

South Africa Civil Society Speaks

Summary based on civil society documents and submissions

**Our goals and visions
including a commentary on the**

**SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT
MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS COUNTRY REPORT**

Issued by the Peoples' Budget Campaign

**September
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This report can be found on the following websites:

www.sangoco.org.za

www.naledi.org.za

www.cosatu.org.za

www.sacc.org.za

INTRODUCTION

This summary has two parts. Part One provides an overview of the content of the goals, and the process around the drafting of the South African Government Report, while Part Two provides comment on the goals and indicators themselves. The full report contains far more detail on the goals than is set out in this summary.

PART ONE: OUR HISTORY OF STRUGGLE AGAINST INJUSTICES

The Peoples' Budget Campaign partners have a long history in the fight against poverty and exclusion in South Africa. The member organizations are the South African NGO Coalition (SANGOCO), Congress of South African Trades Unions (COSATU) and the South African Council of Churches (SACC's) which represent several million members. The People's Budget Campaign was established as a civil society campaign to fight for pro-poor progressive budgetary and macro economic alternatives in 2000. The report relies heavily on experiences of NGOs and unions in the fight against poverty.

The Millennium Development Goals.

The eight Millennium Development Goals are:

1. Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger
2. Achieve universal primary education
3. Promote gender equality and empower women
4. Reduce child mortality
5. Improve maternal health
6. Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other preventable diseases
7. Ensure environmental sustainability
8. Develop a global partnership for development

As progressive civil society in South Africa, we have the following concerns about the extent and nature of the 8 goals.

1) The MDGs are merely the barest minimum for a development programme. On their own they are insufficient to tackling the gigantic task of eliminating poverty and inequality and the democratization of our societies that is much needed. Whilst we broadly welcome initiatives to substantially realise these goals, we do not believe that the indicators represent what really could be achieved in eradicating poverty and human suffering if every life did in fact count equally.

2) The simplicity of the articulation of the MDGs obscures the complexity of the causes of poverty, inequality and exclusion. Poverty can only be eradicated in a sustainable way if people have access to decent work. This in turn means commitment from countries to regulate the labour market to protect workers against exploitation and growing normalization which degrades rights that have been hard won by workers internationally. We believe that the indicators to certain goals should be revisited to address this weakness in the MDGs.

3) Likewise, the MDGs have the potential to displace home-grown commitments to political and economic rights earned sometimes through the blood, sweat and tears of years of struggle. In the context of South Africa we refer to the documents and policies that were developed through inclusive and democratic processes and which reflect the collective vision of the country for a just society. These include the historic Freedom Charter (1955), the Reconstruction and Development Programme (early 1990's) and the South African Constitution (1996).

4) We recognize that the MDGs represent a compromise and an accumulation of diverse demands. Many of these have however been better represented in earlier documents and commitments, whilst more recently again, the UN has watered down even minimum commitments for the world leaders to unite for human rights, development and security, leaving developing countries with much less than they had hoped for. The attempt in "In Larger Freedom" (March 05) to link human rights and human security issues, was better done in global commitments made much earlier in particular the 1995 UN Social Summit. This summit put people at the centre of development and called for "direct(ing) our economies to meet human needs more effectively." Full employment and social inclusion was key to sustainable democracies. It placed civil society actors like unions and NGO's as part of the solution to tackling poverty and inequality.

5) We agree with "Social Watch" when they argue that poverty is not a statistic and should not be defined by USD 1, or even USD 2 a day. Further, as South African civil society we call for newer and more liberating tools of analysis to be developed with the active participation of the working class and those living in poverty and their organisations. We also agree with Social Watch, that the structural causes of poverty and exclusion need to be addressed in order to effect permanent change. Poverty eradication policies need to address the totality of the impact of poverty and be human centred, developed in consultation with people living in poverty and being informed by their voice.

6) We believe that time bound targets are good for all as they lay down a fixed time-table for ensuring delivery on real social targets. It is thus imperative that the Statistics bureaus and departments be staffed by high quality personnel committed to contribute to the eradication of poverty and inequality and the promotion of human rights. Baseline statistics and yardsticks for assessing progress towards the attainment of goals must be agreed upon by all stakeholders, and the monitoring and evaluation processes must be transparent and inclusive. The trend to portray government achievements in the best possible manner, through – amongst others - the

selective use of data and the suppression of other indicators, must be stopped and addressed as a matter of urgency.

Instead, as civil society organizations we affirm that our commitment to fighting for:

- 1) The total and unconditional debt write-off for all of Africa.
- 2) The doubling of international aid from developed countries. The G8 countries must be compelled to meet the 0.7% GNI target for international development assistance and front load those commitments without donor imposed policy conditionality.
- 3) The WTO and international financial institutions must allow for all countries to have the right to choose their own development paths. The World Trade Organization must recognise the right of developing states to redress and to protect their fragile economies without losing their right to access industrialized countries markets.
- 4) It follows that for this to succeed the OECD market access constraints must be removed and an end be made to subsidies that lead to dumping of products in developing countries and the crowding out of local producers.

We register deep concern about the process by which the state's Report was drafted. To date there has been no real consultation with any social partners by government in the drafting of the report, despite numerous frustrated attempts by civil society. We believe that this goes against the spirit of the entire Millennium Project, and unless corrected through the adoption of a transparent participative partnership with civil society for the remainder of the Millennium Project, this unilateral approach of government will threaten the successful attainment of the MDGs. This unilateralism undermines not only the democratic process of governance but also the prospects for working collectively for a just society where exploitation of one group by another is a thing of the past.

