



TUNISIA (UNFI) and SOUTH AFRICAN WOMEN IN DIALOGUE
"Women Peace and Prosperity"
*SHERATON HOTEL 5**
PRETORIA APRIL 1 – 5 2007



1. INTRODUCTION

South Africa

It is now 50 years since the historic march of 20 000 South African women to the Union Buildings in Pretoria to protest repressive Apartheid legislation especially as it affected women and 13 years since the end of that Apartheid regime in 1994. South African women are today celebrating the gains made by our democratic government in providing legal, institutional, and political liberation, and the progress made in socio-economic and cultural development. In this regards, they also support the steps taken by government in promoting peace and security in our country and the continent.

There is however deep concern, that women continue to experience poverty and inequalities in our society. Poverty and inequality in South Africa are not marginal issues. Poverty affects a significant number of South African households who experience food insecurity, crowded homes, usage of unsafe water and insufficient forms of energy, lack of jobs that are secure and/or adequately paid and fragmentation of the family. The distribution of income and wealth is among the most unequal in the world. The brunt of this poverty and inequality is borne by women, children, the elderly and those with disabilities.

Violence against women is also a serious human rights issue which has significant social and economic implications for fighting poverty. The range of abuses that women experience is wide and includes physical, sexual, psychological, economic abuse, as well as stalking, forced isolation in the home and other controlling behaviours. The problem is both individual and social. It is embedded within, and emerges from, South Africa's history as well as from the current unequal social, economic, and cultural relations.

This is a situation that requires women themselves to continue to find new and effective solutions. It requires that women mobilize themselves to strengthen the South African Women's movement so that women have a solid base from which they can demand an efficacious state machinery for promoting women's development and gender equality. Women need a movement that will explore strategies to ensure that legislative provisions so far gained are entrenched and may not be reversed at will through political, cultural and religious fundamentalisms.

SAWID is committed to provide a platform for diverse women to work through their historic divisions,, to confront their current challenges of prioritising the eradication of poverty, disease, violence against women and children and all other forms and consequences of marginalization.

Tunisia is of great interest to SAWID because it is the only country in Africa that has fulfilled the first Millennium Development Goal (MDG) of halving poverty long before 2015. Like South Africa, Tunisia is rated as a middle income country operating in a market-based economic system. Poverty in Tunisia has been reduced from 12% in 1992 to 4% in 2006. We are also informed that Tunisia managed this feat, among other interventions, through various co-ordinated programmes at governmental, para-statal, private and non-governmental levels targeting the poorest communities and with women identified as a critical factor of analysis for social impact.

It was therefore inevitable that the joint Steering Committee of UNFT and SAWID would propose the theme of "Women Peace and Prosperity" as a way of responding to our respective challenges of legally entrenching women's gains as well as building prosperity towards the eradication of poverty.

SOUTH AFRICA: SAWID

SAWID (South African Women in Dialogue) is an independent South African Women's forum committed to improving the status of women by engaging national government, the private sector, civil society organizations (NGOs, CBOs and FBOs) and donors; and forming partnerships to shape development agendas. The SAWID Forum is impartial, not-for-profit and tied to no partisan interest.

TUNISIA: UNFT

The UNFT (National Union of Tunisian Women) is a non-governmental organization created in 1956 to promote the role of women in all fields. One of its main objectives today, is to make sure that women are fully involved in the knowledge society and have the right of exercising their citizenship. By mastering knowledge, innovative ideas will emerge and an entrepreneurial culture will spread among women bringing with it economic and social progress.

The strengthening of the social, economic rights and policies of the Tunisian woman and the consolidation of its place within the family and the society, consequence of a firm political good-will which marked the new era by a process of total and major reforms in all the fields with no exclusion, made the woman the partner of the man with equal rights and both active actors in the development process of Tunisia.

Having shown determination, aptitude to acquire the highest qualifications during her studies, strong capacity to assume responsibilities in all the fields at any level of decision, the woman is facing today new opportunities making her fully involved in the social and economic development of the country. She has to conquer new positions induced by the knowledge economy and especially at decision levels; such chance is confirmed by President Ben Ali who fixed, in its electoral program "For Tunisia of tomorrow", the percentage of women at decision levels to 30% in 2009.

2. CONTEXT

In celebration of international Women's day (March 8 2007) as well as commemorating the 50 years of the South African Women's march to the Union Building and the Enactment of the Tunisian Personal Status Code, SAWID and UNFT agreed to hold

joint celebratory events in both our countries which represent the Northern most and Southern most tips of our continent.

The first and very successful roundtable took place on March 8 in Tunisia under our common theme of “Women Peace and Prosperity”. Focus in Tunisia was on legislation and the knowledge based Industries. The South African leg will continue on these two areas however putting greater emphasis on Using Legislation and ICT’s to Eradicate Poverty and bring prosperity to women and society. The peace theme will be factored into the panel on cultural and religious issues in Cape Town.

The South African dialogue will bring together Tunisian and South African gender activists in legislation, public office, ICT’s, business and civil society initiatives. The women will have an open dialogue on their own roles in building their societies and women in particular. As happened at the Tunisia Roundtable they will continue to unravel challenges facing women in legislation, personal and career development, participation in public life, entry into corporate business and access to ICT’s in line with the WSIS recommendations.

