DAWN Africa Regional Meeting Report: Dakar

From "There is No Alternative" to "There Must Be an Alternative"

The Dawn Africa Debates on Alternative Development Frameworks

Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era
(DAWN)

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Fatou Sow, Codou Bop and the many others who assisted throughout the meeting and with other activities, especially the transcription of the meeting notes on which this report is based , is also appreciated. DAWN wishes to place on record its thanks to all those who contributed to the meeting and workshops by presenting papers and inputs into the debates. Particular note must be made of the many particpants who came from different parts of Africa and informed the debates in critical ways.

Editorial contributions

This report has received editorial inputs from Peggy Antrobus, Gita Sen, Claire Slatter and Viviene Taylor.

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Summary

The DAWN African Regional Meeting was held, in Dakar, Senegal, from 11-13 November 1994, just prior to the NGO and Governmental meetings in preparation for the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing, China, September 1995. The DAWN meeting was co-convened and facilitated by The Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa (CODESRIA) and The Southern African Regional Institute for Policy Studies (SAPES).

The objectives of the DAWN African Regional Meeting were to get feedback and contributions from women throughout Africa on their perceptions of the impact of the dominant model of development on the lives of women, especially the poorest and most excluded members of society; to incorporate critical analyses of the present development model from the perspective of African women into DAWN's Platform document, thereby ensuring that African women's perspectives are included within Women's perspectives from the South; and to consider recommendations for alternative policies and actions necessary to address the issue of development in the South. This document (Markers on the Way: The DAWN Debates on Alternative Development) to be presented at the 1995 Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing.

The meeting's objective was also to provide African women involved with issues of gender and development with an opportunity to discuss the specific problems of Africa, especially in relation to the impact of structural adjustment programmes, debt and political instability on the continent.

The meeting was attended by members of the DAWN Secre-

tariat, the African Regional Coordinator and participants from Southern, East, Central and West Africa. While there was a core group of 35 participants in attendance, during certain sessions the numbers increased to more than 50.

At the end of the meeting, the African Regional Coordinator convened a meeting with the African participants to review DAWN Africa and plan a way forward in the region. After discussing new perspectives and challenges, the group elected new focal points and two African Representatives to the DAWN Steering Committee. Reflecting both regional and language diversities, the focal points covered North Africa, Francophone West Africa, Anglophone West Africa, Central Africa, Southern Africa, East Africa and Portuguese speaking Africa.

DAWN also held two workshops at the Africa Regional NGO Forum for the Fourth World Conference on Women , one on Alternative Economic Frameworks and the other on Reproductive Rights. At these workshops DAWN engaged with some 350 women representing organisations across Africa. Presentations focussed on recommendations which could be incorporated into the Regional Plan of Action which was discussed at the NGO Forum. Two DAWN members (Viviene Taylor and Prabha Prabhakar Bhardwaj) also helped to incorporate recommendations through submissions made the Drafting Committee of the Regional Plan of Action Document.

1. Welcome and Introduction

Dr. Bolanle Awe, DAWN Regional Coordinator for Africa

The African Region meeting started with a welcome address from Bolanle Awe, DAWN's Regional Coordinator for Africa, and chairperson of the session. After welcoming the participants to the Dakar meeting, she expressed the hope that the meeting would open a new chapter for DAWN Africa. She pointed out that over the past few years, since its establishment, coordination within Africa had been difficult and DAWN's programme was affected. The problems were mainly due to the lack of infrastructure – material, finance and effective means of communication in Africa.

She acknowledged Patricia McFadden's (SAPES) personal contribution to the preparation of the meeting and regretted that Pat was unable to attend the meeting due to health problems. She also thanked the Southern African Regional Institute for Policy Studies and the Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa (CODESRIA) for their strong support. Other contributions to the organisation of the Regional meeting were also acknowledged, namely Codou Bop, (Coordinator of the Women's Roles and Status Programme of The Population Council ,Dakar office), Fatou Sow (researcher at IFAN, Cheikh Anta Diop University of Dakar), and the CODESRIA staff. She also congratulated Gita Sen on her award of the Volvo Environmental Prize, recieved earlier in 1994. She then introduced Peggy Antrobus, DAWN General Coordinator and Thandika Mkandawire, CODESRIA Executive Secretary.

2. DAWN's History and Structure

Peggy Antrobus, General-Coordinator, DAWN

An overview of DAWN's history, spanning the period 1984 to 1994 was provided by the General Coordinator to contextualise the role of DAWN within ongoing development debates and the search for alternatives. Peggy Antrobus spoke of DAWN's history and structure. She pointed out that DAWN had started as a network of activists and researchers concerned with the impact of development on the lives of poor women, particularly in the South. A meeting was held in Bangalore, India, in 1984 at the invitation of the Indian economist, Devaki Jain. Participants included women from Asia and the Pacific, the Middle East, Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean as well as Europe and the USA. The purpose of the meeting was to prepare a Platform Document for the 1985 NGO Forum scheduled to take place in Nairobi in conjunction with the World Conference marking the end of the UN Decade for Women (1975-85).

