



Beyond the  
DAWN-Africa debates



**GLOBALISATION:  
IN SEARCH  
OF  
ALTERNATIVES**



A DAWN-Africa manual

Compiled and written  
for DAWN  
by NATASHA PRIMO  
and VIVIENE TAYLOR

Natasha Primo coordinated the postgraduate women's and gender studies at the University of the Western Cape from 1992-1998, where she taught courses on gender and development, and gender and work. She has written on articles on women in the South African parliament, gender and the national budget, and recently, on the women in science and technology debate, all within the South African context. She is currently at the National Research Foundation where she runs a programme that seeks to develop the research capacity of South African-based women.

BEYOND THE DAWN-AFRICA DEBATES



# GLOBALISATION: IN SEARCH OF ALTERNATIVES

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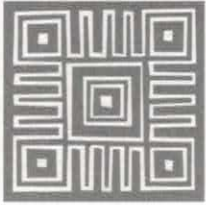
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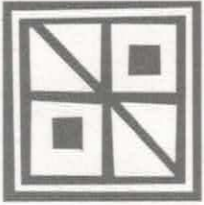
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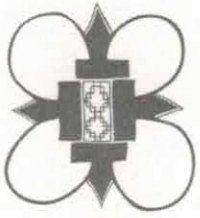
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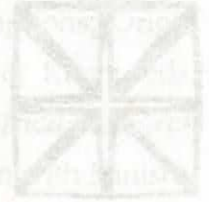
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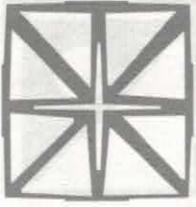
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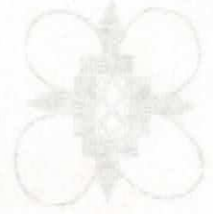
# Acronyms



<b>DAWN</b>	<b>Development Alternatives With Women for a New Era</b>
<b>FDI</b>	<b>Foreign direct investment</b>
<b>GATT</b>	<b>General Agreement on Trade and Tariffs</b>
<b>GNP</b>	<b>Gross National Product</b>
<b>IFI</b>	<b>International Financial Institution</b>
<b>IMF</b>	<b>International Monetary Fund</b>
<b>MNC</b>	<b>Multi-national corporation (also known as transnational corporations)</b>
<b>NGO</b>	<b>Non-governmental organisation</b>
<b>SAP</b>	<b>Structural adjustment programme</b>
<b>UNICEF</b>	<b>United Nations Children's Fund</b>
<b>WTO</b>	<b>World Trade Organisation</b>



# Glossary of terms



**Globalisation** – the movement of economics activities (like production, distribution, consumption as well as trade and investment) across national boundaries.

**Import tariffs** – a tax on the value of an imported good.

**Liberalisation** – the removal or reduction of import tariffs and the abolition or reduction of quotas on imported goods.

**Structural adjustment** – the process of responding to simbalances in the economy by adopting measures that increase exports, reduce imports, attract foreign exchange to a country, as well as curb government expenditures.

**Privatisation** – the withdrawal of the government from economic activities in favour of the private sector through 1) the sale of government-owned enterprises or 2) contracting with private firms to supply services (like health, education).

**Development** – sometimes seen as equivalent to *economic growth*, development is regarded as the steady growth of an economy, manifested in declining unemployment and a growing middle class, growing revenue in the state coffers, decreasing debt, as well as growth in the gross national product.

**Human development** – a process that increases people's potential to lead creative and fulfilling lives and increasing the number of choices available to them by transforming unequal power relations (like class, gender, ethnicity, etc) that pose barriers to their development.

**Economic growth** – usually seen to occur where there is an increase in employment, an increase in revenue, and a decrease in government debt which, it is argued, will lead to an overall improvement in the quality of life of all citizens.

**Neo-liberalism** – a belief system that holds that an economy performs better where there is no state intervention and that the market provides a mechanism for a more efficient allocation of resources.

**Export-orientation** – occurs where the companies are geared towards responding to the needs and demands of companies in other countries rather than that of companies and people internal to a country.

**Gross national product (GNP)** – the sum total of the flow of goods and services produced by an economy plus the income arising from investments and possessions owned in other countries, calculated over a year or a quarter of a year.

**Gender (relations)** – the (mostly unequal) social relations between men and women that structures women's and men's access to resources like employment, land, health care, education and so forth.

**Deregulation** – the removal of government regulations (like import tariffs) that state how companies and markets can operate.

**Devaluation** – reducing the value of a currency in terms of the monetary metal (like gold) or in terms of another currency.

**Inflation** – a sustained continual increase in the cost of all goods (petrol, food) and services (healthcare, education).

**Poverty** – the condition of being without the necessary resources (money, land, etc) to sustain a minimally acceptable standard of living. This is sometimes measured by the ability of a single woman to provide her family with a decent supply of food and clothing.

**Regionalisation** – includes regional groupings (or blocs) like the European Union, the South African Development Community, the Economic Community of West African States that cooperate economically by giving preferential treatment (in terms of trade) to bloc members while taking a defensive stance towards economies outside the regional bloc.





# Introduction to the manual

## BACKGROUND TO THE MANUAL

The events that led to the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing affirmed the need for African women involved in the struggle for gender justice to engage in concerted attempts to understand the dominant development path and challenge its negative impacts. While the DAWN Africa Debates generated critical thinking on the impact of development on the lives of women in regions of the South, Africa's performance has been much worse than other regions. The key challenge that faced DAWN, in Dakar in 1994, was how to share the tools of analysis in the region and take the issues raised by women beyond the level of debates to the level of concrete action based on alternatives. Such alternatives, DAWN argued, should challenge the models of development that increased poverty, inequalities and marginalisation. It was the desire to challenge the given, to move out of the impasse that there is no alternative that led to this manual.

This manual was an outcome of DAWN's intention to empower people at the grassroots, through capacity building, so that they can engage in strategic and practical initiatives to change their conditions. Realising that women in particular require economic literacy and more information on some of the issues and concepts that shape their lives through policies and institutions, the manual reflects on some of the key issues and trends that emerged in the debates.

## PURPOSE OF THE MANUAL

In this manual, we will explore the process of globalisation and liberalisation in order to better understand the nature of the development process, how it has been implemented (through structural adjustment

programmes – SAPs) in Sub-Saharan Africa, and the effects its had on poor women, in particular. The manual also attempts to explore ways in which people in the South can more effectively respond to the globalisation and liberalisation process.

The issues in this manual, have been debated extensively in feminist networks, like DAWN, that seek both to highlight the disastrous effects that this phase of globalisation is having on poor women in the South, and to find plausible alternative approaches to the type of development that marginalises women. One of the primary purposes of this manual is to extend the debates beyond feminist circles and build linkages with organisations, networks and individuals that share the same objectives.

Furthermore, the purposes of the booklet are:

- To promote gendered economic literacy in the Africa region;
- To provide a framework that would guide alternative strategies to the dominant neo-liberal development frameworks;
- To promote debate and deepen the analysis and understanding of the impact of liberalisation and globalisation on African economies and peoples, especially women;
- To share with policy-makers, activists, researchers and grassroots organisations a particular understanding of the global development process, and clarify the linkages between macro- and micro-level development trends.

## USING THE MANUAL

### SECTION ONE

The introduction to the manual provides a brief overview of the historical context, Africa's development status and some thoughts on different economic approaches and how these impact on women. It emphasizes the importance of women's involvement in the development process and reviews some of the central arguments that were discussed at the Africa regional workshop.

### SECTION TWO

This section examines the concept of globalisation, the proponents of globalisation and some of the policies and programmes that underpin it. Some of the main critiques of globalisation are also reviewed.

## SECTION THREE

This section highlights the main features of SAPs and their impact on countries in Africa. It also deals with the gendered nature of SAPs.

## SECTION FOUR:

This section asserts the need for people to be the ends of development and not to be seen in service to the economy – people or human centered development is proposed as an alternative. It explains certain strategies to challenge globalisation, the role of social movements and civil society, and places emphasis on the need to transform the state.

THE AFRICAN CONTEXT<sup>1</sup>

Globalisation is not a new phenomenon. Some people argue that globalisation dates back to the 15th century and the European colonisation and exploitation of Latin America, Africa, and Asia, as well as the white colonial settlement of Australia and North America. These events are examples of the growth and expansion of European capitalism into new territories.



Globalisation is not a new phenomenon: some argue that it dates back to the 15th century European colonisation of Latin America, Africa and Asia.

*The precolonial period:* This dates from about 1500 to 1800 and was called the mercantile phase of European expansion, because it was characterised by merchants who were said to plunder and loot the coastal areas of Africa, Asia and South America. They took gold, slaves and spices with which to feed the European industrial revolution. Africa and other areas in the South were tied into the global trade arena as Europeans forcibly removed its people and economic resources. This loss of economic resources and wealth reduced the future opportunity for economic advancement in the South. Instead, their “national” resources were marshaled against their will to pay the costs of European industrialisation.

*The colonial period:* The colonisation of the South in the 1800s was a way for European nations to secure a regular supply of raw materials to sustain and feed industrialisation in the North, as well as to secure new markets and consumers for their mass produced goods. The British, French, Germans, Italians, Portuguese and Belgians embarked on a “scramble for Africa”, each imperialist state frantically amassing as much territory as it could control and administer directly or indirectly. By 1914, the land under European control amounted to 85 percent of the earth’s surface.

Billions of dollars were used in Africa, Asia and Latin America, particularly in the construction of railways, ports, mines and factories. Production in the new territories was organised to facilitate the removal of raw materials (especially minerals) in order to meet the industrial needs of the North. There was very little or no trade between the former colonies. The people of Africa, Asia and Latin America in turn provided a market for mass-produced goods from Europe and often employment opportunities for surplus labour of the north.