Despite our criticisms of both the content and the process we believe that it is essential to participate as this moment presents opportunities for addressing issues of poverty and underdevelopment that traps millions of poor and working class people in conditions of squalor and despair. Only if people are placed at the centre of the process, however, can the outcomes be relevant and sustainable. The poor are best placed to articulate what they lack, and what they need to move out of poverty. We believe that ultimately this is a struggle and an opportunity to hold our own government accountable to its commitments and to support it and others who want genuine transformation of the global power architecture such as the UN and the WTO and others.

We endorse the African Civil Society Statement entitled "MDGs are not possible without a bold overhaul of global governance" (19 August 2005) drafted and adopted in Nairobi, Kenya. In

particular we recognise the need for UN reform which will discuss and address Africa's under-representation in key decision-making structures such as the Security Council. We share the view also that the Security Council should be expanded to ensure equal geographical representation, transparency and accountability.

We believe that the public service in many developing countries has been decimated by structural adjustment programmes imposed by the World Bank and the IMF, and is in need of urgent resources and rehabilitation to become a truly quality and accountable public service. This is a critical vehicle for creating both peace and solidarity as well as contributing towards anti poverty and inequality goals of the world.

We call on African leaders arguing for real UN reforms to put Africa first rather than their own nation states. Similarly the United Nations (the) and other multilateral institutions must involve meaningfully civil society organizations in their reform processes.

All our comments on the goals must be read with the above perspectives in mind.

PART TWO: GOALS AND INDICATORS

GOAL ONE: ERADICATE EXTREME POVERTY AND HUNGER

Target 1: Reduce by half the proportion of people living in less than one dollar a day.

We submit that to use one US dollar a day as an indicator of extreme poverty in South Africa is an extremely arbitrary indicator.

Our country has a floating exchange rate: to link definitions of poverty to monetary and trade policy vagaries makes nonsense of the conceptualization of poverty. An eloquent critique of this measure states:

"For international comparisons, the World Bank promotes the notion of "\$1 a day" as an international money-metric threshold that can be adjusted for purchasing power parity (PPP). A recent critique of the "dollar a day" poverty line argues that the measure is inherently flawed (Reddy and Pogge, forthcoming). Among other concerns, the authors contend that the selection of commodities in the basket is not grounded in a meaningful definition of poverty, nor are the purchasing power factors employed adequately matched to national currency equivalents. Others have vigorously criticized this norm, noting that it departs from the notion of a threshold income, does not take account of actual living standards or requirements, and conceals double

standards in the measure of poverty, in that different poverty lines are applied to developed countries and developing countries (Chossudovsky, 1998)".

DBSA Development Report 2005, page 40.

Internationally, the approach in poverty studies has been to move away from just quantifying poverty as an income or expenditure issue, and to consider poverty as a broader concept which should be reflected in the choice of goal, targets and indicators. In South Africa, the 2001 Report of the Committee of Inquiry into a Comprehensive Social Security System for South Africa provided a comprehensive framework that considered three mutually reinforcing aspects of poverty, namely income poverty, asset poverty and capabilities poverty.

The measurement of poverty is a deeply contested terrain, not least because any measure that admits to the existence of poverty requires measures to be put in place to address the immediate needs of the people living in poverty and in the medium to longer term, to eradicate the poverty. The deeper the poverty accordingly, the more urgent the policies and measures need to be.

Certain civil society organizations have already initiated discussions around an appropriate and inclusive definition of poverty through the auspices of NALEDI (the National Labour and Economic Development Institute), with both members of civil society and relevant government departments.

Recently, the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) showed that the proportion of people living in poverty in South Africa had not changed significantly between 1996 and 2001. However, those households living in poverty have sunk deeper into poverty and the gap between rich and poor has widened (HSRC 2004).

Based on the different poverty lines developed by the UNDP and HSRC we can see that the number of poor people in South Africa is between 48.5% and 57% of the population.

However, when using the international poverty lines, this declines to between 10.5% (US\$1 per day) and 23.8% (US\$2 per day).

Even though there have been claims of a slight decline in the number of poor people, there has been an increase in the number of people who are chronically poor. In 1995, 9.4% of people lived on less than US\$1 per day, but this increased to 10.5% in 2002.

The Development Report 2005 published by the Development Bank of Southern Africa concluded that there is arguably no “coherent, comprehensive” poverty eradication strategy in South Africa. In other words while the state is spending money on attempting to eradicate poverty, it is doing so in a piecemeal fashion that undermines the probability of successful comprehensive poverty eradication.

Last year, the South African government invited consultants to tender was published last year for an evaluation of government’s poverty relief programme, including the definition of what constitutes a poverty alleviation programme. As civil society we believe that such a process should be far more consultative and transparent than is ostensibly the case. Such a process should at least, proceed through the statutory social dialogue body, the National Economic Development and Labour Council (NEDLAC).

Inequality

Again this is a contested indicator. Government’s Draft MDG report indicated that in 2000, the Gini coefficient was 0.59, but fell to 0.35 if social transfers were included (Page 12). This claim remains a contested one, refuted by many economists. It again demonstrates the extent to which government would use data to portray its interventions in as positive a manner as possible.

It is clear that there is no clear consensus about the direction in which the indicator of inequality is directed, in other words, whether our society is getting more or less equal.

Finally, South Africa remains one of the most unequal societies in the world. There needs to be broader agreement on the measurement of inequality if we are to take the indicator seriously, as well as the appropriate use of social expenditure in calculating income inequality.

Employment and Poverty

For historical reasons that sought to ensure a constant supply of cheap African labour, South Africa is a cash – based society. Wages represent the largest source of income for South Africans.

The official (narrow) definition of unemployment (which excludes all unemployed people who did not “take active steps to find work in the four weeks prior to the interview”) rose from 15.9 % in 1995 to 30.5 % in 2002 (DBSA, page 47), declining to 25.6% in March 2005 (LFS, March 2005, p iii). According to the broad definition of unemployment, the rate of unemployment rose from 36.2% in 1997 to 41.2% in 2001 (Bhorat et al, page 15), declining slightly to 40.5% in March 2005 (LFS, March 2005, p xvii).