The Platform Document, "Development, Crises and Alternative Visions: Third World Women's Perspectives", written by Gita Sen and Caren Grown, formed the basis of a series of panels at the NGO Forum. These panels had a tremendous impact at the Forum and changed the terms of the debates on development policies in the UN conference itself. It gave a voice to women of the South on issues of macro-economic policies. The Platform document synthesized and analysed the impact of three decades of economic, political, and cultural policies and politics on Third World women. It highlighted how women's creative strategies emerged in the strug-

gle against the impact of the various crises (debt, famine militarization, and fundamentalism) on their lives, and argued that the key to the solution to these crises lay in the empowerment of poor women. The Document was later published by Monthly Review Press of New York and has been widely acclaimed.

Following the success of the network's presentations at the Forum, a meeting was held in Rio the following year, to work out a structured, organised process to build on the work done during the 1985 Platform document and other activities. A General-Coordinator and Steering Committee comprising Regional Representatives was appointed. The General-Coordinator, Neuma Aguiar of Brazil, established a DAWN Secretariat at her institutional base in Rio de Janiero and a programme of research, training, communications, publications and advocacy was launched. The themes selected for the first phase of the work were "The Food, Debt and Energy Crisis" and "Women's Visions and Movements". A number of case studies were produced and some were published in two volumes, *Alternatives*, in 1990.

In 1990, at another meeting held in Rio, Peggy Antrobus was appointed General-Coordinator to follow-on from Neuma and the Secretariat moved to her institutional base at the Women and Development Unit (WAND) at the School of Continuing Studies, University of the West Indies in Barbados. Changes were also made in the functioning of the Steering Committee and Research Coordinators were appointed to work on the selected themes of Environment (Coordinator: Rosina Wiltshire of Trinidad), Reproductive Rights and Population (Coordinator: Sonia Correa of Brazil), and Alternative Economic Frameworks (Coordinator: Gita Sen of India). These themes emerged from both the continuing crises under which Third World Women lived and also the themes recognized by international conferences.

As these themes reflected those of the major international conferences of the 1990s, DAWN's work programme was again organised around preparing platform documents for the related conferences. Thus, DAWN planned a one-day session at the NGO Forum at the 1992 UN Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), the 'Earth Summit' held in Rio, and organised a series of panels at the NGO Forum at the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) held in Cairo in 1994. DAWN also published a platform document, Reproductive Rights and Population: Feminist Voices from the South, by Sonia Correa and Rebecca Reichman, for ICPD.

Issues of poverty were being researched and analysed for the

World Conference on Social Development (Challenging the Given: DAWN's Perspectives on Social Development) to be held in Copenhagen in March 1995, and DAWN was producing it's Document on ('Markers on the Way: The DAWN Debates on Alternative Development') for the Fourth World conference on Women, scheduled to take place in Beijing in September 1995.

Although DAWN is a small and focussed organization set up to accomplish specific tasks, and not a grassroots movement, it is recognised that there is a need to build strong links with grassroots organizations and to network with women through policy advocacy and capacity building processes. Programme links with women's organisations at regional and national levels will be a thrust of future DAWN work.

In her conclusion, Peggy Antrobus announced that the Secretariat would have to move to another region by September 1995, after the Beijing Conference, and expressed the hope that it would move to Africa in the future.

3. Keynote Address

Thandika Mkandawire, Executive Secretary, CODESRIA

From "There is no alternative (TINA) to There must be an Alternative (TheMBA)"

Dr. Thandika Mkandawire welcomed participants and renewed his organization's support to DAWN's work. He began by stating that at the present time it is commonly said that "there is no alternative" ('TINA'), to the Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs) of the World Bank and to the debt/development crisis. However, he felt that the very acronym of 'DAWN' is counter to this idea of TINA.

He said that CODESRIA had been extremely active in research on economic policies in Africa: the Council had organised a number of seminars on economic and political issues, structural adjustment programmes, democracy and good governance. CODESRIA had undertaken studies and critiques of regional and international documents concerning Africa's development. In this regard the recently published Berg Report was critiqued in association with representatives of the various social movements. The Berg Report was being compared to the Lagos Plan of Action, which was also being implemented without recognition of its inherent mistakes.

Mr Mkandawire pointed out that according to the World Bank, Africa is adjusting very well to Structural Adjustment Programmes.

Some countries are cited as having achieved "good perfomance status" for the past fifteen years. Ghana is considered a success story. However, he felt that this `good performance' is not evident by any objective standard. He pointed out that countries which were considered by the Bank to be good performers had collapsed a few years later: Malawi, Somalia, Rwanda, Zaïre, etc. In fact, in the opinion of many commentators, the social and economic impact of SAPs in these countries has been disastrous. World Bank rhetoric on SAPs and the reality in Africa was divergent. Even within the UN system, some of the UN agencies like UNICEF and UNESCO were critical of the social impact of SAPs.

He outlined the failures that led to deeper pauperisation of the populations, informalisation of the economy, feminisation of the labor force, increasing illiteracy, infant mortality and political unrest. In fact, Structural Adjustment Programmes have placed even heavier burdens on countries that are attempting to democratize their political systems. Finance ministers have been signing agreements and policies without any prior consultation with their constituencies, calling into question accountable governance. Expenditures are cut in key sectors such as education and health, sectors which should be given centre stage to benefit different social groups.