This period gave rise to an *international division of labour*, wherein the Northern industrialising economies produced and traded manufactured goods, while the southern economies produced and traded unprocessed or raw materials. During this period, colonised territories were integrated into an ever-expanding network of production for private profit, and Southern peoples (especially men) increasingly shifted from their traditional livelihoods to selling their labour to profit-driven enterprises.

*The neo-colonial period:* Colonialism in Africa declined shortly after the second World War, and by the mid-1950s most of the former colonies had gained their independence. The new governments in the former colonies increased state spending on education and infrastructure, as well as industrial investment and the development of export agriculture. African states were heavily involved in economic development ventures, mainly as a result of conditions imposed by foreign private investors.

The availability of finance in the mid- to late-1970s and the upsurge of donor spending generated expanded state investment by African governments. The availability of donor funds accelerated the expansion of social and economic infrastructure and services, and imports of capital and intermediate goods for investments increased. This increased the amount of capital owed to foreign donors while, at the same time, foreign exchange earnings declined as a result of terms of trade losses and stagnation in agricultural production. Employment in the public sector expanded rapidly and placed growing pressure on the government's wage bill. By the 1980s African governments were having trouble repaying their debt to foreign donors.

*The post-colonial period:* The 1980s became the decade of the debt crisis and the implementation of structural adjustment programmes in many Southern countries. In Sub-Saharan Africa, the combined effects of very large borrowing and the decision by foreign and domestic banks to increase interest rates on loans seriously affected the economies of many



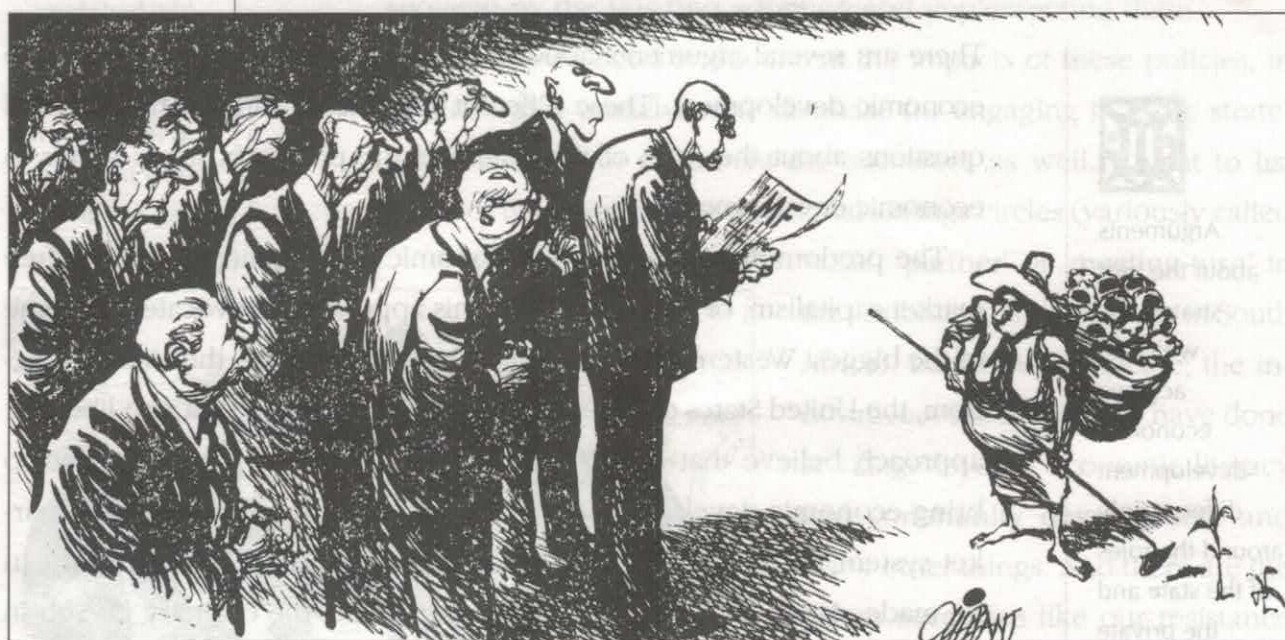
In Sub-Saharan Africa, the combined effects of very large borrowing and the decision by banks to increase interest rates on loans, seriously affected the economies of many countries.

countries. Structural adjustment measures were implemented under the joint direction of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank to reduce government spending and direct involvement in the economy and to create an “enabling” environment for private enterprise to flourish.

The first critiques of structural adjustment programmes emerged in 1984 with UNICEF’s call for “structural adjustment with a human face.” UNICEF showed the disastrous impact of structural adjustment on people, and questioned whether structural adjustment programmes were indeed generating economic growth. Since 1990, the World Bank has begun to slowly take note of the various criticisms of structural adjustment. In 1996, the president of the World Bank announced the intention to start a joint review of structural adjustment programmes in ten countries, involving the World Bank, non-governmental organisations, and the governments of these countries.

## AFRICA’S DEVELOPMENT STATUS AND THE NEED FOR PARTNERSHIPS

Given the development trajectory of Sub-Saharan Africa and its limited engagement in the global economy, partnerships are becoming a precondition for the creation of an integrated regional economy, and as a political bargaining base that would strengthen the region’s development potential. The 1992 *Human Development Report*<sup>2</sup> showed that Sub-



“... So you see, the entire future of the international financial system hinges on your capacity in Africa for quick recovery and vast economic growth.”

Saharan Africa has the world's highest infant mortality rate at 106 in every 1000 lives birth, the lowest life expectancy at 51 years, and the lowest literacy levels at 45 percent. Africa is undergoing a crisis with more than 200 million people living in extreme poverty and 100 million people suffering from malnutrition.

The World Bank ranked Africa as the least industrially developed continent with the lowest contribution to world industrial output or production, estimated at 2 percent. The continent accounts for less than 1 percent of total world trade and has the lowest per capita income. Africa has the largest number of least developed countries in the world at 30 out of 47. Africa's external debt has gone from crisis to disaster – Sub-Saharan debt is equal to its gross national product (GNP) plus 3.5 times its annual export earning. Africa's external debt represents 20 percent of all developing countries' debt. The burden of debt repayments and loan conditions has drastically constrained these countries' ability to respond to people's basic needs. The critical question given this context is what type of development co-operation and trade relations would promote partnerships that are based on mutual benefit, accountable practices, transparency in negotiations and decision-making and would not generate conflict, regional destabilisation and increase inequality.

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT APPROACHES AND GENDER: WHY WOMEN IN AFRICA SHOULD BE CONCERNED



Arguments about the best strategy by which to achieve economic development differ mainly around the roles of the state and the private business sector in economic development.

There are several arguments about the best strategy by which to achieve economic development. These different approaches differ mainly around questions about the roles of the state and the private business sector in economic development.

The predominant approach to economic development is that of free market capitalism, or *neo-liberalism*. This approach is advocated by some of the biggest Western economies like Germany, France, the United Kingdom, the United States of America and Japan. Advocates of a neo-liberalist approach believe that the private business sector is best equipped to bring economic development to a country. Within a capitalist free market system, business will invest its money where the highest profit can be made. According to the neo-liberalist beliefs, the ordinary person in the street will benefit (through "trickle down") as more jobs are created and incomes increase.

In this system, the role of the state is simply to create the conditions

for business to increase their profits and invest them to generate more profits. Globalisation and the liberalisation of trade and markets are key tools that the state uses to promote increased business profits.

Critiques of the neo-liberal approach indicate that the state's role in the economy is critical for balanced development, while neo-liberals advocate a minimal role for the state, with market forces dictating the pace of development.

Keynesians (named after the economist John Keynes) support a mixed economy where both the state and the private sector play an active role in development. *Keynesianism* favours a system where the state regulates the economy in order to curb the power of private business and protect workers' rights and welfare. According to this approach, in order to promote economic growth, the workers, private business and the state within a country agree to a social contract between the different stakeholders. The social contract outlines the responsibilities of each group to ensure the steady growth of the national economy.

While the Keynesian approach provides a human face to the dominant neo-liberalist development approach, both approaches prioritise economic growth and increased investment over the transformation of unequal power relations (on the basis of race/gender/ethnicity/class) within a society. Neither approach has acknowledged the role of women in the economy. The success of both approaches are dependent on the exploitation of women's labour and their social roles within the household, communities and society.

Economic issues are routinely discussed without any attention to women and the way supposedly gender-neutral economic policies intersect with

gender divisions within society, reinforcing women's subordinate position. For most economists and policy-makers, economic issues are not women's issues. However, women's unequal access to and control over resources is an important economic issue that affects women's chances of survival and their quality of life. Yet it remains on the bottom of the agenda for most governments, policy-makers,

Economic issues are discussed without any attention to the way supposedly gender-neutral economic policies intersect with gender divisions in society.





Women need to be concerned about economic policies in Africa because of how dominant policies are changing the way work is organised.

Cutbacks in government expenditure reduces the time women have to search for better-paying jobs.

