



***Ensuing Water & Food Security:
Why Should We Bother?
A Gendered Approach***

Presentation at the DBSA Knowledge Week 08:

30th October 2008, Midrand, DBSA

SCOPE OF PRESENTATION

- ❑ Focus on gender and why women should be at center of water & food security discourse?
- ❑ Understanding the bigger picture: Brief analysis of Poverty Reduction Strategies in SA - a gendered lens
- ❑ Paradigm Shift? What exactly is our current developmental agenda & what drives it?
- ❑ Future considerations in ensuring water & food security – hope or despair?

Water & Food Security: Why should We Bother?

- ❑ Water and food are vital for the life and health of people and ecosystems and a basic requirement for the **development** of countries
- ❑ Water & Food Security a precondition for development
- ❑ Plethora of literature, research papers and more research findings produced: to name a few:
 - **Expert group meeting reports on strategic approaches to water & food security (1998);**
 - **feminization of water security reports following the World Water Forum in the Hague in 2000**
 - **Ministerial Declaration of the Hague on Water Security in the 21st Century in 2000)**
 - **4th World Congress of Rural Women (2007)**
 - **Stolkhom 2008**
 - **What next?**

Focus on Gender: Nothing New! But Where are we getting it wrong?

- ❑ 1994 – Era of hope for South African women (indirect benefits to women in the region)
- ❑ National Gender Machinery (NGM) put in place; Government comprehensive agenda of pro-poor policies and initiatives; Catalogue of very sound policies with a focus on women, youth, children, elderly and those with disabilities
- ❑ An analysis of Poverty Reduction Strategies in SA indicates:
 - **Despite status of SA as a middle income country, poverty & inequality are still widespread and manifest themselves in high rates of unemployment, extreme hunger, lack of access to land and clean and safe water**
 - **Significant number of households food insecure**
 - **Distribution of income and wealth is among the most unequal in the world**
 - **Many households still have an unsatisfactory access to education, health care, energy and clean water despite concrete progress in redressing the inherited backlog since 1994. (APRM Country Review Report. Nov 2006, p.254)**

Focus on Gender: Nothing New! But Where are we getting it wrong?

- ❑ Formation of SAWID (South African Women in Dialogue in 2003) 1000 SA women met in Pretoria to reflect on our past; acknowledge & celebrate our achievements since 1994; to identify current challenges and to plan for the next decade, and to draft a practical and implementable Program of Action to take to communities
- ❑ At end of Dialogue, 5 days later, participants recognized and appreciated the gains already made in providing women with institutional, political and socio-economic liberation. However, they noted with concern that despite all these gains, SA women in particular remain disadvantaged and do not benefit fully from the emerging democratic spaces
- ❑ Of 12 key challenges, frustrating women's full participation in the new democratic order they prioritized: Food security occasioned by poor access to agricultural land; poor access to clean water and sanitation; poverty in rural areas and informal settlements within urban areas

Focus on Gender: Nothing New!

4th World Congress of Rural Women – Durban 2007

RESOLUTIONS

- ❑ Welcome the growing awareness of women issues in rural areas
- ❑ Note with deep concern that the economic and financial challenges adversely affecting the socio economic status of women
- ❑ Act on HIV aids threat, violence and harmful practices against women
- ❑ Strengthen policies and partnerships to improve access to **land, water and other natural resources related to the livelihoods or rural women**
- ❑ Recognize the urgent need to take appropriate measures aimed at further improving the situation of women in rural areas;

Focus On Gender (Cont.)

- ❑ Explore possibilities of collaborative research on problems and solutions by establishing partnerships for technology transfer and narrowing down the digital and technology divide
- ❑ Develop Plan of Action for the implementation of these resolutions, forming partnerships between government, private sector
- ❑ Strengthen and support solidarity amongst women in Africa and the rest of the world to enable them to play a meaningful role in the socio-economic development of the continent
- ❑ Set up monitoring and evaluation mechanisms within the AU for purposes of the implementation of these resolutions,

Focus On Gender (Cont.)

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New Paradigm Shift: Extending the Debate

- ❑ Key question is: 15yrs on - Can we still afford to quantify the gains of our democracy i.t.o how many toilets we have built when there will be no water to flush them? How do we ensure Water and Food Security without a clear developmental agenda as a nation and region?
- ❑ What drives our developmental state trajectory?
- ❑ How do we move beyond clichés such as: “a social contract”; “war room on poverty”, “business as unusual”, “putting people at the center of development” when we hardly have a common position on what development is – starting right here at the DBSA?
- ❑ People centred development is not needs driven but has as an entry point acknowledgement of assets that lie abundantly in communities first – that will foster self-reliance

New Paradigm Shift: Extending the Debate

- ❑ Following limited impact and sustainability of a dev process that places government agencies and/or NGOs as active drivers and communities as the passive recipients of development projects or extension services – a review of our development agenda seems exigent: ABCD approach?
- ❑ Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD) Principles rest on the recognition that many successful community-driven initiatives have taken place with limited outside intervention. These endogenous activities seem to take place through self-guided leadership, with citizens rather than institutions at the centre of the development activity, and in communities that are able to recognise and use their strengths, skills, capacities, social, financial and human capital, as the building blocks of their own development
- ❑ Success with some external agency support that helps facilitate and resource the community process rather than drive it



Key Pointers for Considerations to the new Government in waiting

Before changing furniture and redesigning old offices

- ❑ Prioritise on development challenges of water and food security as they affect women more
- ❑ Partner and utilise existing women networks and initiatives, such as SAWID and SAWIC
- ❑ Promote women entrepreneurship i.t.o employment creation combating poverty
- ❑ Make available appropriate resources and support
- ❑ **refocus** on rural agenda & women issues i.t.o sustainability
- ❑ Do not reinvest the wheel but build on the work that has been done (research findings; resolutions of the congress etc.)
- ❑ Learn from the success Development Caravan models from Chile & Tunisia and not necessarily from “developed” countries
- ❑ Prioritise on Education and leadership development (including political leadership consisting women who need to understand aspirations of fellow women!!!)

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