3. OBJECTIVES OF THE DIALOGUE

- Exchange of best practice in Poverty Eradication strategies, legislative provisions, and participation in public life and corporate business (South Africa & Tunisia),
- Promote international protocols for global equity in legislation protecting women’s rights,
- Highlight the importance of access to knowledge Based Technologies and Industries for women so that they can contribute even more to economic development and innovation
- Identify constraints for women in taking up leadership and decision-making positions.

4. EXPECTED RESULTS

The dialogue aims to:

- Raise practical recommendations that could be followed up in our respective countries and also shared with sisters on the continent.
- Establish mechanisms for eventual exchanges and partnership between SAWID and UNFT for the benefit of women and our larger societies: Indeed to project **Women as vectors of Peace and Prosperity.**

5. DIALOGUE TOPICS

The South African leg will be a moving dialogue taking place in five days in Johannesburg, Pretoria and Cape Town.. The first day visit (April 1st) to the Apartheid Museum where there is also an exhibition of the photographs of veterans of the Women’s march will set the scene on where we come from.

The opening address on April 2 will provide principles which underpin our dialogue for gender equality within the theme of Women Peace and Prosperity.

FIRST SESSION (APRIL 2) TWO PANELS (Pretoria)

Using legislation and ICT to Eradicate Poverty and Bring Prosperity for Women

PANEL (A): Legislation, ICT's and Socio-Economic Rights:

The key issues are to look at some of the legislation pertaining to socio-economic rights and link this on how legislation and ICT's can eradicate poverty and bring prosperity. This panel could look at national budgets as they promote gender equality, target poverty and women through focused expenditure.

This would include legislation for socio-economic rights and women empowerment and how this can be used for social transformation. How can ICT's help in this process.

RSA: Ms Pregs Govender: Gender Activist

Ms Xoliswa Kakana: ICT's

Ms Sandy Liebenberg: University Professor

OR

Min. Geraldine Fraser Moleketi: Minister of Public Service on Socio-economic rights

(estimated time for presenters 10 mins)

Ms Souad Khalfallah,

Ms Nassima Ghannouchi

Ms Rim Belhaj

PANEL (B): How Women in Public and Private Institutions can Champion Gender Policies for Prosperity (lifting as they rise):

This panel focuses on how women can use their own prosperity to champion equitable gender policies and programmes equity. In Tunisia Women from business felt strongly about the need to champion gender policy in order to ensure that the wealth created at public and private levels translates into development for women and the eradication of poverty. There was a sense that women in business are often de-linked from broader gender struggles yet many in South Africa have benefitted from government these policies and programmes in terms of advancing their own businesses. **(2 – 3 speakers per country – Business women, Parliamentarians ICT's or Gender Activists with a facilitator for open dialogue)**

RSA: Ms Irene Charnley: Corporate business

Ms Ngwenya: Parliamentarian & Rural Women Movement

Ms Jane Mosebi: ICT's

Dr Ivy Matsepe-Cassaburi: Minister of Communications

Ms Amel Abbas

Ms Sarra Bouzid

Ms Rim Belhaj

SECOND SESSION

Constitutional Court Exhibition & Legislative Dialogue: (visitors plus equal number South Africans)

This dialogue will move to the Constitutional Court as a space to pursue avenues for entrenching existing national and global dispensations through interactions with select judges of the Constitutional Court.

RSA: Albie Sachs: Judge of the Constitutional Court
Yvonne Mokgoro: Judge of the Constitutional Court
Vytjie Mentor: Parliamentarian
Min. Bridgette Mabandla: Minister of Justice

THIRD SESSION (APRIL 3) PANEL (C)

Accelerating Women's Development throughout their life cycle as a strategy for eradicating poverty (The Tunisian Experience) (see UN Resolution.....)

(Tunisia 3 speakers: e.g. Ministry, Solidarity Fund, UNFT Projects)
South Africa respondents and open dialogue.

RSA: Margaret Legum:
Mohau Pheko:
Moretlo Molefi

Ms Aziza Hatira,

Ms Saida Rahmouni,

Ms Khira Lagha,

Ms Najoua Miladi

FOURTH SESSION (APRIL 4) (Cape Town)

Morning

Interaction with National Parliament **(see attached preliminary programme)**

Afternoon

ICT's MTN Science Centre

FIFTH SESSION (APRIL 5) PANEL D

Dialogue with Western Cape Women (suggest guest speaker on peace on the Continent)
Culture, Religion and Gender: Weaving Convergence
(Tunis 3 RSA 3: Names to follow)

[Ms Aziza Hatira,](#)

[Ms Saida Rahmouni,](#)

[Ms Salwa Tarzi](#)

6. PARTICIPANTS (Pretoria)

It is expected that SAWID will invite 100 – 150 people among them 15+ representatives from UNFT, both to include lawyers, business, government, civil society, urban, rural, all political parties, youth as appropriate.. We shall select people from clusters according to the session thematic areas.

7. DOCUMENTATION

All materials pertinent to the sessions will be distributed upon arrival. On the whole we expect open and spontaneous dialogue after very brief presentations (10 mins) with minimal paper presentations. (papers will be distributed and spoken to)

8. SIMULTANEOUS INTERPRETATION

Will be available in English and French. We are trying to source Arabic as well.

9. PANEL FACILITATORS (as available)

Women in the media

10. MEDIA COVERAGE

Delegate will be availed media interviews and there will be a media roundtable, however panel deliberations will be in closed sessions.