because of the lack of ambulances in Orange Farm (Khanya College, 2002:42)) and the Beyond Awareness Campaign's budget was cut, directly affecting the success of its programmes. In addition, programmes such as those of home-based care and the de-institutionalisation of mental health care, have come under criticism for allowing the state's further withdrawal from its responsibility to provide basic services and health care. Feminist critics have argued that such moves increase the sphere of unpaid or 'reproductive' labour traditionally performed by women in the home and community.

Despite government's celebration of its fight against violence against women and children, NGOs in the sector report difficulties in accessing funding and increasingly donors are arguing that the funding of such 'social welfare' NGOs should come from government as part of the state's responsibility to the welfare needs of its people. However, government argues that it is constrained within its ever-shrinking fiscus to decrease funding in this sector and encourages NGOs to generate income for themselves through various means or to enter into PPPs or seek funding from the private sector for provision of shelters for women and children experiencing violence, and campaigns targeted at reducing its incidence (Naidoo, 2000:2).

HIV/AIDS: four pillars of the National Strategic Plan

The South African state has failed dismally in the combat and treatment of HIV/AIDS. In spite of the existence of The National HIV/AIDS and STD Strategic Plan for South Africa, 2000-2005 (called National Strategic Plan) and the National Integrated Plan (NIP) of 2000, the incidence of the disease as well as the hardships of people living with AIDS, have increased in the review period.

Based on the antenatal HIV prevalence survey conducted in October 2000, 24.5 per cent of all pregnant women were HIV-positive. This translates into approximately 4.8 million South Africans and nearly 20 per cent of all 15-49 year olds[4]. In 2000 it was estimated that 40 per cent of all deaths in the age category 15-49 years were due to AIDS. In some age groups mortality rates have increased by 350 per cent,

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4   Health Systems Trust 2002 - http://www.hst.org.za/sahr/2002

and average life expectancy in South Africa has decreased from 66 years to 47 years, due largely to AIDS. A further consequence of the AIDS epidemic is the doubling of the TB incidence in many parts of the country over the last three years, and the large proportion of hospital beds occupied by patients with AIDS.[5]

In this context, the NIP has its objectives arranged in four priority areas: prevention, treatment, care and support, research and human rights. A joint venture between three Departments (Health, Social Development and Education), the NIP is intended to implement three key interventions of the National Strategic Plan: Life Skills Education, Voluntary Counselling and Testing and Home/Community Based Care and Support. The three interventions are particularly targeted at children and youth and will receive R450 million in the period 2000-2003 (and thereby consume the largest proportion of HIV spending).

Life skills and voluntary testing

Life skills programmes run by government have already come under heavy criticism from experts in the field as lacking in capacity and approach/content.[6] Similarly, life skills programmes run by LoveLife (one of the major partners of the Department of Health) have been criticised for promoting lifestyles that are alien to communities, primarily in terms of the consumerist, American styles and philosophies perpetuated in its programmes.[7]

VCT sites continue to be set up, but with the usual problems of bureaucratic red-tape and a lack of resources and capacity within the health sector. They are, however, regarded as providing a positive environment in which people can come to know and accept their status.

Home-Based Care: shifting state responsibility?

With regard to home-based care, much progress is being made in the extension of its provision. The Departments of Health and Social Development have completed a national audit of all existing Home-Based Care (HBC) operations; produced HBC guidelines, and manuals for trainers and learners; and have appointed a HBC co-ordinator in each province. The plan is to build a series of HBC teams, where each team is capable of providing care to a catchment population of 17 000 persons. What is not officially noted is that the staffing of such projects is largely by volunteers, who receive food and transport allowances only for the time that they work on specific campaigns. Many community organisations and projects that have been set

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[5]   Health Systems Trust 2002 - http://www.hst.org.za/sahr/2002.

[6]   Health Systems Trust 2001 - http://www.hst.org.za/sahr/2001/chapter9.htm.