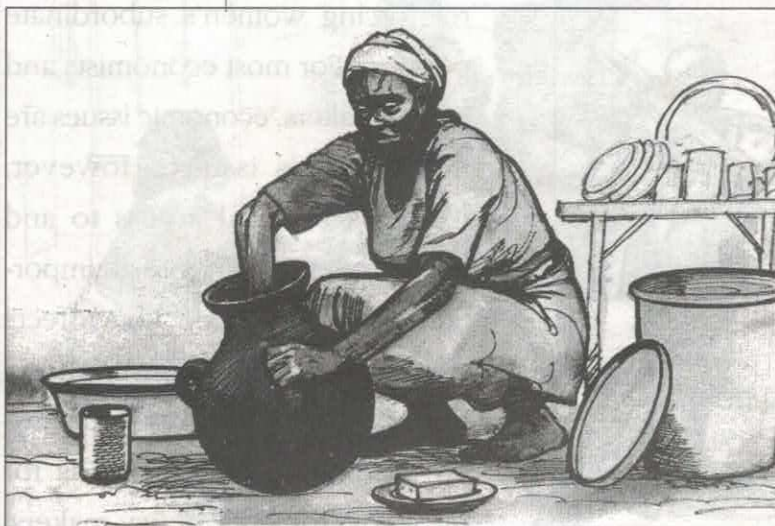
development and civil society organisations. Decision-makers in government and private business remain blind to the different and unequal effects of their decisions on women and men.<sup>3</sup>

Women activists and feminist organisations often lack the information and language to make the linkages between economic theories and inequality in people's (men and women's) choices in life. It is therefore also more difficult for women to intervene in debates and policy that directly affect their lives. Women must be empowered so they can enter into economic policy debates that impact on their lives.

When public servants are made redundant, especially in the social sectors, women are mostly the ones who lose their jobs. They are also the ones primarily responsible for making ends meet within the family, but with less resources at their disposal. As participants in production as well as the ones with key responsibilities in social reproduction, women have a direct stake in which economic policies are adopted and should be empowered so they can participate in discussions on economic matters.

Under current economic policies women are disadvantaged in multiple ways. On the production side, women are exploited as cheap labour in production for export, while the shift to non-traditional crops undermines women's roles in agriculture as well as the production of food for local consumption. On the consumption side, the cutbacks in government expenditures reduce women's access to jobs in sectors where they predominate, reduce their access to services that are crucial to the performance of their domestic tasks, and increase the time spent in compensating for the effect of government cutbacks (which also reduces the time they have to search for better-paying jobs).<sup>4</sup>

Women need especially to be concerned about economic policies in Africa because of how dominant policies are changing the way work is organised. While women in the South are losing jobs in the formal sector, they are increasingly being drawn into more insecure positions in the informal sector, into home-based production, and hired and fired as casual workers. This is a shift from jobs where women might



have had some measure of protection as far as wage levels and conditions of work are concerned to employment situations where the physical conditions of work may be hazardous. Often payment is dependent on how fast they can work (for example, in the garment industry women are paid according to how many items they produce), and if the demand for goods drop, they can be fired at will without any legal repercussions to the employer.

Globalisation and liberalisation policies also encourage more production for export. In some countries, this has led to agricultural lands, traditionally farmed by women to cultivate food for the home, becoming used for commercial farming by male family members and used for export production. This has not only reduced women's power within the household by making them more dependent on male members for household survival but has also led to reduced access to food and higher incidences of malnutrition in some areas of the South.<sup>5</sup>

Furthermore, globalisation and liberalisation have brought changes in the way societies are organised. New groups of elites develop and compete with the traditional elites and bureaucrats for power and resources. Women experience greater marginalisation and alienation.

## THE DAWN AFRICA DEBATES

The DAWN Africa debates<sup>6</sup> arose out of an attempt to provide women activists and feminist organisations in Africa who are concerned with development and gender issues with the opportunity to consider the impact of globalisation on the region, and start formulating an alternate vision for development on the continent. In particular the debates are intended to spread and deepen understanding of the development problems that are specific to Africa, particularly around the impact of structural adjustment programmes, debt and instability in the region.

The participants in the DAWN Africa debates raised issues that are both economic and political in nature, and that constitute both external as well as internal causes or consequences of the crisis in Africa. Under internal factors, they discussed:

- issues of governance and relations between the state, non-governmental organisations, and the private sector;
- the structure of the economy and export-orientation;
- the unequal distribution of power along race/ethnic/gender/class lines;

- the rise of religious fundamentalism and the entrenchment of women's subordinate social status; as well as
- the implications of globalisation for democratisation processes on the South.

Under external factors, the participants in the debate raised issues like:

- the policies of the IMF and World Bank and their impact on domestic economies and people;
- issues of global governance and management; as well as
- the continued economic dependence of African economies on their former colonizers.

The starting point of the DAWN Africa debates is the argument that the dominant approach to development and growth is not an inevitable strategy that every developing country has no choice but to implement. Instead, the DAWN Africa debate is premised on the belief that “there must be an alternative” to the dominant neo-liberal approach to development. The outline of the DAWN Platform on Alternative Economic Frameworks provided a basis from which participants in the debate could begin to outline their ideas for economic, social and political transformation in Sub-Saharan Africa.

### Some questions for discussion

- What similarities can you see between the history of development patterns in Africa and your own community?
- What have your experiences and observations been of the dominant economic policies?
- What do you think of the different approaches to the economy?



## 2: Globalisation: The current context

Globalisation means different things to different people. Simply put, it is the movement of goods, ideas, information, services, cultural and economic activities (like production, distribution and consumption, as well as trade and investment) across the political boundaries of states.

It also refers to a growing openness of national economies to economic activity by companies from other states, greater interdependence between different national economies, as well as the harmonisation of what is produced, exported and imported within a nation with the “demands” of the international economy (also referred to as “integration” into the global economy). Companies embark on the process because of the promise of higher profits and in response to competition in the market.

Economic policies of globalisation and liberalisation are worsening environmental degradation. The collapse of socialist systems in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union has dramatically changed the global political scene. There is a major crisis of livelihoods, poverty and inequality is affecting the large majority of people in the South, and driving women increasingly to earning incomes under very difficult conditions. The great and growing gap between rich and poor countries and between rich and poor within countries remains. Using a gender lens, it is clear that the double burden of income earning and reproductive work within households has become crushing for the majority of poor women in the South...

Another major challenge of the current global economic model is the changed relations between governments and the private sector producing for profits. The World Bank’s model attempts to substitute private producers for state production in the belief that the former are more cost effective and efficient in their use of scarce economic resources. Apart from the question of whether this is true on its own terms, a major issue is whether people’s needs are met in the processes of down-sizing the state and privatization. Increasingly, the World Bank has been defining the role of non governmental organisations (ngo’s) as taking over the role of the state in critical sectors that directly affect human development, such as health, education, and poverty programmes.



(Gita Sen, DAWN Research Co-ordinator on Alternative Economic Frameworks, in *From “There is no alternative” to “There must be an alternative”*: The DAWN Africa debates on alternative development frameworks, SADEP: Bellville, 1997, p11)

In order to respond effectively to globalisation and liberalisation, people who work towards social transformation need to understand this trend and its social implications. It is therefore necessary that we first understand what is meant by globalisation.

## GLOBALISATION AND LIBERALISATION

Globalisation is not a new phenomenon. Some people argue that globalisation dates back to the 15th century and the European colonisation and exploitation of Latin America, Africa, and Asia, as well as the white colonial settlement of Australia and North America. These events are examples of the growth and expansion of capitalism into new territories. The growth and wealth of the economies of countries like Great Britain and Spain, for example, were built on the exploitation of raw materials and people in colonies in Africa, Asia and Latin America (see section 1).

Over the last 500 years, economies across the world have alternatively sought to globalise only to retract and focus on national development, only to later again attempt a globalisation strategy. Globalisation has happened unevenly and in cycles over the last four to five centuries. It is therefore not the highest or “ultimate” form of capitalism but is the result of policy decisions by states in relation to the needs of international economic institutions. The current rise of globalisation should therefore not be seen as inevitable but should instead be viewed as a socio-political outcome that is intended to benefit particular groups of people.<sup>2</sup>

### DEFINITION OF GLOBALISATION<sup>1</sup>

When people talk of globalisation they generally mean:

- that, more and more, decisions taken by governments, companies and trade unions, for example, are influenced by events happening elsewhere in the world;
- that the way products are made, distributed and used is organised on a global level;
- that, more and more, individuals, companies, governments and social, political and cultural groups are cultivating economic, political and social relationships at an international level;
- that states are developing more cooperative relationships with their neighbours (or “economic blocs”) in order to strengthen their economic position within the world economy.

Source: Deanne Collins, “Globalisation: new terrain, new struggles” *South African Labour Bulletin*, V21 N5, 1997.

## WHO SUPPORTS GLOBALISATION?

The main supporters of globalisation are the governments of industrialised countries whose economies are strong and “world competitive,” the multi-national corporations (MNCs), as well as the World Trade Organisation (WTO), the International Financial Institutions (IFIs) like the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). Another group of governments who support globalisation are from countries that export raw materials (or “primary goods”) to industrialised economies that are performing well. These governments act on the belief that the growth and expansion of the industrialised economies will generate a higher demand for their primary goods and thus benefit their own economies.<sup>3</sup>

In all countries, governments have to negotiate their roles in the national and the international economies in the context of globalisation. In the current context, the developmental role of a national government is frequently undermined by the conditions set for participation in the global economy. Central Africa and Francophone Africa are good examples.

### Central Africa

Discussing the blocks to development in Africa, it was argued that it was necessary to consider the impact of the balkanization of Africa. In Central Africa, for example the organisations that were established to ensure regional protection failed to strengthen partnerships between member states and prevent the rise of prices and taxes on products. Within another regional organization, the Economic Committee of West African States (ECOWAS), the main failure came from the fact that their products are not competitive with those coming from abroad. Indeed, a great deal of pressure is placed on regional blocks in Africa.

### Francophone Africa

Former French colonies in Africa have to question their position in relation to France and, also, in relation to other countries. The franco-phone countries have had serious cash-flow problems, since France did not import enough of their products to allow them to increase their financial resources. And yet developing countries paid France about 17 billions francs (CFA) for imports. In other words, France is still an important market for African countries. Francophone countries should therefore consider how to dismantle the processes that maintain them in economic dependence with France and examine the type of impact which is reproducing itself with the devaluation of their currency. It is not, therefore, feasible to discuss definition of the role of the state vis-a-vis the private sectors without referring to the historical process of colonialism and neo-colonialism.