More recently, government has decided to do away with reporting on unemployment using the expanded definition of unemployment, claiming that the continued use of this term has caused confusion.

Unemployment also has a gendered and spatial quality to it, with the highest unemployment affecting African women living in rural areas.

Whilst unemployment has risen, wages have declined. In 2004, 39% of the population earned under R1000 a month, virtually the same number as ten years earlier. Yet in this period, the purchasing power of R1000 fell by well over half. Both of these factors have increased the poverty levels of the working poor. There has also been increased pressure on the disposable incomes of the poor from expenses such as these include school fees and increased transportation costs, effectively diminishing the potential for capital accumulation and savings. This has entrenched earning patterns and income disparities.

To describe the persistence of mass poverty and unemployment, the government has adopted the metaphor of the 'first' and 'second' economies. In this description, the 'first' economy comprises the formal economy which is characterised by modern technologies and legalised economic relationships. The 'second' economy comprises those excluded from the formal sector, either unemployed or engaged in the informal economy or subsistence agriculture. However, even in the 'first' economy, the majority of workers are poor – with many formal sector workers earning under R1 000 a month. Even for union members, half have wages of less than R2 500 a month. This conceptualization appears to accept – if not legitimize- the bifurcation of the economy and, by extension, society. This helps to insulate resources in the first economy against demands that might be made by those in the second economy. Furthermore it discourages people from thinking of a single, more egalitarian society.

Access to social assistance

South Africa is hailed for a social security system that is far more comprehensive than in most developing countries, especially with respect to its social assistance programme. The Constitution guarantees the right to "appropriate" social assistance for all people who are not able to provide for themselves and their dependents. Currently the system provides means tested grants to children up to the age of 14, and to older people over 60 (women) or 65 (men). Currently around ten million people are receiving social grants, ranging in value from R180 per month for the child support grant to R780 per month for old age pensions and disability grants.

However, poor unemployed people of working age are not eligible for any form of social assistance, which leaves a huge hole in the weave of the social security safety net.

There are strong arguments being made internationally about the importance of social security, especially in the current age of increased vulnerability for workers arising from globalised forms of production and efforts to decrease costs of production as much as possible. Organizations such as the ILO argue that social protection is beneficial to any society for a number of reasons. Given the insecurity of many jobs and the growing informal economy in which jobs are not tied to social protection, the ILO is arguing that governments should reconsider their role in providing social assistance, reversing an international trend of cutting social spending internationally in the last 30 years. Social Protection is developmental, and it increases productivity. It is developmental because it allows for better spending on health, education and nutrition – investment in human assets. Such investment has been shown to translate into higher levels of productivity in a given workforce. Given the redistributive element of a universal transfer system funded through the fiscus, social inequality will be reduced, fostering social cohesion, which in turn encourages investment by business.

Many civil society organizations in South Africa have argued that government must consider the fundamentals of a universal cash transfer system, commonly referred to as a Basic Income Grant (BIG). This was also one of the main recommendations of the appointed Committee of Inquiry into a Comprehensive Social Security System in South Africa in 2001. We believe that better than any single poverty eradication programme, this will cut eradicate absolute poverty and greatly lessen intergenerational chronic poverty. Brazil, under President Lula, has legislated for the gradual introduction of a universal income transfer system. Brazil is a country similar in terms of income inequality to ours.

Research by the BIG Coalition, presented to government departments and committees has demonstrated that a universal BIG is feasible and affordable. It will provide for people's immediate needs while the longer term government poverty eradication and job creation programmes are unrolling. It will also position South Africa as a bold world leader that is prepared to invest in the future of its people.

A report commissioned by the department of Finance and produced by the Human Sciences Research Council entitled "Food Security in South Africa: Key policy issues for the medium term" (January 2004) studied the source of income for poor households. The report found that the income from social grants proved to be of considerable importance to poor households. It concluded:

“The importance of constructing a social safety net that does not have sizeable holes in it can hardly be more graphically demonstrated....If targeted grants are to be preferred to much blunter universal grants, then it is essential to make sure that the former effectively cover the entire low income/ food insecure population – a considerable policy, administrative and research challenge that has not yet adequately been met”.

This study sets out the need for a new approach to addressing the needs of the poor, and of recognizing the methods that have been adopted that have been successful in eradicating poverty, such as the social grants. The holes in our social security safety net could best be closed through the introduction of a universal grant.

General

Clearly workers and the poor have carried the brunt of “the rainbow nation’s success” and suffered disproportionately when compared to employers and other classes. The economy has only grown slowly, at under 4% a year and has not created new and sustainable jobs. South African businesses have failed to invest 5% of net profits per annum into job creation as agreed at the Growth and Development Summit 2 years ago, but they are still quick to list overseas.

Research by COSATU has concluded that the past ten years have been one of business’ most profitable decades. This is clear from the statistics published by the government. Between 1993 and 2004, the share of profits in the economy rose from 25% to 30%. Meanwhile, the share of wages and salaries dropped from 51% to 45%. Incomes inequality must be addressed if the legacy of apartheid is truly to be eradicated.

Apartheid persists in part because we have not been sufficiently brave in our new democracy by implementing labour enhancing employment. The Social Summit correctly called for full employment which we endorse. Instead our government adopted GEAR which aggravated the jobs and poverty crisis. In line with GEAR, the government cut tariffs that protected local industries and hence local jobs, reduced public spending and tried to privatize or at least commercialise the state-owned enterprises. As a result, the public sector shed hundreds of thousands of jobs. Meanwhile, economic growth slowed down and infrastructure deteriorated from lack of investment.