Consequently Mr Mkandawire argued, that one must go beyond the rhetoric of the agencies to also understand the agenda of different institutions and see how these influence various groups and countries according to gender, race, ethnicity etc. The private sector also should be examined in order to study what, if any, regulations it follows to protect people's rights to development beyond issues of their profits. The impact of SAPs on the social and political fabric of Africa is very bad; the rules of the market define, for example, the pricing of goods. It is not an accident that countries like Somalia, Sudan or Liberia went into crises after being declared successful by the Bank. Their failures are the results of policies defined by institutions like the Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the UN. In this context the process of democratization as it occurs in African regimes is very problematic. For instance, it is impossible to organise free elections in these circumstances; the promotion of democracy should not be perceived as a means of imposing economic adjustment programmes in countries of Africa.

The complex nature of democracy, understood differently from Western style democracies, needed to be examined within Africa's historical and economic context. Africa and those committed to its development can begin to assert an alternative vision of develop-

ment forged out of African experiences. In concluding his presentation, Mr Mkandawire indicated that CODESRIA was beginning a new research area on the study of "The transition to Democracy". All these initiatives, together with the work of organisations such as DAWN pointed to the conviction that "there must be an alternative", a different, more human path to development.

The Issues

The discusssion that followed the presentation focused on the elements of alternatives, the need to struggle against the 'TINA' attitude (especially in Africa); the need to avoid the danger of relegating gender issues to certain domains such as health, environment or education (especially since women's concerns have been given some legitimacy by scientists and policy makers); cutbacks of public expenditures in the social sector; the dangers of privatization of education and health care and the need for continued involvement of the State in these sectors; the issue of women's rights as a central part of human rights.

4 Outline of DAWN's Platform on Alternative Economic Frameworks

Gita Sen

Gita Sen, Research Coordinator on Alternative Economic Frameworks, addressed the conference on DAWN's platform for the Beijing Conference. She explained DAWN's process of producing platform documents and how these attempted to reflect the opinions, hopes and strategies of women from the South. DAWN actively solicits participation and critical responses from women across regions of the South. The platform document was already going through a review process in some of the other regions. While it was difficult to revise the whole document, all comments received after each meeting, would be considered for inclusion in producing the final version.

Gita pointed out that in 1984 there was hardly any discussion among women's groups about structural adjustment programmes. DAWN had taken a leading role in raising issues of women's integration or marginalization from current development processes. Women are at the bottom of the development process generally, but it is important to recognize that the development process itself creates and exacerbates impoverishment and inequality. DAWN made one of the earliest comments on the crisis of food, water, fuel and environmental sustainability, as well as debt and violence. It is clear that women need an alternative vision of the economy and also specific strategies for specific regions because problems vary according to the local and historical context.

What has changed and what has remained the same

The world has been going through major economic and political changes in recent years. Economic policies of globalization and liberalization 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.

The failure of SAPs to support growth in many countries of the South, and particularly in Africa and Latin America, has led the World Bank to hold up a few countries such as Chile or Ghana as successful 'models' of effective policies for other countries to follow. These must be challenged and analyzed from a gender perspective. Furthermore, real alternatives must be developed at both global and national levels. Some of our hopes in this regard have been belied by recent trends. The potential provided by declining military budgets in the North following on the end of the Cold War, has not led to a reduction in the global arms trade. Instead arms dealers and producers have shifted their focus to the South, feeding and worsening incipient tensions between and within countries. Among the major sufferers of the resulting violence and conflict are women of all groups.

The dominance of the Bretton Woods model has led to the belief worldwide, that economic growth is the highest priority. But the critical question is "what kind of growth?" Is it growth whose main role is to support balance of payments stability so as to make it easier for financial capital to flow between countries, or should it be the type of growth that improves the lives of ordinary people, and promotes sustainable use of natural resources? Accelerated growth in India in recent years, has for instance, led to degradation of vital coastal areas as a result of shrimp farming for exports.

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.

These challenges have led DAWN to define its role as three-fold:

- to challenge market processes because they do not adequately meet the needs of people, and can be very contradictory for women;
- to work to transform our states so as to make them more accountable to us for their actions;
- to support the strengthening of the institutions of civil society (to which we ourselves belong) so as to do the above.

4.1 African Country Situations: Responses to the DAWN Outline

Following Gita Sen's presentation, the discussion centered on alternative economic frameworks for human development with an emphasis on meeting basic needs. The following are some of the highlights of the discussion:

(a) The nature and the role of the state – colonial, post-colonial and neo-colonial states;

(b) The roles of national and international NGOs and grass-roots associations, and key actors in civil society;

(c) The dichotomizing of 'public' and 'private' spheres in relation to state policies: what were the distinctions between these supposedly different spheres?

(d) Issues of power, especially in Africa: power-sharing among ethnic groups, women who had engaged in independence struggles and were later left out of the ensuing power structure.