*(From “There is no alternative” to “There must be an alternative”: The DAWN Africa debates on alternative development frameworks, SADEP: Bellville, 1997, p14.)*

## HOW DIFFERENT COUNTRIES INTERPRET GLOBALISATION

Industrialised countries whose economies are not performing well or are in decline pay lip service to globalisation but may in fact practice *selective* globalisation. In industries and sectors where they hold a strong competitive advantage, they may open their economies for other competitors and demand the same openness in return. In other industries and sectors where they may have lost their competitive advantage, they impose import restrictions in order to protect their domestic companies.

Developing countries may also interpret and implement globalisation strategies differently, depending on the strength of their economies and their relationships to developed countries. They may protect industries and sectors of their national economies that are weaker and less able to withstand competition from international companies.<sup>4</sup>

## WHAT KIND OF POLICIES PROMOTES GLOBALISATION?<sup>5</sup>

Governments of countries like the United States of America (USA), Japan and Germany, for example, tend to provide open access to other countries to invest and trade in their economies, and demand the same openness from their trading partners. The cornerstone of globalisation is a set of ideas that, together, constitute the doctrine of *free market capitalism*. For the proponents of globalisation, free market capitalism exists when there is *privatisation, deregulation, trade and financial liberalisation*.

### PRIVATISATION

Privatisation is one way in which the state can intervene in the economy in an attempt to meet its economic objectives. It involves the withdrawal of the state from certain economic activities in favour of the private sector. This usually involves the sale of assets (such as companies and land) owned by the state to the private sector.

Those who favour privatisation argue that the private sector is able to more efficiently produce goods and services than the state. They also argue that the sale of state assets will free up state resources that can then be used to reduce its national and international debt, which in turn will attract more investments. Other arguments that are used to support the call for privatisation are that the state is slower than the private sector in responding to changing technology while the private sector can provide quality service much quicker than the state.

There are other ways in which privatisation occurs. In addition to selling off state assets, privatisation also occurs where the state subcontracts some of the services it previously performed to private companies.

## Impact on women in Zimbabwe

In terms of food security, we used to have a stock pile of maize due to the necessity to dodge the drought's effects. We were able to sell some to Mozambique and donate some to Ethiopia. But when the EEC and the US began to dump their yellow maize in Zimbabwe the price of maize went down and producers preferred to sell their grain to middle grinders rather than to the Grains Milling Board. GMB depots began closing down because of these small grinders in urban areas and peri-urban areas. The liberalization of markets and the closure of GMB depots has forced women to sell to middle people who buy cheap and sell dear, so undermining women's capacity to improve their own life. But the new pricing policy has lifted the price-freeze to give more money to the producers, while passing the cost of adjustment onto consumers. As women are crop-producers they are benefiting from this. However, cost recovery measures in agriculture have also meant the removal of subsidies on fertilizers.

(Ona Jirira, University of Zimbabwe, in *From "There is no alternative" to "There must be an alternative": The DAWN Africa debates on alternative development frameworks*, SADEP: Bellville, 1997, p.21.)

### DEREGULATION

Deregulation refers to the abolition or reform of measures that dictate how companies and markets can operate. Calls for deregulation include pressures on the state to:

- remove subsidies on services and goods that the state helps to make accessible at no or low cost;
- remove price controls such as those on staple foods, and to allow private companies to set their own prices – which are usually higher;
- remove regulations that impose control on private companies on, for example, minimum wages, working conditions, and hiring and firing workers – also known as a call for “flexible labour markets”;
- reduce taxes on income and profits in order to free more money that companies can invest in the production of goods and services.

### TRADE AND FINANCIAL LIBERALISATION

Trade liberalisation involves the reduction of import tariffs and the abolition of quotas on imports. Import tariffs are imposed on goods coming into a country. These tariffs usually increase the prices of imported goods and make them more expensive than domestically produced goods. Import tariffs are one way that governments assist the development of domestic industries and the growth of the national economy. Calls for the abolition of import tariffs usually benefit international companies that want to compete “equally” in an open market, and see import tariffs as a “penalty” that

increase the price on their goods outside the budgets of most citizens. Trade liberalisation is intended to ease trade across political boundaries.

Financial liberalisation measures are intended to ease the flow of money across national boundaries so investors can move their money when they want to, where they want to.

## GLOBALISATION AND LIBERALISATION IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

Globalisation and liberalisation in developing countries have occurred at a much slower pace than in industrially developed countries. The pace of globalisation and liberalisation increased with the introduction of *structural adjustment programmes* by the IFIs. Still, the implementation of liberalisation in developing countries is fairly limited and has occurred unevenly. Liberalisation of capital flows (movement of money) has developed much faster than the liberalisation of trade policy and trade flows, in order to attract foreign direct investment (FDI) and “non debt-creating” capital flows.

### WHAT ARE SAPs?

Structural adjustments are reforms that are aimed at stabilising developing economies and promoting their growth through currency devaluation, increases in the prices of producer goods, liberalisation of trade and investment, privatisation, and other supporting institutional changes. In most cases, these reforms are implemented in the context of economic crisis and in response to promises of resources from donors, especially the World Bank and the IMF. The World Bank is primarily responsible for designing the structural adjustment programmes for individual countries.

If we believe the arguments of those who favour globalisation and liberalisation, the benefits of following these policies should be greater than the costs. Indeed, the projections for 1995–2001 suggest that globally, income will rise by \$212–510 billion. However, a closer look at who will win and who will lose shows that the losses will be borne by a group of countries that cannot afford them. The developing countries will lose up to \$600 million a year, and Sub-Saharan Africa will lose \$1.2 billion. This loss will have serious implications for the ability of developing and Sub-Saharan African countries to address questions of poverty and human well being within their national borders and in their regions.

## GLOBALISATION AND LIBERALISATION IN AFRICA

The IFIs (also known as the Bretton Woods Institutions) argue that history shows that where states became involved with running production, and countries followed industrialisation policies that sought to produce goods that would otherwise have been imported, these experiments have failed. They have also characterized governments of Third World or developing countries as corrupt and inefficient, and argue that they allocated resources in ways that did not lead to development and the growth of the economy.

The IFIs and governments of industrialised economies also suggest that African economies are failing because they have traditionally been marginalised from the global economy. They further imply that the marginalisation of African economies is the result of decisions by African governments and thus their own fault, and can only be corrected through actions taken by these governments.

These corrective actions, according to the IFIs, include cutting back on government expenditures, especially in social welfare, to remove measures that restrict the functioning of private capital, and to open the economy to competition and allow the free flow of trade and investment.<sup>6</sup>

## WHAT DO THE CRITICS SAY ABOUT GLOBALISATION AND LIBERALISATION?<sup>7</sup>

People who are critical of globalisation and liberalisation argue that the processes will not necessarily lead to development and growth in developing countries. As evidence, they note that liberalisation and globalisation failed to deliver on important aspects within the industrialised countries. In industrial economies, the period since 1980 has shown slow economic growth and mass unemployment, while the most dynamic growth in these economies occurred before their deregulation and liberalisation. Given that liberalisation and globalisation produced such poor results in industrialised countries, it pays to be skeptical about the potential benefits for developing countries.

The developed countries and IFIs recommend that other developing countries pursue policies of globalisation and liberalisation, cut back the state's involvement in the economy and social welfare policies, and allow private companies and markets to operate freely. As evidence of the success of these policies the IFIs frequently point to the performance of

the East-Asian economies. However, critics of globalisation and liberalisation point out that these countries followed policies that are opposite to those that are now being recommended. Countries like South Korea, for example, discouraged foreign investment, implemented import controls, and the state directed industrial policy. Such countries were able to raise the standard of living of their people by integrating only to the extent, and in the direction, that benefited their economies and their people. Rather than follow a policy of wholesale integration into the global economy, these countries pursued a policy of "strategic integration."

Critics point out that after ten years of structural adjustment policies that were meant to increase the pace of globalisation and liberalisation in developing countries, many of these economies are still unable to grow. In fact, in these countries incomes have gone down, infant mortality has increased, illiteracy and school attendance have grown worse, and the incidence of domestic and public violence have increased.

While the general critique of structural adjustment might suggest that its only the rural poor who are affected by it, in Ghana this is not the case. In fact there's not a middle class – the middle class have fallen out of the bottom of their class-level. So you can imagine what is happening to the rural poor. Structural adjustment has affected people across the board. It's only a few types of operators who have been benefiting from structural adjustment: people involved in high level trading and speculation in the currency market; people involved in the new financial institutions that have arisen in Ghana like the Stock Exchange, and that sort of thing. Young, upcoming professionals, university teachers, all men or people of whom one usually does not think when one is talking about the African crisis, have been affected by the structural adjustment programme.

(Dzodzi Tsikata, Third World Network, in *From "There is no alternative" to "There must be an alternative": The DAWN Africa debates on alternative development frameworks*, SADEP: Bellville, 1997, p26.)

Critics also point out that the marginalisation of African economies is due to poor economic performance in spite of being more integrated into the world economy. These economies declined as a result of events that were entirely beyond their control (such as the escalation of the value of their debt following the 1973 rise in oil prices, and the rise in interest rates). Instead of becoming more integrated into the world economy, these countries should give careful thought to *how* they integrate into the world economy.

Globalisation and liberalisation increase the gap between the rich "have's" and the poor "have-not's."

**IN SUMMARY:**

What a global liberalised system is not ...

- fixed, immutable and given
- inevitable
- driven by abstract market forces
- a new phenomenon

What a global liberalised system is...

- driven by corporate/business strategies
- promoted by political interventions and negotiations
- imbalanced in its impact (in terms of who gains and who loses)
- uneven in sectoral impact
- uneven in geographical spread
- polarising between and within countries
- unsustainable and unstable.