The social wage

Government spending on the “social wage” has increased significantly since 1994. There remains, however, a need for a more consultative and transparent process for determining the

financial value of the social wage, and measuring its impact on the lives of the poor. Disagreement exists amongst economists over whether the total amount of spending by government equals the total value received by the beneficiary. How does one equate the total education budget to the value in the quality of learning for the learner? There are a number of different positions on how the value of the social wage can be quantified. There should be a consultative process to reach consensus on this point before official figures incorporate the social wage in a manner which may skew some reports.

For instance, government's policy of requiring user fees means that many poor households cannot maintain access to services and a large percentage increasingly fall behind with payments, fuelling municipal debt. This phenomenon emerged dramatically through the housing programme. Until 2001, poor households received new RDP houses free of charge, but had to pay for improved electricity and water. Because they could not afford the service charges, many ended up renting out or selling the houses, in some cases even facing eviction.

The situation is even worse for telephones. In the late 1990s, government required Telkom to provide three million new landlines. During the Census 2001 process, the definition regarding telecommunications changed in a conservative direction. The 1996 Census measured the number of people using phones, whereas the 2001 Census only measured people having access to a telephone (regardless as to whether they had resources to make a telephone call). This may explain in part why the parastatal cut off 80% of the new lines within five years, mostly because the new recipients could not pay for them.

The current initiatives around developing policy for local government on free basic services are also to be welcomed. The challenge faced by government is how to ensure that the policies are developed in accordance with need, rather than being dictated by the budget.

Target Two: Reduce by half the proportion of people who suffer from hunger

According to government's report, progress in attaining this goal has been gradual. However, an examination of the three key indicators — namely the prevalence of underweight children under five years of age, the percent of children showing wasting and the percent of children showing stunting — suggests that in fact the number of children suffering from hunger has increased.

Investment in adequate nutrition and food security must be one of the most rewarding investments that any government can make. The linkages between adequate nutrition, and returns on good health, such as the positive use of educational opportunities and later labour

productivity are well documented. In addition, nutrition is vital to strengthen the immune system of people vulnerable to HIV and essential to people who are taking Anti-retroviral Treatment.

Section 27(1) (b) of the Constitution of South Africa guarantees to everyone in South Africa the right of access to sufficient food. Section 7(2) of the Constitution obliges the state the obligation not only to respect and protect the rights set out in the Constitution and the Bill of Rights, but also places on the state the positive obligation to “promote and fulfill” these rights.

According to a report by the HSRC, commissioned by the Department of Finance, Approximately 1.5 million South African children suffer from malnutrition, while 14 million people in South Africa are vulnerable to food insecurity. Almost half of all households in South Africa – 43%- suffer from food poverty. Ten percent of children under nine are underweight, with 1.5% being classified as “severely underweight”, while 21.6% of children in this age cohort are affected by stunting, and 3.7% of these children suffer from wasting.

The report concludes that “*there is empirical evidence to suggest that malnutrition in South Africa has been worsening over time*” and this is borne out by the figures presented in government’s report.

Due to historical patterns of apartheid race and labour policies, a true African peasantry has long since disappeared from South Africa. In fact, the agricultural sector is the primary source of income for only 4% of South African households.

It appears however as of government has viewed the issue of food insecurity as one that should be solved through the promotion of production of food for own consumption – which is borne out by the fact that the food security programme is located within the Department of Agriculture. The Minister of Agriculture said in a speech on 16 October 2004 that “*My department is tasked with the responsibility of leading this fight. Agricultural development thus becomes critical to providing the vulnerable communities with a hope for a better life, free from poverty, hunger and unemployment. To achieve food security, poor communities need to assign the highest possible priority to increasing food production*”.

Internationally however there has been a shift from viewing food insecurity as an issue of insufficient food production, to acknowledging it to be the result of a failure of livelihoods to guarantee access to sufficient food or levels of nutrition, i.e. lack of access to sufficient income. In the event, according to the Labour Force Survey for September 2003, over half of those in the

former homeland regions suffered hunger at least occasionally, compared to a third of those in the rest of the country.

We endorse the HSRC's recommendation:

*“While there can be no doubt that the productivity of agricultural resource use in the rural areas in which low income household predominantly reside is far lower than it could and should be, **the tables suggest strongly that expenditure and effort directed at improving the availability of and access to social grants will be more effective in reducing food insecurity than will the equivalent quantum of resources directed at improving agricultural productivity**”.* Our emphasis).

While hunger and malnutrition are important indicators for poverty, we recommend that measures to address hunger must be seen as part and parcel of an effective poverty eradication strategy as set out above.

GOAL TWO: ACHIEVE UNIVERSAL PRIMARY EDUCATION

Target 3: Ensure that all boys and girls complete a full course of primary schooling

These goals are too modest do not go anywhere as far as the Education for All Commitments made in April 2000 in Dakar Senegal. The wide ranging nature of education and its relationship to other sectors of society such as health were clearly articulated. (See EFA Goals and Targets)

The Global Campaign for Education is a world wide movement of education unions and NGO's was established to ensure quality education for all. Without the ability to read many people will be unable to access services and resources:

- It enables people to participate meaningfully in our democratic life
- It plays a role in reducing inequality
- It helps in eradicating child labour
- It contributed to securing livelihoods
- It plays a role in improving health
- It plays a role in sustaining the environment.

Education and learning is more than the sum total of numbers going and exiting the educational systems and schools in particular. We believe that one of the reasons why primary school children are dropping out and not completing their primary school education is due to an inability to pay the user fees, which discriminates against poor children. By governments own account

more than 4 % (Stats SA- to 4.5%. Towards a 10 Year Review) or of the learners are out of primary school largely, we believe, because of the costs of education. This could be anything upwards from 500 000 to a million - losing out on primary education

Universal education – why not?