(e) Global economic policies: the crisis, the mismanagement by the State and other sectors, the adjustment policies and their impact on women and other sectors in society.

Other issues raised by various participants included:

(f) The relevance of gender sensitivity to economic growth and human development: the need for gender equity for women

and the link between this and their involvment in economic processes and the survival of many communities;

(g) Democratization and privatization processes and the need to reassess the double-edged role of NGOs: for example, who were the beneficiaries of NGOs activities and funding, the people whom they were supposed to serve or their staff - which might be only one or two people?

(h) Fundamentalism: it's hostility to women - it's tendency to blame women for all the wrongs of society, it's pervasiveness in many countries, cultures and religions.

South Africa

Many questions were raised by South African participants, whose attendance at the African Regional meeting was significant. They explained that they wished to learn from others' experiences, in order to avoid the pitfalls made by other countries. The search for the alternative development approaches is critical to the social transformation of South Africa and the shift of power to the majority, were sentiments expressed by South African participants.

Nigeria

One of the participants from Nigeria raised questions about the devaluation of African currencies, the rise of inflation and the process of privatization and human rights abuses. She said that there was confusion among Nigerians about the relationship of the devaluation of the naïra to the price of oil and its overall impact on the country. She also pointed out that there was a severe crisis of political legitimacy due to the erosion of civil society and the judicial system. Women in Nigeria are being marginalized from the state and also from the economy, and this could be attributed to many causes. She agreed that it was urgent to rethink the relations between the State, the market, the NGOs and civil society.

Cameroon

In the discussion on the concept of civil society, Dina Nfon Priso (Cameroon) wondered what this notion of civil society could mean in her country. She explained that two things happened at the time of the democratization process in Cameroon, the emergence of the concept of 'civil society' at the same time that a number of political parties

or associations were trying to voice the views of the population in their platforms of action. However, women had no power in most of these organizations and there was consequently little attention to issues of special concern to women. At the grassroot level, one recognizes the need to have people express themselves on the type of development models they want, however the political system in Cameroon did not enable people to participate at any level.

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 strenghten 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 francophone 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 refering to the historical process of colonialism and neo-colonialism.

Mali

Mary Keita (Mali) raised the issue of participation of grassroot communities in civil society in her country, especially in relation to langage. She explained that after the breakdown of the military regime (1992), Mali was quoted as being a success because it was a popular movement which overthrew the military goverment. But there is still a great

deal of work to be done with grassroots communities which have no real strategies for participating in civil society. Grassroots organizations are raising a number of questions about the State, the NGOs and the relationship between these structures and civil society. All the different governments that have emerged in Mali talk about alternatives, but their actions do not reflect a search for alternatives. In the old days, it was clear that the enemy was military rule, but now it is not clear who is the new enemy. DAWN references to the changes taking place in the world today make the task even more difficult. People also have to focus on language, especially when it is co-opted by institutions that are not really concerned about poverty and deprivation.

Zimbabwe

Ona Jirira (Zimbabwe) pointed to the different schemes of collaboration between the State, NGOs and donors, the conditions in which they cooperate, when their interests are convergent or divergent. For instance, at the time of the post-independence reconstruction in Zimbabwe, there was some collaboration between the State, the donors and the NGOs. However, the relationships between the State and the donors were very difficult when Zimbabwe tried to set up a socialist State. In discussions about the public and private sectors, therefore, the main issue is the specific interests of each sector: under what circumstances or conditions do they collaborate, or struggle against each other? What is the impact of those conditions on their relationships?

South Africa

Viviene Taylor (South Africa) highlighted the manner in which the transition to democracy was being affected in South Africa as a result of economic constraints and the apartheid debt (some borrowed externally and a major part of the debt through internal borrowing). The new democratically elected government was expereincing extreme difficulty in restructuring the civil service, the economy and in responding to the needs of the poorest. The negotiated settlement has resulted in compromises that resulted in a political victory but the struggle for social and economic power is still a critical factor. The intersections between racial capitalism and gender inequalities emerge very strongly, in the experiences particularly of black women in rural communities who are excluded from mainstream economic activity. The South African situation poses different and similar challenges given its history. The manner in which it engages in the global economy

and its emerging relationship within the Southern African region and Africa as a whole needs to be redefined beyond the search for economic markets. The ANC led government, Viviene Taylor said, would not want to play a hegemonic role on the continent but one which would be cooperative.

5. Presentation of Country Case Studies

On the second day, two country case studies were presented. The first on Zimbawe by Ona Kwanele Jirira from the University of Zimbabwe, the second on Ghana by Dzodzi Tsikata, researcher at ISSER, University of Ghana. In the afternoon session, a critique of regional and international documents (the Economic Commission for Africa Proposal for the 'African Alternative') was introduced by Ayesha Imam from Nigeria.

5.1 Zimbabwe Case Study

Ona Jirira

Structural Adjustment Programmes have played havoc with the lives of many people in Zimbabwe, reinforcing the need for an 'alternative economic framework', the focus of this seminar.