**Some questions for discussion**

- What are the positive and negative impacts of globalisation in your country?
- Why are women more negatively affected by globalisation than men?
- How can women and women's movements engage with the state to change these negative impacts?
- In what ways should civil society capacity be strengthened to negotiate better terms for poor communities?



## 3: Structural Adjustment Programmes in Africa

### WHAT IS THE NATURE AND WHAT ARE THE MAIN FEATURES OF SAPs IN AFRICA?

Since the early 1980s, the IFIs have pushed for faster paced globalisation and liberalisation in the developing world in order to accelerate economic growth. The mechanisms for “fast-tracking” economic growth are structural adjustment programmes, or SAPs. Many African countries like Ghana and Zimbabwe have had to implement a set of reforms that were designed by the IMF and World Bank, lured by the promise of access to loans to help them meet their development goals and service their debt.

In contrast to the promise of development and growth, the effects of structural adjustment programmes on the economies of African nations have been disastrous:

The character of structural adjustment in Ghana, the kinds of macro economic policies instituted were very similar to other programmes. There was currency devaluation because the currency was grossly over-valued, financial deregulation, trade-liberalization, reductions in government expenditure, pricing-policies which removed subsidies from everything, and wage-restraints. And these policies were targeted towards various sectors like energy, agriculture and industry. In addition to these macro-economic policies there were attempts to rehabilitate certain sectors of the economy such as exports - mainly cocoa exports and gold-mining. And one of the most important measures in the cocoa industry was a decision to increase producer-prices - the same thing as happened in Zimbabwe. Another aspect of the programme was the rehabilitation of the public sector.

(Dzodzi Tsikata, Third World Network, in *From “There is no alternative” to “There must be an alternative”*: *The DAWN Africa debates on alternative development frameworks*, SADEP: Bellville, 1997, p26)

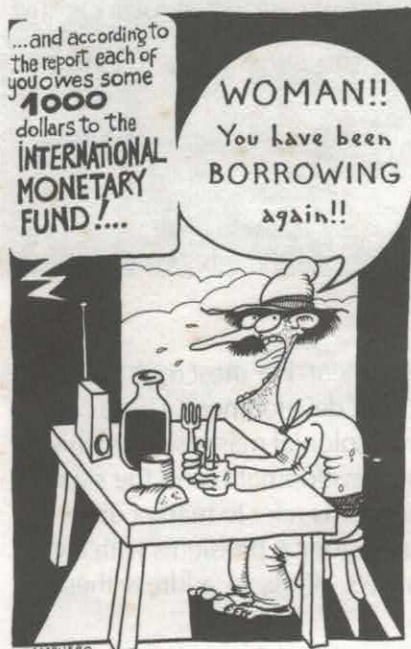
SAPs have resulted in the destabilising of national currencies and destruction of the economies of African countries, the decline of women’s social rights, as well as increased environmental destruction. As these

## WHAT IS STRUCTURAL ADJUSTMENT?<sup>1</sup>

"Structural adjustment" is used in one of two ways. First, it can refer to a shift in *policies* from an activist state which encourages state intervention in the economy and the allocation of resources to a neo-liberal state whose role in the economy is limited and allows for the market to allocate resources according to demand. The term also refers to *mechanisms* and *policies* that have been put in place to persuade governments of developing countries to conform to these prescribed policies.

measures are being applied in several countries at the same time with more or less the same effects, it is likely to produce a "globalisation of poverty" where more and more people's livelihoods are insecure. Women are more likely to bear the brunt of this increased insecurity.<sup>2</sup>

The World Trade Organisation (WTO) was established in 1995 to make sure that developing countries effectively implement the structural adjustment measures designed for them by the World Bank and the IMF. Currently, the World Bank, IMF and WTO menu of reforms on trade liberalisation, privatisation and cutbacks in government expenditures are simultaneously implemented in more than 100 countries. The measures that constitute the package of structural reforms that governments in developing countries are obliged to implement include currency devaluation, cutting back state expenditure, and poverty alleviation.



For Ghana the most serious problem of our SAP has been debt-servicing. I have forgotten the precise statistics, but really Ghana can be called a debt-distressed country. The only thing is it is giving money to recycle its loans. If you consider the amounts of exports and the debt-servicing you know that there is a coming crisis.

And the debt thing is the more problematic because Ghanians are not involved in the processes that decide which loans to contract, how they are disbursed and so on.

Many of the loans we receive go out again in payments of foreign experts and that sort of thing, when there are Ghanians who are just as qualified.

(Dzodzi Tsikata, Third World Network, in *From "There is no alternative" to "There must be an alternative": The DAWN Africa debates on alternative development frameworks*, SADEP: Bellville, 1997, p27.)

### CURRENCY DEVALUATION

The destruction of a country's currency is one of the key reforms required by the IFIs. The effect of lessening the value of a nation's currency is to immediately make goods (like medicines, staple foods) and services (like health care, education) more expensive – a phenomenon known as “inflation,” to reduce the value of workers' wages, and to decrease the buying power of its citizens. Ironically, the donors demand these reforms as a mechanism aimed at “eradicating rural poverty.” In reality, the price hikes produce all sorts of unforeseen outcomes. In Nigeria, for example, increases in the price of soap as a result of the devaluation of its currency led to a dramatic increase in the incidence of some skin diseases.

### CUTTING BACK STATE EXPENDITURE

The IFIs also require that governments implement “anti-inflationary programmes” to counter the rise of inflation that results from currency devaluation. The effect of anti-inflationary programmes is to reduce the demand for a range of goods and services. This is usually accomplished by reducing the number of public employees through retrenchments, cutting back government investment in social sectors like health, education, and food subsidies.

The wide-scale loss of wages and the inability of poor citizens to afford or access these previously subsidised goods and services reduces the demand for them. Frequently, protest actions by trade unions are outlawed and trade unionists are arrested as the state seeks to silence any display of opposition to the reforms.

### WHAT IS STRUCTURAL ABOUT STRUCTURAL ADJUSTMENT?

There are two views about what constitutes structural problems to development. For most opposed to SAPs, structural problems refer to economic and social imbalances that limit development. These can include the orientation of developing economies towards that of its former colonial masters. From this perspective, development refers to efforts to overcome these barriers to development, and the state plays a key role in correcting these imbalances. For the IFIs, structural problems refer to market distortion and this is usually blamed on state intervention in the economy. Thus, in Africa, problems with the economy are not blamed on colonialism, for example, but on the state's efforts to address these problems.

IFIs also demand that the governments reduce the amount of money they spend. For example, the state is no longer allowed to spend its own money – money that is gathered from taxing its citizens, amongst others – on the building of roads, schools, hospitals, clinics, providing safe water, and so forth.

The IFIs, and the World Bank in particular, therefore decide what sort of investments the states in developing countries can make in order to meet some public needs. These states generally comply with the conditions if they want to continue accessing donor funds from the IMF.

### POVERTY ALLEVIATION

Contrary to the effects of devaluation and cutbacks in public sector investments, the IFIs claim that their measures are intended to accelerate national growth and development, and that they are committed to eradicating poverty. However, they insist that “sustainable poverty reduction” is best – that is, more efficiently – addressed through programmes that directly target the poor, and combine “cost recovery” with the privatisation of health and education services.

Under the IFIs’ scheme, the role of the state in the provision of social programmes and services is expected to be taken over by non-governmental organisations (NGOs) within civil society. More international donor aid has been directed towards NGOs so they can take over the functions of various line ministries and local governments whose funds have been cut as a result of structural adjustment programmes.

In this way, NGOs are used to “manage poverty” while their work, at the same time, reduces the risks of social protests and riots that may threaten profit levels.

In Sub-Saharan Africa, this policy of targeting vulnerable groups through organisations in civil society while restricting state social expenditure has resulted in the physical breakdown of schools, hospitals, and health clinics, and the deterioration of these social services.

Targeting vulnerable groups through NGOs while restricting state social expenditure has resulted in the physical breakdown of schools, hospitals and health clinics.



## GENDER AND GLOBALISATION IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

Right from their conception, SAPs have been blind to the negative impact of the reforms on women's lives and the relations between men and women. Instead women in developing countries have been targeted as part of a larger group, "the rural poor," "the poor," and so forth.

In itself, the gender-blindness of structural adjustment programmes casts serious doubts on the validity of SAPs as a development strategy, especially in Sub-Saharan Africa where women are in the majority among the poor.

One of the assumptions on which structural adjustment is premised is that women's time and energy can be stretched to absorb all the pressures imposed by the cutbacks in state expenditures on safe water, quality and accessible health care services, and education.<sup>3</sup>

SAPs are built on the further exploitation of women's labour as the policy is based on the assumption that the costs of human reproduction can be shifted from public responsibility (that is, the state) to the private sphere (the home).

In the home, women are expected to shoulder the responsibility, in the face of rising food, health, and education costs, of making ends meet while using fewer resources.

After a decade of structural adjustment programmes in Sub-Saharan Africa, it is clear that women have felt the effects of the state's reduced ability to meet social needs (like safe water, basic health services, food security, and basic education) more acutely than men.

### WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO HAVE A GENDER PERSPECTIVE?

Having a gender perspective means that one is sensitive to the ways in which women's and men's social roles may differ, and how social programmes may have different consequences for men and women in society.

It involves a commitment to understand and clarify how it is, in various spheres of life, that women and girls are disadvantaged in relation to men and boys.

In the context of devising development strategies to benefit the poor, having a gender perspective means that one recognises that women play a central role in both the economy and the household, that women are both the income-earners and the carers who tend to the young, the sick and the elderly, and that placing their needs at the centre of a development strategy will impact positively on both economic growth and human wellbeing.