The Department of Education (2003) admits that it is facing a challenge in meeting its objective of hundred percent enrolment of the compulsory school-aged learners, and claims that a large proportion of the three percent of compulsory school-aged learners are out of school as a result of a disability. This is contested by some non-governmental organisations. We believe that poverty and user fees keep learners out of school.

Abolishing school fees especially in the primary schools, can have a major impact on enrolment for boys and girls as the experience of Malawi, Mauritius and many other countries can testify (refer to EFA, 2004 for country statistics).

Distressing to note though, it is a daily fact confirmed by various anecdotal research and lived experiences that in many extremely poor homes parents often encourage their daughters to participate in transactional sex in order to feed the family and to meet the costs of schooling. This exchange nature of sexual activity puts girls at increased risk of pregnancy and HIV/AIDS and further jeopardizes their chances of completing their education..

We believe that this goal in particular cannot be achieved without eradicating user fees, including school fees and fees for learning support materials. Five years after the Millennium Summit and fifty years after the adoption of the Freedom Charter the call for universal primary education and quality education for all remains loud as ever. Unfortunately in many countries this goal has not been attained.

The Freedom Charter boldly proclaimed: "The doors of learning and culture shall be opened." This call was supported by close to 3 000 delegates who met at the Kliptown football ground, Gauteng on June 26, 1955 to sign the Freedom Charter.

Current initiatives regarding fees by the education authorities whilst welcome, do not go far enough. We call on government to make 10 years free education a right as outlined in the RDP and our political mandate. This means that it must include an expanded programme of Early Childhood Development and reception year programmes. Experience has shown that later

education and academic progress is due largely to good and solid and creative learning during the foundation phase.

GOAL THREE: PROMOTE GENDER EQUALITY AND EMPOWER WOMEN¹

Target 4: Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education preferably by 2005 and at all levels by 2015

A gender perspective and strategy must infuse all the MDG demands. Education, especially for girls and women, is the best way to break the cycle of health, hunger and poverty. Without it, we cannot achieve the Millennium Development Goals.

In analyzing this goal it is important to understand the differences between gender parity and gender equality. The EFA Global Monitoring Report (2004, p44) makes the following distinction:

- Gender parity is purely a numerical concept. Reaching gender parity in education implies that the same proportion of boys and girls-relative to their respective age groups-would enter the education system and participate in its different cycles
- Gender equality means that boys and girls would experience the same advantages or disadvantages in educational access, treatment and outcomes

There is a need to pursue a deliberate policy to keep girls at school and learning, given that expulsions from school due to pregnancy and abuse are high.

Statistics in South Africa indicate that teenage pregnancy is increasingly becoming a barrier to girls completing their secondary education.

The loss of a parent and orphan hood places tremendous burdens on poor children who usually drop-out or don't attend school altogether. In South Africa, the HIV/AIDS pandemic has further exacerbated the situation. Orphan hood has serious implications for children of school going age.

Although current statistics indicate that South Africa is on track to achieving universal education for all, our country's qualitative improvements have failed to keep pace with our quantitative expansion of the system. As a result there are still high rates of grade repetition, children dropping out of school for periods of time, large numbers of school aged children out of school, and a large number of children failing to complete their education due to various economic and social barriers (Shindler, 2005). For South Africa to achieve its goal of universal access to education, strong partnerships between the government, civil society and communities are

^{1 1} This section relies on work of report "COURTING GENDER EQUITY IN SOUTH AFRICAN SCHOOLS" by Shermaine Mannah done for WomensNet;

required. NGO's remain key instruments for boosting state efforts to achieve UPE and gender parity goals.

Although some studies indicate that gender parity is being achieved at significant levels in South African secondary schools, other data shows that women continue to still lag behind their male counterparts in completing formal education.

In 2004, 12.7% of women, and 9.1% of men in South Africa aged 20 and above lacked any formal education.

Although the participation of women in South Africa's education system has been high, there is still much concern about the quality of their performance.

Gender equality requires the achievement of equal outcomes for women and men. Inequalities arise from unequal power relations between the sexes and hence assessment of any progress towards gender equality needs to establish whether the changes are significantly altering these relations. In the last Senior Certificate Examination, women still constitute the majority of candidates (54%) and the majority of passes and endorsements (53% and 51% respectively) (Shindler, 2005). However, the pass rate among men continues to remain higher, with 72% of male candidates passing as compared with 70% of female candidates (DoE, 2005). In seven of the nine provinces, women performed less well than men, with men achieving a higher endorsement rate. In respect of a gender breakdown by subject, proportionally fewer women than men continue to take gateway subjects, like mathematics and physical science that are essential to the Human Resource Development Strategy of the country (Mannah 2005).

GOAL FOUR: REDUCE CHILD MORTALITY

Target 5: Reduce by two-thirds the mortality rate among children under five.

The MDG target for South Africa is approximately 20 per 1000 live births. According to DHS data, between 1998 and 2003, IMR and U5MR decreased by 0.5% and 0.3% respectively. This decrease is small and may not be significant at all. According to UNICEF data, the annual average rate of reduction in under-five mortality rate between 1990 and 2002 was 2.7% (UNICEF, 2005). Both sources of data (UNICEF and SADHS) show that SA is slipping backwards and is unlikely to meet the MDG target without increasing the AARR to 9.1% per year over the next 13 years.

While HIV and AIDS and related causes have become important causes of death among children in South Africa in the 2000s, there are other competing causes of deaths among children. Analysis of the 1997-2002 causes of death data from Stats SA shows that among children aged under five years, deaths due to intestinal infections, respiratory tuberculosis, influenza and pneumonia and HIV accounted for under 10%. This group of causes however has been steadily increasing, from 8.1% of under-five deaths in 1997, to 8.8% in 1999 to 9.6% in 2001.