[7]   Epstein, 2003, http://www.nybooks.com/authors/10; Naidoo, 2003.

up to provide home-based care also emphasise that they are unable to sustain their work between official HBC activities. Government funds allocated for HBC can also not be spent on any other activities and often this inflexibility causes problems in cases where other needs, such as funerals or building, require funding (Khanya College 2002:42). Here again, the critique can be made that HBC is a means for the state to renege on its responsibility to provide health care, and in a patriarchal society, this increases the burden on women who have traditionally provided for the reproductive needs of society through their unpaid labour in the home and community. See also Chapter One of this review for a broader discussion on the effects of the state's abdication of responsibility with regard to HIV/AIDS care and support.

Promotion of human rights

The fourth priority area of the National Strategic Plan deals with the promotion of human rights, with the objective of creating a legal and policy environment that protects the rights of all persons affected with HIV and AIDS. Heywood remarks that "by mid-2001 South Africa had created one of the most progressive and far-sighted policy and legislative environments in the world."[8] Policies exist for education, the workplace, HIV testing and counselling, and the management of patients with HIV and AIDS. In addition, there is a national Patients Rights Charter which unfortunately, as with much other far-sighted and progressive legislation, has not yet been effectively implemented, and

> stigma and poor access to justice deter people from seeking redress for institutional human rights violations. Women's dependence on male partners, together with the lack of support services and shelters, prevents women from taking steps to protect themselves from risk of infection. In the workplace, there is evidence that unfair discrimination, albeit unlawful, continues to take place (Health Systems Trust, 2002).[9]

While several NGOs exist to deal with HIV/AIDS within the framework of human rights, they are "wholly insufficient in number and capacity" (Health Systems Trust 2001).[10] Statutory bodies, such as the South African Human Rights Commission (SAHRC) and the Commission on Gender Equality (CGE), have also not embarked on any campaigns or processes to encourage HIV/AIDS to be treated as a human rights issue.

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8   Health Systems Trust 2001 - http://www.hst.org.za/sahr/2001/chapter9.htm.

9   Health Systems Trust 2002 - http://www.hst.org.za/sahr/2002/chapter12.htm.

10   Health Systems Trust 2001 - http://www.hst.org.za/sahr/2001/chapter9.htm.

Treatment and care

Despite the noble national plans and progress made towards their implementation, treatment for PWAs continues to be a problem. In November 2001 the National Health Summit discussed the issue of ARVs extensively and recommended that pilot projects using ARVs to treat children and adults should be set up in the public health service.

During 2001 the provision of PMTCT services became a contentious issue. Following the Durban HIV Conference in 2000, the Department of Health took a decision to implement a PMTCT 'pilot programme' at 18 sites, two in each province. These sites began to implement services from the middle of 2001 and all 18 were operational by the end of that year. In addition, Gauteng and the Western Cape expanded the programme to other sites. The programme is guided by a national PMTCT protocol that includes the administration of nevirapine, the implementation of revised obstetric practices and the provision of free formula for six months for those mothers who choose not to breastfeed. Towards the end of 2001 the Treatment Action Campaign (TAC) took the government to court to challenge the decision not to roll out the PMTCT programme beyond the 18 pilot sites for a minimum of two years. TAC argued that the PMTCT programme had been shown to be "an efficacious, safe, affordable and cost-saving way of dealing with an aspect of HIV/AIDS, and should therefore be rolled out" (Health Systems Trust, 2001).[11] In particular, TAC argued that no doctor at a public hospital should be prevented from giving nevirapine to mothers in need.

In its defence, government argued that it lacked the resources and infrastructure to sustain a large roll-out, and raised concerns about the toxicity of nevirapine and the development of resistance to ARVs. TAC has, however, repeatedly asserted that ARVs are safe, effective and affordable (*Independent On-Line*, 01 August 2003).[12]

In December 2001, the Pretoria High Court ruled that the government was 'obliged' to expand the programme and make nevirapine available as part of the individual's constitutional right to health treatment. Government was given until 31 March 2002 to 'create a comprehensive plan for dispensing the drug and reducing vertical transmission throughout the country'[13] While government and social movements (in particular TAC) maintain a stand-off over the need for the provision of treatment for PWAs, the flaws in government's continued prioritisation of preventative and palliative care for HIV/AIDS over any provision of treatment are more evident. The escalating

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[11]   http://www.hst.org.za/sahr/2001/chapter9.htm

[12]   *Independent On-Line*, 01 August 2003. *TAC threatens legal action over nevirapine*. (http://www.journ-aids.org/reports/01082003d.htm.)