SAPs have served only to reinforce existing inequalities between men and women in Sub-Saharan Africa. In the various sectors, women's lives are worsening as they bear the brunt of problems generated through structural adjustment.<sup>4</sup>

#### WOMEN IN AGRICULTURE

In Sub-Saharan Africa, the agricultural division of labour is profoundly gendered: most women are engaged in agriculture and are involved in subsistence farming, to produce food for the family while men farm cash crops. SAPs strategies to increase the production of crops for export by increasing the price are therefore almost solely targeted at male farmers and ignore the role of women farmers. Furthermore, patriarchal relations within the family produces a skewed distribution of rural household incomes where women household members benefit very little from extra income generated through cash crops production.

The lure of more money also means that more land previously used for subsistence farming is being turned into cash crops. Thus, women's access to resources like land and production for household consumption are steadily decreasing.

In Ghana, for example, the extension of cocoa crops into forests areas removed women's access to traditional forest products, like honey, that they traded for an income. This shift from subsistence to cash-crop production increases the prospects of poverty and starvation within poor communities.

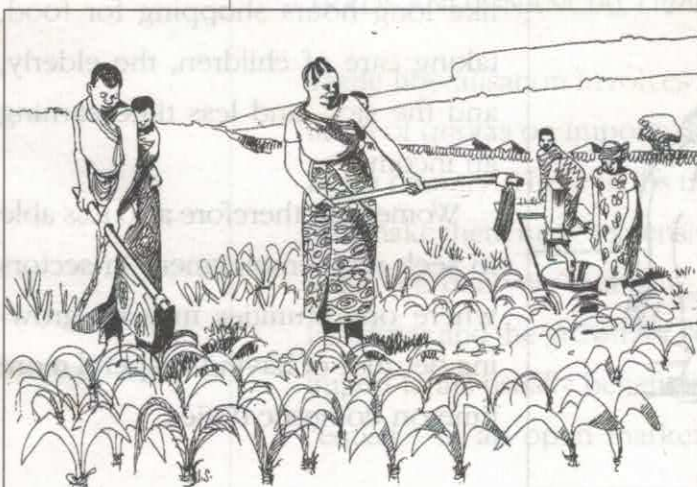
The shift to export-crop production is also accompanied by the withdrawal of subsidies and services for subsistence food production, where women predominate. While women in food crop farming have benefited less from government subsidies

and services (like extension-services), the withdrawal of governments subsidies and services will still affect them negatively and lead to smaller crops.

#### WOMEN IN THE FORMAL SECTOR

In the formal sector, the cutback in state expenditure has resulted in massive unemployment in the public sector, especially in the social services. As women

In Sub-Saharan Africa most women engaged in agriculture are involved in subsistence farming.



predominate in the nursing, teaching and other social service sectors, they have been hit hardest by retrenchments.

#### WOMEN IN THE INFORMAL SECTOR

As women's access to agricultural resources and employment in the formal sector has diminished, more women have entered into the informal sector.

However, women traders are mostly involved in selling lower ranked goods like food, fruits, and vegetables, while men trade in higher ranked, more expensive goods. Thus, in Ghana, Zimbabwe, Tanzania, and Uganda, for example, the income of most women traders has dropped because they are trading in goods where competition between traders is fiercest.

More women are therefore being pushed into insecure employment in the informal sectors where they earn very low incomes. The conditions for people, mainly women, in the informal sector are worsening as more enter into informal trade and competition intensifies.

One positive spin-off of adjustment is that state regulation of the informal sector has decreased though this is partly a result of the state's reduced capacity.

#### WOMEN AS HOMEMAKERS AND CAREGIVERS

Within the home, the burden of having to cope with unaffordable, inaccessible and reduced quality social services falls overwhelming on women's shoulders.

In order to cope with the cuts in social spending, women are spending more time on household duties, like long hours shopping for food, taking care of children, the elderly, and the sick, and less time earning an income.

Women are therefore also less able to seek new employment in sectors where opportunities may be growing because of having to spend more time on domestic duties.

Women are less mobile to seek employment in sectors where opportunities may be growing because of having to spend more time on domestic duties.

## MEN SHOULD ALSO COLLECT WATER



## GLOBALISATION AND POVERTY IN AFRICA

People in Sub-Saharan Africa are much poorer than in other developing regions – the average income of the poor in Sub-Saharan Africa is much lower. Adjustment has also not decreased the number of poor people; evidence shows that the number of poor people in Sub-Saharan Africa has in fact grown. More people now argue that we need to see poverty as more than just earning a low income, and that looking at income as the only indicator of whether and where poverty exists provides an inadequate picture of the phenomenon.

Instead, poverty exists when people lack the opportunity to find paid employment and to access adequate health care, education, safe water, and safe shelter, when they are malnourished and food sources are insecure, and when they are unable to participate in decisions affecting them. When we use this more comprehensive measure of poverty, it is clear that the majority of the poor in Sub-Saharan Africa are located in rural areas and are women.

Globalisation and liberalisation have had mixed consequences in Africa. Poor rural people's living conditions are worsening as they have less access to land, implements, and labour, for example. This is truer for women engaged in subsistence farming whose agricultural plots are been used for export-crop farming. Gender inequality within the household means that women do not benefit as much from income generated by male household members who may be engaged in export-crop farming. Urban-based poverty is increasing as a result of the mix of a number of events: people in the formal sector losing their jobs and wages declining while the cost of consumer goods rise, people losing subsidies on certain kinds of foods, and the

### WHAT IS POVERTY?<sup>5</sup>

There are three different views on what constitutes poverty. From the *income perspective*, a person is poor only when her income falls below that which is necessary to buy a specific amount of food. This income level is usually specified. From the *basic needs perspective*, a person is poor when she is deprived of the basic elements that will allow her to fulfil her human needs like food, clothing, employment, health and education, and so forth. From the *capability perspective*, when she lacks the basic capabilities to function. These include aspects physical needs like clothing, food, health, and shelter as well as social aspects like the ability to participate in community decision-making, for example.

Source: Human Development Report 1997

affordability, availability and quality of social services declining at the same time. While urban people may have benefited from that inflow of trade and imported goods, the dramatic price hikes offset these benefits.

## THE FEMINISATION OF POVERTY<sup>6</sup>

One of the key policy prescriptions of structural adjustment is that more people should move into the production of “tradable” goods, that is, goods that can be traded on the market. Inequalities between men and women have increased because:

- men are mostly involved with the production of tradable goods while women are engaged in subsistence farming and social reproduction within the household – whatever benefits accrue from structural adjustment are thus monopolised by men;
- differences in social power between men and women means that women are less able to resist men’s expropriation of their resources like cash, labour, and land, which are then targeted at export-production;
- women have lost the benefits of subsidies on essential goods and services (like food and health care).

## THE CHALLENGES OF GLOBALISATION AND LIBERALISATION<sup>7</sup>

Economic growth does not automatically lead to the human well-being of poor people.

The experiences of many developing countries show that economic growth does not automatically lead to the human well-being of poor people. In most African countries, people’s livelihoods have become more insecure, while inequalities along class, race, ethnic, and caste divisions have increased dramatically. For poor women, in particular, globalisation and liberalisation

have meant increased marginalisation, less access to productive resources (land, water, farming inputs, jobs) and reproductive resources (adequate and affordable healthcare and food) resources, and have ultimately meant poverty. More poor men and women in particular have become impoverished, their lives marked by a crisis of basic livelihoods, unemployment, food and income insecurity, environmental degradation, as well as class/caste/racial/gender violence. Coupled with the worsening conditions of life is a growing sense of hopelessness and belief that “there is no alternative” to globalisation.

Through cutbacks in public expenditures as well as the market and trade liberalisation measures, globalisation and



liberalisation have also diminished the power of the state to pursue a developmental agenda.

On the other hand, globalisation has also increased the potential for women's employment in the informal sector, the labour-intensive industries, and export-oriented agricultural businesses. Women have more opportunities to move into jobs that, traditionally, they were unable to enter. These provide an opportunity to earn higher incomes than before, and to break from traditional patriarchal relations. However, wages in these industries are still low compared to those of men in the formal sector, while working conditions, especially health and safety standards, are hazardous, and way below internationally-accepted standards.

In the last ten years there have been growing criticisms of the IFIs and their imposition of globalisation and liberalisation measures, through SAPs, on developing countries. As evidence of the increasing impoverishment of poor peoples grows, the IFIs are being accused of being more interested more in creating favourable conditions for MNCs on the lookout for higher profits, than they are in real social and institutional change and development in the South.

## WOMEN NETWORKING AGAINST SAPS

In Sub-Saharan Africa, one of the outcomes of the implementation of SAPs has been the growing numbers and strength of civil society and non-governmental organisations. In Tanzania, for example, women have organised themselves into savings societies and women's co-operatives, forming new networks whose main purpose is to support its members in particularly hard times. Non-governmental organisations have taken up the cause of women that are particularly vulnerable, such as migrant workers, and push governments to take responsibility for ensuring the rights, safety and dignity of migrant women workers. Actions by NGOs and civil society associations in particular are motivated by notions of support for each other and the sharing of resources.

Women, especially women of developing countries, need to bring new ideas to development debates and expose practices that impact on their lives. They need to record and speak about their experiences and challenge claims made by governments (in the North and South) and the IFIs about the lack of benefits for the poor from globalisation and liberalisation. If we see development as a strategy geared towards improving

the lives of the “poorest of the poor,” then globalisation and liberalisation processes have failed miserably. We need now to rethink how we can pursue development and maintain strategies that will either eliminate or reduce poverty and deprivation, especially in developing countries where the majority of the “poorest of the poor” reside. We need to ask: *What kind of development can best promote human development?*

### Some questions for discussion

- Discuss how women are affected by SAPs because they do not have access to and control over resources.
- Examine whether SAPs have led to more women entering the informal sector in your country, and whether the informal sector is able to promote poverty eradication.
- How would you mobilise support within your country to challenge government and business on the impact of SAPs?
- How would you organise in your country to engage the World Bank, IMF and WTO on the impact of SAPs on women?