Three distinct periods can be identified in Zimbabwe's recent history:

- Between 1965 and 1975, when Zimbabwe had a relatively high growth rate of about 3.6%. This was the period of U.D.I. (Unilateral Declaration of Independence) by the Ian Smith regime. (Zimbabwe attained independence in April 1980, so we are relatively new players in this game!) During the time of the Smith regime the country was isolated by the international community, so policies were inward-looking and there was an import-substitution pro-

gramme. This sustained the country for quite a while, but the cost of the war against the liberation movement to the government was reported to have been about one million dollars a day and created a drain on the national resources.

- Between 1975 and 1979 which was the period of the oil crisis and of global recession, there was a decline of 1% in the GNP.
- During the period 1980-81 - there was an economic boom with a growth rate of approximately 9.7%. During this time the Zimbabwean Government called a donor conference to try to interest donors in post-war reconstruction. As a consequence there was a lot of donor aid coming to the country because the imbalances inherited after independence were so severe that the Government was seen to be fulfilling war-time policies.

There was a document called 'Growth with Equity' (1981), which was supposed to redress imbalances through improved social services: health, education, subsidies etc., as well as through increases in minimum wages of workers. Before independence, most of the industries were white-owned, workers were very poorly paid and there was no minimum wage legislation. Land distribution is a hot issue in Zimbabwe up to this time because where most African people are living, you cannot grow anything without irrigation, and the people cannot afford irrigation. So you need state-driven irrigation-projects.

It is important that you have an idea of the kind of imbalances and distribution we are talking about. In Zimbabwe, towns were divided according to race : the Africans lived separately, the so-called coloured lived separately, the Indians lived separately, the whites lived separately, and even after independence mobility is limited, depending on income. The majority of the African population is still 'ghettoed' in what are called African areas, where infrastructure is very poor, workers are retrenched and malnutrition is high. So this is where most of the working class come from to go and work in the informal sector, high density areas which are working class and poor people's neighbourhoods, as compared to the so-called European areas, which are like Europe.

There's an area called Binga. Binga is on the border-area and most of the border areas are the worst ecological regions you can live in. They are areas of acute malnutrition and they are mostly inhabited by small ethnic groups. It's ironic that in this area, Binga, people should starve because it's a game hunting area where tour-

ists come and bring dollars. But still people are starving. For instance, in the Binga area a Save the Children Fund survey was done on the nutritional and health status of children and household food security. It found a prevalence of stunting among children and one-third of children's mothers under-nourished. OXFAM has also reported that in Africa there are an estimated 4.2 million children under five who are dying as a result of malnutrition, with another 30 million underweight.

So, if we are going to discuss alternatives, I think we want to factor the food-equation into our discourse - food is the key. And I think we should discuss infant mortality. In 1990 in Zimbabwe, infant mortality among babies arriving at Harare Hospital which is our big central hospital, was reported to have increased by 1/3 (one third) in the six months following the introduction of SAP. In 1977 the infant mortality rate (I.M.R.) was 98 per 1000 live-births; in 1989 it was 46 per 1000 live-births; in 1991 it was 48 per 1000. This might appear to be a small increase but the government's considerable efforts to try to at least salvage the immunization programme for children is what is buffering us.

Maternal deaths in Harare have doubled in the past two years. The peri-natal mortality rate for unregistered mothers is 251 for 100,000 live-births compared to 33.8 for booked patients. There is a distinction between unregistered women who are not given any information because they do not register, and booked women who register and who are more conscious of their reproductive rights. You see what happens when you go and register when you are pregnant is that you are told to come every month for a check-up so that they can see if there are complications or not. But the introduction of user-fees means obviously that women from poorer socio-economic backgrounds cannot afford to register, because you just don't go there for free.

In Zimbabwe abortion is illegal but the statistics that are coming out are alarming - annual abortion estimates put the figure at 700,000. According to one of the doctors in obstetrics and gynaecology, abortion complications are the second main cause of maternal deaths in Zimbabwe. The city of Harare has more than 5,500 abortions per year, which is one in eight pregnancies. Much more than 45,000 women per year in this country are likely to induce an abortion. Harare Parenia - the biggest hospital in Zimbabwe - had 36 (?) abortion-related deaths in 1992: 18 were married women, 15 were divorced widowed, while 3 were younger than 20 years. But in Zimbabwe the males have ganged up against women: the Catholic Church's human rights organization which is

fundamentally male-led and some fundamentalist religious groups have been campaigning and lobbying politicians in Zimbabwe so that we cannot have abortions. They even go on television - there is a foetus in his mother's belly and you hear 'boom! boom! boom!' and the message is 'we are for people'. Now, what do you think subliminally that message is saying ? It is anti-abortion.

In Zimbabwe there are no safe places for abortion for poor women and vulnerable groups. Even if you are well-off you would not have an abortion there. You would go to Zambia because Zambia is one of the countries within the region where you could go and have an abortion legally. Dr Timothy Stamp, our Minister of Health, actually made a public statement saying 'the first rights of a child are to be desired, to be wanted and to be planned'. The ironic thing is as much as they are anti abortion, they are pro-control of women's reproductive rights, because right now one of the so-called success stories in Africa, in terms of population control and fertility control, is Zimbabwe. Didn't you hear that Jane Fonda said in Cairo that Zimbabwe is a model. It is a model, but at what cost to the women?