[13]   Health Systems Trust 2001 – http://www.hst.org.za/sahr/2001/chapter9.htm.

figures for HIV incidence and the many images of PWAs are reminders of government's continued failure to address the needs of the desperate majority of South African society. In a society where gender inequalities, violence and abuse (particularly of girl children) are rife, such an approach to the provision of treatment deals a second blow, in many cases, to women and girls who have already been poorly served by the health and legal systems to which they look for assistance and protection.

Social security: need far exceeds delivery

While many commentators on South Africa have spoken to the necessity for a comprehensive social security framework to alleviate the burden of poverty borne by the most vulnerable, budgets for the review period have been unable to meet these needs. The lack of adequate safety nets for the most marginalised means that the problems identified earlier are likely to be exacerbated.

A brief glance at figures released by the SA Human Rights Commission for the period 2000-2002 highlights the vulnerability of the majority of South Africans:

- 14 374 817 persons received social security;

- 3 421 107 households relied on social security;

- 648 104 households had no source of income;

- 23 819 458 persons had no source of income;

- 3 741 603 households had an income below the poverty line;

- 16 837 214 persons had an income below the poverty line.

While government has always conceded the need for a comprehensive strategy for social security provision, and although substantial gains have been made in this area, particularly during the period under review, the extent of the needs of South Africa's poor far exceeds the capacity of the current framework. This is as a result of a combination of factors: firstly, the lack of an adequate administrative infrastructure to cover all those eligible for social security; secondly, the fact that the current framework for social security means that many people who need social security do not qualify for it; current fiscal discipline enacted by GEAR does not allow for the mobilisation of sufficient resources to meet all needs; and individual allocations for social security often serve as safety nets for entire families rather than individuals.

The following statistics, provided by the National Department of Social Development, provide an indication of the pressures on the current social security system:

- of the 1 208 105 beneficiaries who were eligible for disability grants, only 714 091 had actually received the grant;

- of the 2 132 359 people eligible for old age grants, only 1 936 553 received grants;

- 68 per cent of payout points have no access to water;

- 64 per cent of payout points have no access to toilets (and pensioners are forced to wait an average of 2 hours in order to receive grants);

- 79 per cent of payout points have no facilities for disabled people;

- of 3 308 467 children eligible for the child support grant, only 1 574 927 received it;

- of 319 354 eligible children, only 90 680 received foster care grants;

- of 276 776 eligible children, 42 474 received care dependency grants (SAHRC, 2002:28).

The fact that such large percentages of those eligible for grants have not been able to benefit from them, is indicative of the failure to ensure adequate systems and capacity for delivery within the current model and points to a need for greater resource mobilisation to this end. The report also highlights the continued privileging of the urban in the disbursement of child support grants. It highlights the fact that several eligible beneficiaries (especially in the rural areas) find it difficult to access the grants because of documentation requirements such as identity documents and birth certificates. One of the problems cited by the report is that there is minimal communication between the Departments of Home Affairs and Social Development in this regard. The current framework also makes no allowance for child grants in child-headed households, a phenomenon peculiar to developing nations. Children of such households have not been in a position to initiate the process of applying for grants due to the lack of adult assistance. Similarly, the report notes that children living on the streets are denied access to most social services offered by the state, especially the child support grant, and refugee children are denied access as they are not citizens of the country. HIV/AIDS orphans would also find it difficult to access grants as they often lack the adult support and supervision necessary.

Frustration caused by the lack of delivery on the part of the current social security system has been enunciated in the campaign for a Basic Income Grant (BIG), led by the South African National NGO Coalition (SANGOCO), the South African Council of Churches (SACC), and the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU), and supported by a range of civil society organisations. The central demand of this campaign is for a universal subsidy allocation of R100 a month to every person. While government has established the Committee of Inquiry into a Comprehensive Social Security System (in May 2000) to investigate and present options to Cabinet for an affordable and comprehensive social security system for South Africa, taking into consideration gaps and problems with the existing system, recent statements

from government have implied that a BIG is unlikely to be part of a plan for a new social security system.