## 4: An alternative approach: Engendering human development

Southern women's perspectives provide us with good principles on which to assess the development process, and suggest some of the outcomes we should demand from development processes in different countries and globally. These principles include the firm belief that the development process should facilitate access to resources like work, productive resources (like land, water) and affordable reproductive resources (like health care, education) that are necessary to care for human beings, and that such care and the development of human potential should drive the pursuit of economic growth, and reduce class/gender/race/ethnic inequalities.<sup>1</sup>

A development approach that prioritises human development over and above private profits is contra to the dominant neo-liberal approach.

However, the experiences in many developing countries over the last fifteen years show that growth-oriented development is an imperfect strategy with many weaknesses. Because of the economic adjustment measures demanded by IFIs, governments in developing countries are now less able to actively pursue development strategies that aid human development.

### WEAKNESSES OF A GROWTH STRATEGY<sup>2</sup>

- Growth may not occur, especially in very poor countries where the physical infrastructure (like roads and electricity) and the pool of economically valuable skills are weakest.
- While there may be growth, the number of jobs created may be few.
- Growth and employment may both increase but the kind of the jobs that are created may be insecure and hazardous to human health and welfare.
- Growth may lead to irreversible environmental damage.
- The kind of economic adjustments advocated by the IFIs reduces the role of the state in the provision of social services and places the burden of survival on the poor, but especially on poor women.

After consistent opposition and critique, the World Bank now acknowledges that SAPs are ill suited to the development needs of developing countries. They agree that governments must play a role in meeting social needs like primary education and primary health.

For women, particularly women in developing countries, the key question is: *What framework can women use to critique existing global processes, and to develop alternatives for development?*<sup>3</sup>

## ENGENDERING HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

Rising opposition among the people and governments in developing countries to SAPs has rekindled the debate on which development strategy provides a more holistic approach to human development. Advocates of the human development approach stress the need to develop human capabilities and empower people to use those capabilities in order to participate fully in the development process. Human development covers all aspects of human need, from production processes and the need to create jobs, to political freedoms and the ability to participate in the political process, to methods of government, to basic and non-basic human needs and choices in both developing as well as developed countries.

The guiding principle of human development is that *people come first*. The human development approach must recognise that women have the strongest stake in human development, that women suffer most when human development is inadequate.

A human development approach means that all economic and social processes are aimed at improving the lives of all, and especially poor women. Only when the lives of poor women in the South have improved significantly can we judge human development as adequate.

A human development approach also means that the present focus on economic growth as an end in itself must be reversed. Rather, eco-

### WHAT IS HUMAN DEVELOPMENT?<sup>4</sup>

Human development is a process of enlarging people's choices, and empowering them to lead more complete and productive lives. From a human development perspective, poverty means the denial of choices and of chances for a more tolerable life.

Source: *Human Development Report*, 1990, 1997.

## PRINCIPLES FOR HUMAN DEVELOPMENT<sup>5</sup>

- It must develop people's potential to lead creative and fulfilling lives.
- It should be the primary goal for economic growth processes.
- It must transform gender, class, race and other power relations that pose barriers to the human development of all.
- It must not damage the environment.
- It must ensure adequate and sustainable livelihoods for the poor, especially women.

Source: DAWN, 1995

economic growth must become a means for achieving human development. In other words, economic growth must be managed so that it remains true to the principles of a human development approach. Economic growth should be in the interest of furthering human development, and not the kind of growth that serves the rich and further impoverishes the poor.<sup>6</sup>

## FROM TINA ("THERE IS NO ALTERNATIVE") TO TMBA ("THERE MUST BE AN ALTERNATIVE")

Globalisation is not an inevitable phenomenon, but is an outcome of political interventions and negotiations between IFIs and governments in both developed and developing countries. It is not an abstract force over which humans have no control. Instead, it is driven by business' concerns for more markets and higher profits and is aggressively promoted by some governments, multinational corporations and international financial institutions that stand to gain from the process. As has been shown over the last 15 years, developing countries and their people have generally not benefited from globalisation and liberalisation processes.

DAWN has identified a set of methods by which governments and people's in developing countries can begin to formulate a new approach to development, and move out of the current development crises. These strategies for moving towards more holistic, human development include:

- countering the negative effects of globalisation at local, national and global levels;
- working to transform the state so it can serve the interests of the poor, and women in particular; and
- working towards strengthening civil society organisations.<sup>7</sup>

## CHALLENGING GLOBALISATION

At the DAWN-Africa debates, Peggy Antrobus, one of DAWN's founding members, gave the following input which captures emerging strategies through which women can challenge globalisation:

"We have survived situations far worse than that which we are now experiencing: as a people some of us have survived slavery and colonialism. I think we need sometimes to reflect on those experiences; to the times when it has been much worse than it is today; to document our triumphs and our success-stories – even the small successes - to give us hope, and help to figure out how we might organize to resist this current onslaught on our humanity.

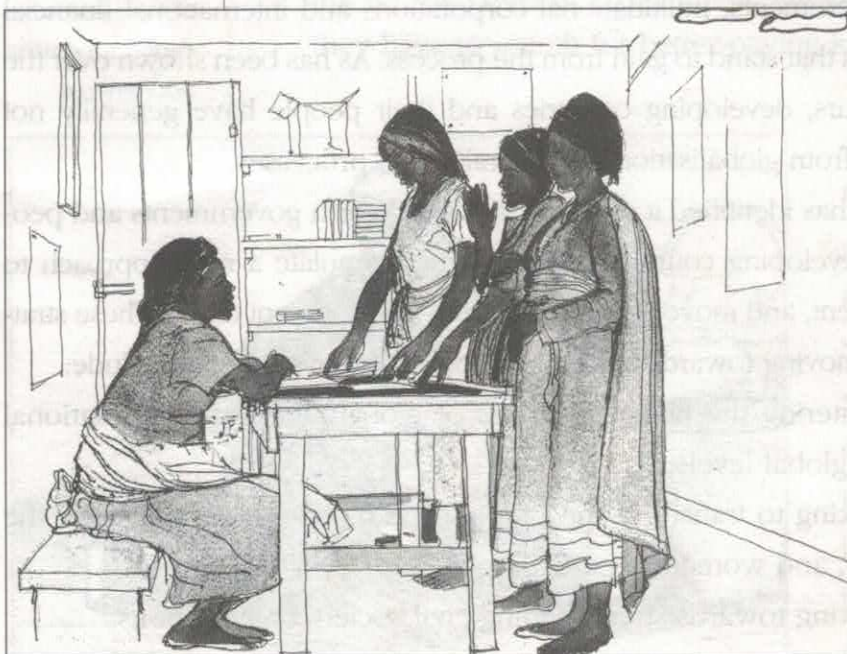
It seems to me that we cannot confront our oppressors on their terms. Men have made a mistake in trying to 'challenge the master's structures using the master's tools' - economic arguments, formal, political strategies. Women must find different, less confrontational strategies, other ways (perhaps subversive ways) of resisting the oppression of the dominant structures. Someone has said that we cannot strike down the iceberg, we have to melt it from its base.

We have to look at the household and we have to think of two things: food and the household, and put those two together to form the framework for some of our strategies of resistance. This is what we have to do.

*First*, we have to "Challenge the Given" (the title of DAWN's platform document for the up-coming World Conference on Social Development, the Social Summit). Here are the 'givens' that have to be challenged as part of our strategy:

1. SAPs do not lead to a better life for people. We have to say that as often as possible. As Thandika said yesterday: 'we have to move

Strengthening civil society organisations is one strategy for moving towards more holistic human development.



from TINA to TEMBA'. We cannot ever allow ourselves to be seduced by the fact that it seems there is no alternative.

2. Economic development cannot be separated from social development.
3. The market is not the best allocator of resources: the market does not prioritize human needs, its priority is to maximize profit. That is the logic of the market. (I like to remind Caribbean people that we, who are the descendants of people who were commodities in the market-place of slavery, have no reason to glorify the market).
4. Women's work cannot be exploited with impunity, just because it is unremunerated and undervalued, just because women will do that work without pay. Reproductive work is essential to economic production. As Gita has been saying: as women, let us impose our own conditionalities.

*Secondly*, we have to expose the hypocrisy and the misrepresentations that are implicit in the language of the International Financial Institutions (IFIs), and even in that of our own leadership. Aid is not a gift. The purpose of structural adjustment is not to help our countries. We need to remember that our leaders - political, professional and commercial - stand to profit enormously from those policies. Some will make a lot of money from them; many will become a new elite. In these circumstances they can easily be seduced by the IFIs into adopting and implementing them.

*Thirdly*, we need to document the impacts of these policies, in order to give ourselves the database for engaging in these strategies. We have to document the successes as well. I want to list some of those successes: traditional savings circles (variously called

'susu', 'partner' or 'meeting-turn' in the Caribbean, and stockvels in South Africa); traditional medicine; the innovative work some of us have done at village level in economic literacy and community development and many other things. And there are the bigger successes like our resistance movements against slavery and colonialism, not forgetting Cuba's current struggle against neo-colonialism.

Women's work cannot be exploited with impunity, just because women will do that work without pay.



Cuba shows us that it is possible for governments to choose a different option to the prevailing wisdom of market-led development: what Cuba demonstrates is that a government that has lost 75% of its resources (since the collapse of the Soviet economic system) can still prioritize human development.

In DAWN's alternative economic framework, we will document those experiences that give us hope against the power structures of market-oriented development. We have to use these experiences to leverage a better deal. Getting back to the focus on the household, there are three areas which lie within this sphere – health, education and welfare. These are the very areas in which public expenditure is being cut, in the context of structural adjustment policies. They are being left to the private sector, including NGOs.