These views are supported by research undertaken by Health Systems Trust, which reports that the child mortality rate in South Africa was 59/1000 in 2001. The rate has not been reduced but instead it is rising. The main cause for the high rate is HIV/AIDS, it accounts for 40.3 %, diarrhoeal diseases, which is 10.2%, low birth weight that is 11.2%, and lower respiratory tract infections, at 5.8%. In addition, poverty is the main cause, affecting all. ARV programme and projects are not implemented well. Safe water and sanitation needs improvement. There is also a need to improve nutrition.

Thus while there is unfortunately uncertainty around the actual level of child mortality, there are strong suggestions that South Africa is slipping backwards and is unlikely to meet this MDG target without a reversal and an increased annual reduction over the next 13 years.

The implications are that comprehensive primary health care including the prevention of mother to child transmission of HIV, immunisation, integrated management of child infections and nutrition interventions must be improved together with the provision of basic needs i.e. water, sanitation and nutrition. The policies are in place – the need is to achieve effective implementation.

Opportunities exist to decrease morbidity and mortality from HIV as well other common illnesses such as diarrhoea and pneumonia, malnutrition. On the issue of common childhood illnesses, the adoption of the Integrated Management of Childhood Illnesses (IMCI) strategy in South Africa in July 1999 provided a major opportunity for the reduction of childhood mortality from common childhood illnesses. The Integrated Management of Childhood Illness Strategy (IMCI) is an integrated delivery strategy, with a strong technical basis, for improving child health. It combines many of the interventions listed by the Bellagio Child Survival Group as feasible for implementation and for reducing under-five mortality. The IMCI strategy had been implemented in 46 out of 53 health districts by 2004 and this has been accompanied by training of over 7 000 nurses in IMCI. However challenges remain in sustaining training; following-up health workers after training; improving household, family and community behaviours for child health and communicating messages that improve child health at various levels.

Goal Five: Improve maternal health

In addition to the above analysis regarding gender and women's empowerment, we believe that demands for women's rights and quality services can only be attained through organized and conscious action by women and girls working together with men as partners and friends, brothers and fathers

We also believe that that the Department of Health's maternal mortality ratio estimates from a DHS may be wrong as a result of the large sampling error, particularly when the MMR is relatively low. However, it is not correct to say that the Department overestimates the ratio: if anything, it is likely to under-estimate it.

The maternal deaths reported by Stats SA are likely to be an under-estimate. Not all deaths are registered – and maternal causes are generally under-recorded. This has been observed in South America where a special investigation has been established to investigate all deaths of women of reproductive age.

The actual level of maternal mortality remains uncertain. However, there are very clear signs that the Maternal Mortality Ratio has been increasing, largely as a result of HIV.

GOAL SIX: COMBAT HIV AND AIDS, MALARIA AND OTHER DISEASES

Target 7: Halt and begin to reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS

Target 8: Halt and begin to reverse the incidence of malaria and other major diseases

The scourge of HIV/AIDS allied to poverty is killing not only people but also our institutions and much more must be done to reverse this. The number of peoples on anti-retroviral medication still falls short of the targets set by the government.

Decisive leadership and resources are needed to turn around the epidemic and its deadly impact on the poor and marginalised households that have limited access to public services which can provide information and treatment. Government's failure for government to lead undermines the objectives of a developmental state.

Health is promoted by integrated delivery of water and sanitation – both of which must be in public hands. Attention must also be given to other major diseases we should be considering other chronic diseases that are increasingly affecting the poor. We should be aiming to increase physical activity and to reduce hypertension, diseases arising from use of tobacco and obesity.

Water and Sanitation, Nutrition

Given its integral role and connection to healthy living, we believe that water and sanitation services are expanded in line with the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) and WSSD commitments. These services must not be privatized. In the early 1990's the RDP promised to wipe out malnutrition and hunger in a three year programme by asking the new government. The new government promised to -inter alia -keep VAT off basic foods, support educational programmes, improve the social security system and curb the powers of the marketing boards that influence food prices. Progressive civil society endorses the call for quality health services as we believe that social delivery cannot happen without quality public services.

GOAL SEVEN: ENSURE ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

Target 9: Integrate the principles of sustainable development into country policies and programmes; reverse loss of environmental resources

Target 10: Reduce by half the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water

Target 11: Achieve significant improvement in lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers, by 2020

We support the expansion of essential services such as electricity and clean water supply to all, and oppose their privatization. This means that we must halt to policies of privatization and "liberalization" which lead to the concentration of public resources in fewer and often non-national hands.

We also call for the effective resourcing of the laws and policies that exist in this sector to ensure sustainable development.

We demand action on pollution (both water and air pollution) by multinational companies. We already have very good policies that are not implemented - policies like: National Environmental Management Act (NEMA), National Waste Management Strategy (NWMS), Environmental Management Policy and Waste Management (IPW), as well as section 24 of the Bill of Rights as enshrined in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, The Conservation Act, The Biodiversity Bill, The Air Quality Management Bill, The GMO Act, The Minerals and Energy Act, The National Water Act, The Maritime Zones Act, The Marine Living Resources Act, The Nuclear Energy Act, The National Nuclear Regulator Act, legislations like the Promotion of Access to Information Act. We call for implementation and monitoring by government and civil society of polluters such as those in the mining industry.

Food Security

Government must ensure that its people enjoy food secure. This means, in part, dealing with the concerns around GM foods but also ensuring a more transparent and a participatory mechanism for evaluating GM permits for genetically modified organisms and to review the GMO Act of 1997 with full public participation.