What happened to free basic education?

In a keynote address to the SADC Education Policy Forum in November 2001, Professor Jonathan Jansen contended that African education reform can only be successful if it recognises that the basic physical conditions for effective educational change are not in place. These fundamental conditions include trained and qualified teachers, basic infrastructure in schools, textbooks, libraries and laboratory facilities (Wits Education Policy Review: *Fundamentalism and the Fundamentals of Learning*, Vol. 8 No. 4, December 2001:8). The socio-economic rights report for 2000-2002 noted that:

- 10 723 schools do not have enough classrooms;

- 13 204 schools do not have enough textbooks;

- 10 859 schools do not have access to electricity;

- 2 498 schools do not have proper toilet facilities;

- 21 773 schools have no library facilities; and

- 17 762 schools have no access to sporting and recreational facilities.

In a context of neo-liberal fiscal constraint, education budget allocations for infrastructure development have been low and have not addressed the problems in their entirety.

Together with a national crisis around the payment of school fees, the general lack of progress in terms of primary and secondary education saw the education crisis in schools dominate much of the review period. Despite a constitutional commitment to the provision of free basic education, the introduction of user fees for schools (and a differing scale of school fees based on the nature of the school and the levels of fees set by governing bodies) has resulted in a number of learners failing to pay for their education. The review period has seen a number of cases where children have been refused access to school or have been ridiculed or punished for non-payment of fees. With the increase in such cases and the growing number of parents and learners with only a limited knowledge of their rights around education, the Education Rights Project (ERP) was established in February 2002 to increase people's access to basic education. In community workshops run by the ERP countrywide, cases have been recorded of families having their personal belongings attached by school governing bodies who have become custodians of the neo-liberal policy of cost recovery within a decentralising education system.

Current legislation allows the school governing body to set both the school fees and its exemption policy for disadvantaged students. (The Department of Education, however, has released a basic means test which sets the parameters for exemption policies. The ERP has criticised the means test for excluding factors such as number of dependants, in consideration of need.) In some areas, school fees can be more than R10 000 per year. This has also affected the extent to which goals of equity and redress have been met. In May 2002, thousands of Congress of South African Students (COSAS) members took to the streets to demand the abolition of school fees.

Education in context

Jansen argues that "effective reforms have to acknowledge the moderating influence of context. This includes not being oblivious to the dialectic between school and the broader society". He cites violence, unemployment and the HIV/AIDS pandemic as key issues that impact on schooling. The problems of poverty, lack of basic services and health care cited above also have an effect on learners and the school system generally, as social security nets remain inadequate for the majority of South Africans. For instance, the extent of the HIV/AIDS pandemic has already seriously affected the school system. Jansen contends that the Department of Education's 'rationalisation' policies, in the face of the pandemic, have contributed to the shortage of teachers noted in 2001. The higher education sector also suffered from a miscalculation as a result of ignoring the link between education and broader society. While policy makers predicted large-scale 'massification' in South African higher education from 2001 onwards, about 10 000 fewer students were registered for the 2001 matriculation examination and the immediate effect was that the 36 public higher education institutions had another year of drastic reduction of students.

The period under review also saw the release of the second version of Curriculum 2005, which was met with greater approval from civil society organisations. In addition, the higher education sector came under the spotlight with the release of the National Plan for Higher Education in March 2001, which included the following:

- the reduction of the higher learning institutions from 36 to 21 (the Ministry of Education finally recommended 22);

- programme collaboration and rationalisation in each region;

- the enhancement of the quality of technikon programmes and the capacity of technikons to undertake research and to offer post-graduate programmes linked to their vocational mission and focus;

- the incorporation of the college sector into the higher learning system (this had already happened by January 2001); and

- the regulation of unplanned satellite campuses.