We have got to find a way of valuing that work. We need statistics to quantify the value of unwaged work and we know that there are enormous technical difficulties in doing this, especially if we want to quantify it and put a price on it. However, there are ways of valuing women's reproductive work in the household in order to lay claim to certain services and benefits.

But first, we women ourselves must understand the value of what we do, and use that to challenge the 'givens'. Ultimately, of course, it is our political power that is going to bring success." (From "There is no alternative" to "There must be an alternative": *The DAWN Africa debates on alternative development frameworks*, SADEP: Bellville, 1997, p33.)

Existing social movements like the women's movements, the peace movements and the workers' movements, for example, have in the past successfully challenged market processes when they do not meet the needs of people. The success of their campaigns against the effects of globalisation has depended on their ability to forge alliances with other movements.

Within their national contexts, social movements need to develop new strategies and options for dealing with the challenges of globalisation. Social movements need to consider: What mechanisms (financial and otherwise) can be instituted at the national and global levels to reduce the incidences of capital flight? What actions can be taken to reduce or eliminate national debt, especially where the current debt servicing commitment is more a result of changing interest rates than the actual amount



We women ourselves must understand the value of what we do, and use that to challenge the 'givens'.

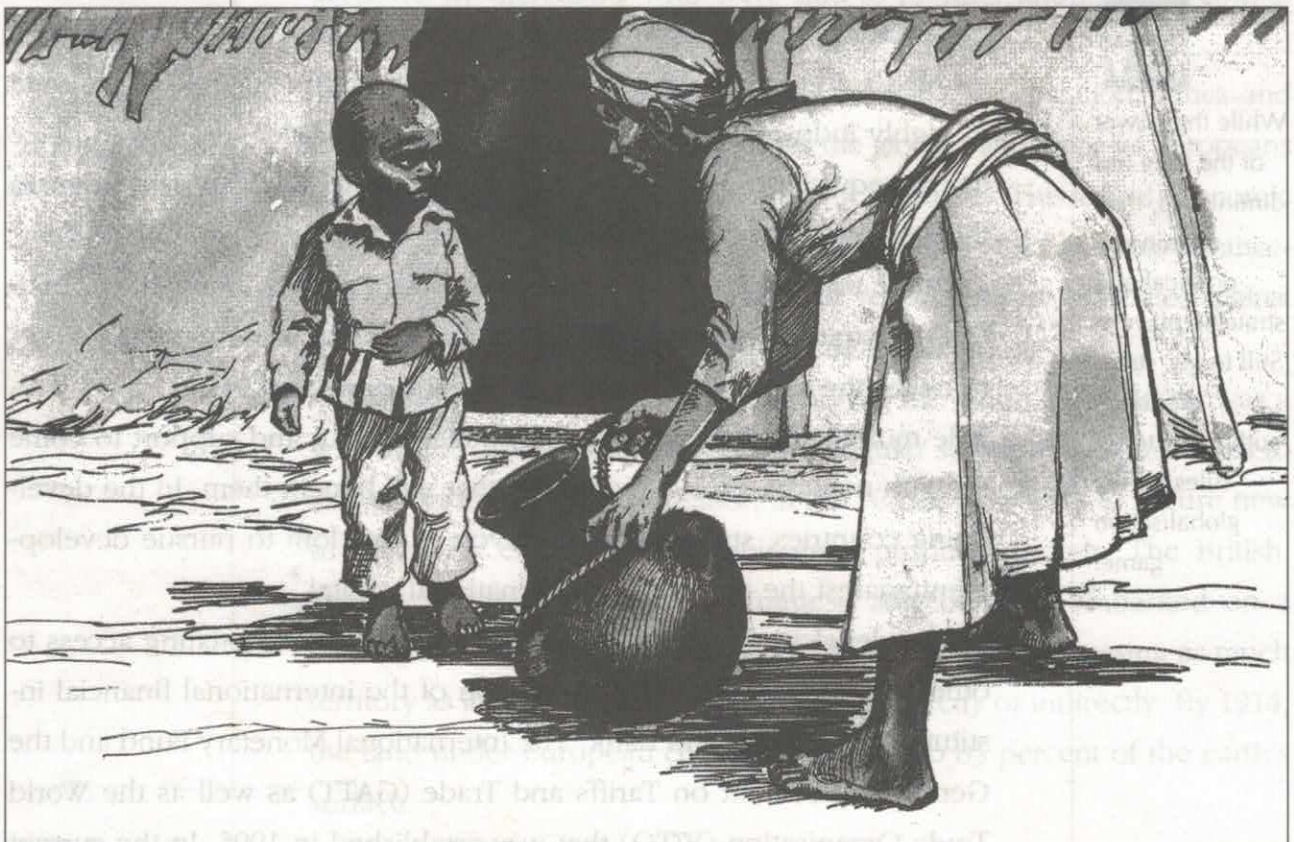
borrowed? What actions do we need to take to make the IFIs more accountable for the consequences of their decisions and actions? How can we support international organisations, like the International Labour Organisation, that set standards and seek to protect workers' rights? How best can we limit the negative effects of the operations of multinational corporations within our national economies? At what level do we need to operate (national, international) to increase the chances of successfully meeting each of these challenges?

## STRENGTHENING CIVIL SOCIETY

Over the last two decades, women's organisation have learnt the necessity of developing broad-based platforms for change and strengthening civil society organisation across the spectrum of social, political and economic concerns. The role of civil society organisations is crucial for the development of an alternative vision for and approach to development.

The nature of these civil society organisations varies – some operate at community level, others are non-governmental organisations, trade unions, and they focus on different issues like land rights, workers' rights and so forth. However, in order for them to successfully challenge market processes that undermine the livelihoods of poor communities, they will

Women themselves must understand the value of what they do.



need to develop a common analysis and coordinate their actions so they do not undermine each other efforts.

Civil society organisations within each country or regions will have to formulate their own responses to the following questions: How can they together develop an understanding of and approach to social problems that erode the various forms of inequality (race/gender/ethnicity and so forth) that exist with their society? What are the bases on which they will form alliances with other civil society organisations? What strategic alliances can they form at the international level to support their national activities?

Furthermore, how best can civil society organisations combine their development while pushing national government to provide the necessary social services?

## TRANSFORMING THE STATE

In the colonial period, the colonising states (or “imperialist states”) were the main agents behind the growth of capitalism. Today, multinational corporations (MNCs) are the main actors in expropriating wealth and exploiting labour in countries across the world. MNCs now fulfill the role previously occupied by the colonising states and trading companies, exploiting resources and cheap labour. From the time of colonial expansion to the current context of globalisation, the state has been instrumental in negotiating and guaranteeing access and opportunities for MNCs. In the current phase of globalisation, the key role of the state in highly industrialised economies is to push policies that sets in place the prerequisite conditions for entry by MNCs. While today states remain the key political players, they are no longer the key economic players.

While the power of the state has diminished, they remain key political and strategic players. Still today, states alone are authorised to set rules for the globalisation game. In the industrialised world, states provide multinational companies with political clout and support to come up with new rules for globalisation that will benefit them. In the developing countries, states negotiate levels of freedom to pursue development against the demands of international capital.<sup>8</sup>

The developed states were also key players in negotiating access to other economies, through the creation of the international financial institutions like the World Bank, The International Monetary Fund and the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) as well as the World Trade Organisation (WTO) that was established in 1995. In the current



While the power of the state has diminished, they remain key political and strategic players. Still today, states alone are authorised to set rules for the globalisation game.

context of globalisation, these institutions serve to undermine national laws and markets that favour the local population in order to further facilitate the entry of MNCs. These international financial institutions (IFIs) form one of the most important ways in which the industrialised states provide support to multinational corporations to demand economic conditions that are likely to maximize their profits.

While SAPs were implemented supposedly to advance “development” and “democracy,” they have in fact necessitated an increase in political repression to support a process of economic repression of poor people by Third World elites. An example of this political repression is the use of the police and army against Zimbabwean people who protested the rise of petrol and bread prices in 1998. While international donors require the holding of multi-party elections as a condition for aid, the reforms in fact hinder genuine process of democratisation. Instead, the continued implementation of SAPs requires support for the military and a repressive state that will keep in check any protest actions by impoverished citizens.<sup>9</sup>

Social movements must challenge the state to become more accountable to the needs of its people, and to make the state and its processes more transparent. The state should be challenged to be more open and to seek the participation of civil society in policy-making. Non-governmental organisations should be drawn into discussions on major economic policy that involves the IFIs.

Non-governmental organisations should be involved in building institutions that would support “good governance” initiatives that seek to make both national governments and international aid agencies more transparent. Governments must be challenged to meet the needs of poor people, especially women.

### Some questions for discussion

- What other issues and concerns can you identify to challenge the dominant approach to development?
- What strategies would you use to build poor women’s capacities to negotiate better terms at all levels in society?
- How can development and gender activists use regional networks more effectively to voice the concerns of poor women?

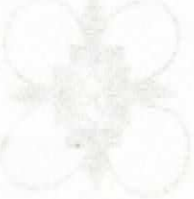


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# DAWN

DAWN is a feminist network of women activists, researchers and policy makers from the South who are committed to developing alternative frameworks and methods to attain the goals of economic and social justice, peace and development free of all forms of oppression by gender, class, race and nation. Established in 1984, DAWN participants have, over the years, drawn their analysis from their experiences and research within the women's movement, and from the impact of the political economy of change on the lives of the poorest women in the South.

Through its research processes and analysis published as books and various documents, DAWN has consistently argued and voiced an urgency on the need to advocate for alternative development processes that would centre, in a fundamental way, the needs of women, particularly the poorest women. DAWN's approach is consequently characterised by linking the struggles and experiences of local community or grassroots women within the contexts in which they live, with regional and global political and economic processes.