Right after independence they banned Depo Provera, but now it is back in Zimbabwe and it is being advertized on television. Its one of the options: there's Depo Provera, the condom, IUDs, and yet they are not talking about 'Femidom'. It has been introduced, but its success rate is very low because in Zimbabwe most of the males say that they have bought the use of the woman's uterus through 'labolla'. Poor working class men are saying this and 'lobolla' means dowry. Abortion is really about women's right to choose what they should do about their bodies. It is an issue of women's reproductive rights, fundamentally an issue of women's human democratic rights. So this is where we are: we are just beginning to try to see what we can do so that we can at least control our bodies. Because at the end of the day its ours.

There are few places in Zimbabwe where you can get a pap smear or a mammogram. In fact you can only get papsmears in family planning clinics or if you have a private doctor. In normal clinics you won't get a pap smear and what has been happening is that the incidence of cervical cancer in Zimbabwe is high: 20 out every 100,000 women are being affected by cervical cancer or cancer of the cervix. Out of every 100 malignant cancer cases that are being recorded in both adults and children, 37% are of cancers in the cervix. There is reported to be a 75 % increase in new cases. We need to have an informed population - women and men - on issues of reproductive rights and health. We need more gender-

sensitive health-centers in Zimbabwe; it is important to have female-booths or health centers where we can give information to people. It's important in cases of abortion, in cases of cervical cancer. I think the Government should reconsider its current cost recovery measures on health.

AIDS is increasing in Zimbabwe but, ironically, it has been recorded that most of the women are dying because of maternal mortality, and half of these deaths are not AIDS-related. I think because of this kind of evidence we have to look elsewhere, and ask why? AIDS is increasing in Zimbabwe we know, but at the same time what is causing infant mortality? People have to investigate the other side..

In education, at secondary school level, there are more men who are staying in school and more female drop-outs because of the introduction of user-fees. Rural families are opting for sending their male-children to school. The daughters of families who cannot send them to school tend to go into prostitution. Its very sad, and older men are literally attacking them, seeking sex with young girls or with a virgin because there present less risks. With some families unable to send their male children to school, we are now seeing male prostitution in Zimbabwe. There's also the phenomenon of "street kids": all those orphans of the war and Mozambican refugees. The goverment is concentrating on the urban areas and trying to deal with this problem, and trying to develop industries. But it does not know what to do with rural areas where the situation is worst.

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 underminding 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.

It is not easy for women to get access to credit in banks and

other financial institutions because Zimbabwe, as you know, is a patriarchal society. They are talking about equity, so they should rework strategies so that women may have access to credit.

The majority of the labour force in the agriculture sector is made up of women and children and they are suffering because they are underpaid. They work in peak periods, they don't have medical care, benefits, pension-schemes etc. In urban areas, following retrenchment, they no longer have three meals a day - they cut one of them. So women as well as children are suffering because they are bread-winners. The situation is worse for women because most of them are heads of families in urban and rural areas.

Women are not passively absorbing SAPs. They are resisting through networking. In Zimbabwe networking is seen in clubs where groups of four to twelve members give in contributions and get it back 3 or 12 months later. Women are joining those clubs more and more. Networking is also exemplifed by women who are bonding in child care, or sharing their burdens when cross-bordering and in the field of nutrition through home gardens. The failure of the women's resistance struggle has been identified as a lag in longtime organization so that women cannot articulate and defend their interests at state-level. In seeking an alternative economic framework we should organise ourselves to have access to power. We need a voter education drive and political conscientisation. I think we have lessons to take from other countries.

Discussion

The discussion mainly focused on alternatives to health policies especially affected by Structural Adjustment Programmes.

Augustine Owashiga from Groots International branch in Ghana, raised issues on the use of traditional medicine in Zimbabwe. In Ghana, most people are going back to their roots, to the ways in which their forefathers cured themselves because of the rise of the cost of western medicine. This process is called 'Sankofa'.

In Zimbabwe people never stopped turning to traditional healers who have set up an association named ZINATA. The head is a sociologist and the Chancellor of the University of Zimbabwe who strongly believes in the use of traditional herbs. One of the leading chemists in Zimbabwe, from the University, has also been working on traditional herbs in relation to AIDS cure. Of course, conflicts arose between the partisans of traditional healing and researchers who tried to down play its role. There is a project concerned with identifying traditional healing plants and their scientific base and

exploring people's knowledge and use of certain herbs. The AIDS project has received funding from the Japanese Government. The goal is to marry African science and knowledge to the orthodox European knowledge to see how the fusion of the two schools of medicine could be used to improve the lives of the people.

Traditional birth attendance and family planning are incorporated into Zimbabwe's Primary Health Care Programme and are trained in safer health pratices in order to reduce infant as well as maternal mortality. Thus traditional and modern knowledge are combined to improve midwives' skills and health care. The governement pays TBAs a salary although it is low. But in terms of cost-recovery measures, it cuts down on certain outlets.