Land reform and rural development

Developments in this sphere fall within the general neo-liberal frameworks adopted in the Rural Development Strategy of 1995, and the subsequent Rural Development Framework (RDF) and Integrated Rural Development Strategy (IRDS) of 2000. No significant changes have been noted in the area of land redistribution, with land redistributed since 1994 remaining at 1 per cent (SANGOCO, 2002:10), and the 'willing buyer-willing seller' model continuing to determine the framework for redistribution. Land activists have argued that this remains a huge limitation in the delivery of the current land redistribution programme. Cementing the location of this programme in a neo-liberal framework is the Land Redistribution for Agricultural Development (LRAD), a sub-programme of the Land Redistribution Programme, introduced by the Department of Land Affairs in August 2001 to stimulate development and encourage commercial farming by African farmers. Targeting women and young people who live in rural areas, the programme had made available 60 hectares of land to 2 681 applicants in December 2001 (SAHRC 2002:68). The Department of Land Affairs contends that its comprehensive planning approach takes into consideration all categories of vulnerable groups, giving preferential treatment to female-headed households and low income households earning below R1 500 a month. However, it notes with concern its exclusion of homeless people as a category deserving of this benefit.

According to indicators developed by the Department of Land Affairs for 2000-2002, a total of 1 098 008 hectares of land has been made available to those previously denied access to land (768 605 hectares to the rural poor, 17 812 hectares to the 'homeless', and 50 000 hectares to farm labourers); a total of 406 120 hectares of land was made available to those who were 'dispossessed' of their land, with 325 000 hectares in rural areas; 98 958 land redistribution grants were awarded; 50 792 families acquired land tenure security; and compensation awarded amounted to R938 268 710 (SAHRC, 2002:77).

With regard to service delivery in the rural areas, cost recovery (mediated by local government-steered development) through private-public partnerships and privatisation continues, as outlined above.

Mobilising the rural poor

Poor and inadequate services, poor living and working conditions, coupled with the increasing vulnerability of farmworkers (as seasonal labourers as well as at the receiving end of continued racism in the form of physical and verbal attacks), have contributed to the emergence of a growing Landless People's Movement (LPM). Converging first at the Landless People's Camp held during the World Conference Against Racism (WCAR) held in Durban in August 2001, thousands of land activists met in discussion and debate and contributed to the civil society protest action

against the WCAR and the UN. During the WCAR, landless movement activists drew attention to the stratification of the 'landed' and the landless according to racial categories. Under the slogan 'landlessness = racism', the LPM argued that the legacy of colonial expropriation and white rule continued to determine patterns of land ownership.

The rapid growth of the movement in the period of review is an important barometer of the crisis within the land sector. Leading several campaigns, demonstrations and court actions for people's right to land, the LPM has, in just over a year of the period under review, come to occupy an important position amongst local and international social movements. With the increasingly daring actions of the movement, the response of the state hardened, and LPM activists were arrested, particularly around the WSSD in 2002. While the LPM has emerged as a largely rural movement, recent struggles for access to land and housing by informal settlements in urban areas have been taken up by the LPM (for example, in Thembelihle and Protea South). In addition to posing challenges for traditional distinctions between rural and urban struggles, such struggles are also providing the opportunities and spaces for the LPM to come together with other urban-based social movements such as the Concerned Citizens' Forum, the Anti-Privatisation Forum, and the Anti-Eviction Campaign.

Environmental sustainability

The environment has suffered some of neo-liberalism's worst effects. The review period has seen heightened mobilisation by civil society organisations in this sector, in particular around the WSSD. Groups of organisations who experienced an increase in their public profile during this period include the South Durban Community Environmental Alliance (SDCEA) and Groundwork, an NGO also based in Durban. In June 2001, the deaths of two workers on contract at the Engen (South Durban) and NATREF (Sasolburg) plants as a result of poisoning, led to the call for a Commission of Enquiry into the issue by Groundwork. In August 2001, the Sasolburg Environmental Committee opposed the proposed building of an incinerator in Sasolburg through a submission to the Minister of Environment, Mohamed Valli Moosa. In October 2002, the Free State government refused to allow its establishment, and this was claimed as a victory by activists.