Water

Government has to ensure access to clean drinking water for its citizens. Clean water and access to it are key factors that limit the potential for growth, because water is essential for human health and welfare as well as for agricultural and industrial production. Restricted access to clean water limits the potential for economic growth. Protection of the quality of water resources to ensure sustainability of the nation's water is in the interest of all water users

Critical interventions by government includes ensuring access to safe and clean water through stopping all pre-paid water meters, water privatisation and water cut offs, and ensuring that mining operations should stop contaminating our under ground water.

Energy

Energy production in South Africa harms both people and the environment. Presently a large proportion of the country's energy is generated from fossil fuels – coal, gas and oil which release dangerous gases into the atmosphere such as nitrous oxide (NO), carbon dioxide (CO₂) and sulphur dioxide (SO₂). South Africa has various underdeveloped renewable energy resources, which have the potential to help extend access to affordable and modern energy services. The use of the pebble-bed modular nuclear reactor has been proven to be very costly and it would drain much needed funds from the fiscus. Government should explore other alternative sources of energy, particularly given the current and worsening oil crisis and the environmental consequences the world is facing.

Waste Management

Waste management is one of the world's environmental and community health problems.

We call for a zero waste campaign and proper management of all forms of waste. We call on our government to ratify all international protocols and conventions that have been developed to control the production, handling and movement of waste around the world and reduce emissions of toxic gasses emanating from waste treatment.

Access to secure tenure

As regards housing and land reform, we acknowledge that the initiatives on housing for all has been gallant, and truly believe both the quality and demand could be met by greater public sector delivery in this sector, rather than only relying on the private sector.

We endorse the concerns of the Peoples Budget Campaign (2005) regarding land tenure and reform. The PBC reported:

“While the progress of land and agrarian reform to date has been disappointing, important advances have been made. New laws have been introduced to give effect to the rights and obligations contained in the Constitution; new institutions, such as provincial land reform offices, the Commission on the Restitution of Land Rights and the Land Claims Court have been established; and a sizeable number of beneficiaries have gained access to land and other resources.”

Other notable achievements in recent years have included:

- * An increased rate of land transfer under the redistribution programme;
- * An increased rate of settling restitution claims;
- * Larger budgetary allocations to land reform;
- * An improvement in the ability of the DLA to spend its land reform budget; and
- * The creation of implementing partnerships with statutory and non-statutory agencies.

The PBC stated that although these achievements are significant, and there is evidence of steady improvement in certain areas of delivery, major problems remain. Broad areas for concern include the failure to meet targets in terms of land transfer, the ineffective protection of tenure rights on commercial farms and in communal areas, the lack of attention to livelihoods issues, and the continued neglect of poor and marginalised groups, particularly women.

Among the specific problems are:

- * The limited contribution of restitution to redistributing land;
- * Difficulties faced by would-be beneficiaries in acquiring suitable land on the open market;
- * Failure to integrate land reform into processes of local development planning;
- * Disagreement among key players on roles in providing and funding post-transfer support;
- * Inappropriate project planning that bears little relevance to the needs of beneficiaries;
- * Poor implementation of farm dweller and labour tenant programmes;
- * Inadequate support for new landholding entities; and
- * The absence of systematic monitoring and evaluation of implementation and the impact on livelihoods.

GOAL 8: DEVELOP A GLOBAL PARTNERSHIP FOR DEVELOPMENT

This goal essentially calls for action by the Northern governments that have, thus far, failed to deliver on their promises.

All other goals 1-7 call for action and commitment by the south to deal with poverty decisively and they are time bound. Goal 8 – calls for decisive action on the part of wealthier north and the G8 countries in particular as well as multilateral financial institutions like the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund and they simply fail the poor.

Five years ago they pledged to work in favour of development in a global partnership. We call for an urgent review of their performance and the development of appropriate targets as an indication that Northern governments really are serious about contributing to ending poverty and under development in developing countries and about trying to equalize the results of centuries of oppression and exploitation by the North of Southern peoples and resources.

Target 12: Develop further an open trading and financial system that is rule-based, predictable, and non-discriminatory trading and financial system (includes commitment to good governance, development and poverty reduction – both nationally and internationally).

According to the South African Government Report on Target 12, the report states “**Target and indicators are not presently being measured in South Africa**”

The MDGs are informed by a market-based approach that assumes that trade will lead to development. The International Financial Institutions macro-economic policies have been imposed directly and indirectly to promote liberalisation. Policy flexibility enjoyed by the rich countries to build their economies is systematically being eroded and made illegal for developing countries by the world trade rules. In countries with low levels of industrialisation, the UNDP Human Development report shows a negative correlation between trade liberalization and industrialization. In part this because trade rules favour big corporations at the expense small and medium business development. International trade rules systematically legalize barriers to trade where developing countries have a comparative advantage like subsidies, escalating tariffs and tariff peaks.

In South Africa the controls on government policies from WTO rules and free trade agreements, together with the governments internal macro-economic policy orientation, are undermining the urgent tasks of reconstruction and development, the redistribution of wealth and the elimination of poverty in our country based on access to decent and secure jobs or sustainable livelihoods and the promotion of democracy and the empowerment of our people.

In this context we would like to see the South African government make the following shifts in economic policy and trade:

- A transformation in policy approaches that are based on the notion that trade, per se, is driver of growth and therefore a measure of development to one base on sustainable development. The *success* of free trade systems depends on the underlying productive capacity and not just market access.
- Trade policy needs to be seen as only one element of a broader development policy, therefore a South African trade strategy needs to determine the appropriate role trade plays in the development of our domestic economy. Fair trade can contribute positively by reversing the tendencies towards marginalization. Therefore trade must be constructed in the national framework and the outcome must support development strategies and have a positive impact on the economy that considers infant and labour-intensive industries and the needs of the vulnerable, poor and working class in general.
- So that South Africa is less vulnerable to price fluctuations, policies and strategies should be focused on focusing on importing and exporting through the diversification of the domestic production base.