The use of contraception, traditional and modern, raises women's right to sexuality. Traditionally, in Zimbabwe as well as in South Africa, single women were not supposed to have sex. Today the use of contraceptives is not allowed under 18 years. But, in actual fact, young girls and boys have sex. Condoms are available but because of the control of older relatives, they have to hide. They may buy traditional medicines for aphrodisiacs from the market - these traditional medicines are there and there are studies that have recorded some of the kinds of traditional methods available.

Another question raised by Jean Murcott of South Africa was about the kind of resources that traditional healers use, the way these are being expoloited and marketed by business and their conservation. In the Southern African countries, the big drug-companies are interested in acquiring and capturing these resources, she said. Madagascar and Malaysia have huge herbal gardens for the preservation and propagation of local herbs and medicinal plants for future use. In Zimbabwe, 'campfire' projects have been set up in rural areas so that people are conscious of preserving the environment. Primary culture programmes encourage them to grow local trees, herbs, and medicinal plants. Throughout the country, botanic gardens preserve species and medicinal plants. ZINATA, the traditional healers' association, is given plots to grow traditional medicines and herbs which they will use for their purposes. So although Zimbabwe suffers from deforestation and other ecological problems, on another level, there are moves to preserve indigenous medicinal plants and herbs.

The participants refocused on the economic framework by pointing out the common concerns in the African region. The Zimbabwe case resembles other cases in Africa, or elsewhere in the Third World. Some of the issues the case study raises for the participants is the need, in Southern Africa particulary, and in Africa

generally, to re-focus the actual debate that is taking place in terms of economic integration. Economists and business people, said Viviene Taylor especially in South Africa and Southern Africa, are looking at the rest of Africa as potential markets and in terms of capital accumulation. Women and economically vulnerable people need to examine the social costs of economic integration in the light of their own experiences and and need to mobilise at all levels against the negative impacts, she said. It was suggested that participants look at concrete strategies for placing social issues on the agenda at the policy and programme level. In Southern and South Africa in particular, each crisis, as it emerges, is addressed in terms of piece-meal project responses. There is a tendency to lose focus on the need for restructuring the actual relationships between the State, the private sector and civil society itself. Some of the issues raised by the Zimbabwe case study reinforce the initial need to address the social and economic problems in the region. So ways have to be found to build solidarity around these common problems and concerns to mitigate the effects and focus on engendering development.

5.2 Ghana Case Study

Dzodzi Tsikata

Ghana is supposed to be one of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) success stories and most of the positive reports on Ghana have been written by foreigners. Many of them spent not more than two weeks in Ghana. I think that it is important that Ghanians tell their own story.

A number of Ghanians have written about SAPs. One of them, Takywiaa Manuh, has done extensive work on SAPS and on market women, and market women are not a popular category of research so that's a very important intervention. Others, like Ebo Atchfo, have written about the politics of structural adjustment, which I think is a very important part of the Ghanian story. I don't think that any discussion on structural adjustment in Ghana can separate the economic programme from the political developments which led to the programme. I also would like to acknowledge the help I got from my colleague, Mensan Kudson. We stayed up last night and discussed our points to present to this meeting but unfortunately Mensan Kudson cannot be here because she has to be with the African economic group.

One of the things that kept running through my mind when

listening to the Zimbabwean paper was just how similar structural adjustment has been in Ghana and in Zimbabwe, so I see my paper as a complement to Ona's. I will not go through all the details - they are similar. What I would like to do is distinguish between Ghana and Zimbabwe in the way they have experienced structural adjustment. As I said earlier, structural adjustment in Ghana cannot be separated from political processes. It's quite clear now that the crisis in Africa that led to SAPS had both external and internal causes and they are all known - the collapse of all prices and the recession in the world economy and all that. In Ghana's case, just before structural adjustment, the Ghanian economy had come to a complete halt and this had to do not only with the external crisis but with political instability in Ghana.

Ghana has had about ten years of military government and there was great torment over this government because in the beginning it was an interesting experiment in alternative government. The government had repudiated all debts from international financial institutions saying that they had been unjust. But the result of this was that Ghana became the pariah of the international community: very little aid or anything came into Ghana in that whole decade between 1970 and 1980, and then this government degenerated into one of the most corrupt in the continent.

We had three months of a military government which started in 1979, supervised elections and handed over power to a civilian government that lasted for two years. In 1981 the same military group that had overthrown all military dictatorships came back to power in another "coup d'Etat". So that was the scenario before structural adjustment was introduced. And that government was interesting because it was supported by workers and the left in Ghana. And that's one of the strange things about structural adjustment in Ghana: it was supported by socialists in the beginning. And I'm sure every body was surprised about that but thought that it had its roots in the crisis that was facing Ghana's economy.

There was now management of the government, so the left in the government was very supportive of any attempt to reinstitute fiscal discipline and reintroduce policies which would create conditions for economic growth to take place, because people believed that those policies were necessary to any attempt to solve their problems. And from that experience have come some of the interesting orthodoxies, such as structural adjustment in Ghana. One popular thing heard in Ghana today is `there are no alternatives to structural adjustment' and I think that most people have come to believe that.

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.