In November 2001, the SDCEA and Groundwork, together with community organisations in Mozambique, Swaziland, Secunda, Sasolburg and Cape Town, launched the 'Bucket Brigade' campaign which aimed to bring communities to share skills, resources, ideas and approaches to the monitoring of levels of pollution and corporate accountability in communities where industries exist. In January 2002, the SDCEA launched its local component of the campaign in the form of a community monitoring programme of the environment for industrial pollutants,

training community members in environmental monitoring. In April 2002, the above alliances called for a ban on incineration in the Southern African region. In September 2002, the Global Anti-Incinerator Alliance (GAIA) asked Mondi Paper to abandon its incinerator plan for Durban.

Issues of environmentally sustainable practices came under the spotlight particularly during the WSSD towards the end of 2002, when corporate accountability became the focus of many environmental NGOs and campaigns. The People's Action Campaign for Corporate Accountability was formed during this period by organisations including Groundwork, Greenpeace, Friends of the Earth, Third World Network, Corpwatch and the Corporate Europe Observatory. In addition, there were many attempts at bringing strictly environmental organisations together with the more developmental NGOs, such as the Rural Development Services Network (RDSN) and the Environmental Justice Networking Forum (EJNF). While both types of organisations were part of the initial South African civil society process towards the WSSD set up by the Heinrich Böll Foundation, and the Civil Society Indaba (CSI) under the leadership of SANGOCO, by the time of the WSSD, EJNF and RDSN had clearly placed themselves outside of the Global People's Forum and in the Social Movements Indaba (SMI). While many other environmental NGOs and campaigns continued to participate in the Global People's Forum, most chose to participate in the march of the SMI on 31 August 2002.

The importance of linking issues of the environment to broader developmental agendas remains a key challenge for policy makers. This also means paying close attention to issues like the delivery of water, land redistribution, food security, etc, within a holistically integrated development framework.

Conclusion

The review period has seen the further implementation of the neo-liberal macro-economic policy, GEAR, with increased hardship for the poor. This has manifested in the form of reduced access for people to basic services (mainly in the form of water and electricity cut-offs) as the policies of privatisation and cost recovery take hold. Health care provision remains inadequate, with particular battles around increasing people's access to preventative and palliative treatment for HIV/AIDS, along with decreased access to education, social welfare and housing, and increasing poverty as a result of job losses. In response, people in communities and civil society have come together in organisations, campaigns and movements at local and national level to fight the effects of neoliberalism. They have employed various tactics and strategies in responding, ranging from illegal activities, such as the reconnection of water and electricity, to lobbying government and employing the law to test government's commitment to the socio-economic rights protected by the constitution.

During the WSSD, they came together to take on the world's institutions and leaders who champion the neo-liberal agenda through the United Nations structures.

At face value, the two marches on 31 August 2002 might have seemed no different from each other. However, in spite of the similarity of the songs sung or the slogans on the banners, the marchers' mobilisation of the language of social change worked in very different ways. On the one hand, the march of 20 000 was an expression of the real desires of people fighting daily the effects of neo-liberalism and constituting alternatives where possible. There were no delegated leaders and no manifestos delivered. For the second time in the space of a year, South Africa's new social movements were coming together in action against the ANC government. August 31 was significant in that it made clear also the complicity of the UN and all its processes in the continued exploitation of the world's poor. The second march was a skilful exercise in illusion – the employment of progressive language, the expression of the desire for equitable change and redress, the direction of demands for change and so the placing of faith for change in the hands of the ANC government, the international financial institutions and the UN system, with no accompanying critique of those very same institutions that are responsible for the interpretation and translation of neo-liberal policies at a local level. During the review period differences and divisions between competing notions of development and social change have become increasingly sharp. They have played themselves out in terms of the state's continued failure to deliver to the fullest extent on what is needed in South Africa as a result primarily of neo-liberal policy frameworks for change, and in terms of the continued demands made on this state by a civil society that is still largely committed to seeing change being effected through the state in one way or another, and that is determined to find alternatives that conceive of access and equity in their broadest terms. It is likely that these factors will determine the nature of the South African political landscape for the immediate future.

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