Target 18: In cooperation with the private sector, make available the benefits of new technologies, especially information and communications.

Goal 8's targets should be time bound with specific time limits for each section. Government, especially one committed to a developmental state, has an important role to play and cannot expect the private sector to drive this.

ICT is a necessary and fundamental vehicle for development. Historically, Telkom SA had a sole monopoly in the telephony sector. This was originally meant to ensure effective cross-subsidization of the extension of access to rural and poorer communities. However, as government's report admits, the number of fixed line subscriptions have declined. Independent

research has shown that this is caused the charging of the user fees rather than as a result of Telkom's "modernisation".

The Universal Service Agency is tasked with overseeing the extension of access to services, especially in poorer communities. We believe that the extension of access to poor and under resourced communities can not be left to the private sector, and accordingly call on the USA and government to thoroughly review the following areas in order to address current obstacles to access and use.

- Telecommunications costs:
- Infrastructure
- Free Open Source Software
- Integration
- Diversity
- Freedom of expression and democratic ownership:

Goal 9: Ensure equitability and inclusion of people with disabilities within the mainstream society of South Africa

Goal 9: Ensure equitability and inclusion of people with disabilities within the mainstream society of South Africa	
<i>Target 19: Ensure equal opportunities for children with disabilities within the education system</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that children with disabilities can attend mainstream schools • Ratio of children with disabilities to children without disabilities within primary, secondary and tertiary education
<i>Target 20: Ensure access to employment for people with disabilities. We should reach a target of 5% - 10% employment of people with disabilities per company by 2015.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ratio of people with disabilities employed in the open labour market vs. people without disabilities employed • Ratio of people with disabilities within protective employment centres and sheltered employment
<i>Target 21: Ensure access to health care services for people with disabilities</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Free Health Care to people with disabilities • Availability of medication at clinics and hospitals
<i>Target 22: Ensure access to assistive devices for people with disabilities</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assistive devices should be provided to people with disabilities as part of free health care, especially to those who are not employed.
<i>Target 23: Ensure the eradication of discrimination towards people with disabilities</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advocacy programmes, training and awareness via television, radio and newspapers on all types of disabilities. • Disability specific NGO's to receive increased funding to ensure the eradication of myths and stigma's surrounding each disability.

We have added a ninth Goal to the existing MDGs. This goal addresses the needs of people living with disabilities, which is not addressed in any of the other goals. We believe this omission is serious as it wipes out and makes invisible the role disabled persons play

in the economy and implicitly negates their potential as a key component of life and civil society in meeting the developmental goals.

Thus Civil Society recommends that not only South Africa but the whole world attach a new goal to the MDG targets.

South Africa currently has a population of approximately 47 million people. In a joint publication by Disabled People South Africa (DPSA) and the Office on the Status of Disabled People (OSDP) in 2004, "*Disability our voices, our rights*", it is stated that an estimated 4,8 million South Africans are disabled.

The Census 2001 statistics indicate that there were 2 255 982 people with various forms of disability. This number constituted 5 % of the total population of this census. (in 2001 – 44 819 778 according to the census).

We do not ascribe to the racial categorization of people. These descriptions are merely used to illustrate the huge task before us and our collective inheritance and challenges as it derives from our Apartheid past and more recent history. Of this number 1 854 376 (82.2%%) are African, 168 676 (7.5%) coloured, 41 235 (1.8%%) Indian / Asian and 191 693 (8.5%) are white South Africans.

The number of females affected was 1 173 939, compared to 1 082 043 males. The province with the highest number of people living with disabilities was KwaZulu Natal (470 588) while Northern Cape had the lowest number (46 973). In terms of prevalence, Free State had the highest percentage (6,8 %) and the least affected province was Gauteng (3,8 %). The prevalence increased by age from 2 % in the age group 0 – 9 years to 27 % in the age group 80 years and above.

The percentage of disabled persons was highest among people with no education (10,5 %) and lowest among those with higher levels of education. This could be a reflection of the fact that disabled persons were often excluded from educational opportunities, as the environment in regular schools does not facilitate integration. Another possible explanation is that low levels of education are generally associated with prevalence of poverty, which in turn renders people more vulnerable to become impaired because of factors such as lack of access to healthcare and rehabilitation. Only 1,6% or 65 342 disabled people had higher education an approximately 30% or 672 288 disabled people had no education.

Only 18,4% of disabled people were employed in 2004. This could be due to diverse socio-economic and social cultural factors, particularly their low levels of education, discrimination in the labour market and negative attitudes of those they live amongst. The low levels of employment for the disabled population highlight their continued marginalisation and lack of independence within society.

We believe the following inclusive guidelines will assist in including people with disabilities within mainstream economic activities. These are:

- Break invisibility and affirm the rights of disabled persons. That is why we have created this goal. For this to work government must take the lead in policy making as well as effective implementation of laws and policies.
- Provide good pay and working conditions for service providers and the retention of staff, all social workers and those NGO's that work with the disabled
- Obtain supportive devices to lessen the burden.
- Create Quality Jobs and Justice Building Capacity

In this manner the disability sector can make a meaningful contribution to the economy of our country.

CONCLUSION

As civil society we have not been included in the preparation of our government's country report. We believe that to exclude civil society is shortsighted and undermines the potential for all sectors of the country to contribute to the attainment of the MDGs.

Government has stated that all sectors of society need to commit, through a social contract, to improve the lives of all in South Africa. Our constitution also sets out framework for a consultative, participatory democracy for this country.

Accordingly, we reiterate our call made on a number of occasions to government to establish a broad, truly consultative standing forum with civil society and labour to develop the MDGs further in our country, and to allow for the ongoing monitoring of our progress of the goals.