Having laid the basics, I'll now go into the character of structural adjustment in Ghana, the kinds of macro economic policies instituted - and they are very similar to other programmes. There was currency devaluation because the currency was grossly overvalued, 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.

The philosophy was that these policies would create conditons for the economy to take off. But because of the depression in the economy, Ghanians could not take advantage of new incentives and openings. This whole business of privatization is epitomized by the Ashanti Gold field, which is arguably one of the richest gold mines in the world, one of the richest hundred square miles of gold land in the world. And there was huge publicity about the Ashanti Goldfield. And when people heard that the government was divesting itself of 25% of its shares, which used to be 55%, five persons toured inside Ghana to pacify all the noises about privatization. And it is interesting because of the orthodoxy of how the private sector is more efficient and would do better and lead economic recovery and all that. People were not complaining about privatization until Ashanti Gold-field shares were being sold. And when 5% of the shares were being sold in Ghana, the impression given to ordinary people was that they could make money with

their shares in Ashanti Goldfield. One may imagine that 5% for all Ghanians is not likely to make a difference to anybody.

The other aspect of privatization has been the pressure from the World Bank to privatize cocoa marketing and the banking sector. Now the cocoa marketing board was set up out of recognition of the inability of the private sector to run the industry. There are issues of quality-control, issues of infrastructure to reach the remote areas of the country where cocoa is grown. But that rationale has been set aside and there is insistence that the private sector can do it. And yet the World Bank document are saying that the private sector is weak, and therefore these expectations about the private sector are overdone. The banking sector is the same. The Ghana Commercial Bank is the only bank that operates in remote areas of Ghana and in some rural areas. And with these pressures of privatization one can be sure that banking services are going to be out of reach of ordinary people.

The other aspect of the programme has been the issue of taxation. In trying to generate revenue for the government and because the government is withdrawing from productive activity, the government has had to rely on taxes to make revenue, to service whatever it wants to finance. And because the tax-regime has been expanded very drastically, all men or women who are selling by the streets, who have small hair dressing salons, who are making traditional soap and that sort of thing, are now being taxed. And they are very confused about it. Some of them are asking to pay their tax on a daily basis, otherwise, they don't know how to do it. And one of the things the governement has to rely on is taxes on petroleum products and they have multiplied taxes on the economy because the cost of petroleum-products has nothing to do with the world prices of petroleum; it has to do with the petroleum tax. And it rebounds on the food sector because of transportation; it rebounds on workers and all the other aspects.

But for us 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. Yesterday Augustine was pointing out that 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.

There is another issue I want to raise and that has to do with the World Bank and its assessment that Ghana can become like East Asia if it follows the present programme that has been instituted in Ghana. Now we have been told that the East-Asian miracles were not achieved by deregulation: governments took an interest in the economy, planned their areas of priorities and all that. Ghana is not allowed to do that, and yet we have been told that if we continue doing a, b, c, and d we are going to be like the East-Asian Tigers. And it is interesting that recently the World Bank put out a book called 'Ghana : 2000 and beyond', and it is one of the most equivocal statements I have seen in my life because it keeps on saying: 'if this, then Ghana might do this, if so and so is in place, then Ghana might achieve this'. Now we know that all those things, all those 'if's' are not in place. So, in effect, this East-Asian miracle is not likely to occur in Ghana and other parts of Africa.

There is another aspect of the recovery which is problematic. It has to do with the environment and adjustment. Now structural adjustment is export-led, and in Ghana the most recovered section has been the Goldmining section. And what that means is the Ghanian environment is suffering and the government, because of its desire to encourage foreign investors who are not coming and who are only interested in mining anyway, has not been able to institute strong measures to safeguard the environment.

But to talk about the distributional impact of SAP on Ghana, there's one point I want to make: I made a point earlier on the squeezing out of the middle class. I want to say that when one has listened to the critique of SAP, everybody has said that women have been more affected than men and all that. This implied to me a critique of SAP which means SAP does not only have to do with the World Bank and the IMF, it also has to do with internal social relations in our own countries. Why is it that women are more affected than men? Is it because they don't own land, or are more poorly educated, which is why they are in the service-sectors, why they are in the informal sector and all that? Whatever our approach in critiquing SAP, it involves a two-track response: dealing with or fighting for internal changes in our own countries as we are fighting the World Bank and the IMF.

I shall leave out the details about how SAP has affected women in Ghana; I'll say just a few things. When I heard (Ona) talk about the primary health programme (in Zimbabwe) it seems to be a positive policy because primary health care was introduced after SAP. For us it has not been a very positive policy because it's an

indication of Government's abdication of its responsibilities in the health-sector and its predicated on women as unpaid labour. Women are supposed to teach the whole community about health, to treat children who get ill at home. They are supposed to basically take charge of health issues in their communities. And I believe that those are the responsibilities that the government has to take, and not pass it onto the community.

And the other aspect of primary health care in Ghana has been concentrated on women as mothers, a very narrow level of interest. All the other health needs of women have been ignored by the primary health-care programme. And even if one does not have statistics to say that SAP has worsened the situation of women, and that's difficult to say because of where we started from before, one can say for sure that SAP has not improved rates of maternal mortality and that sort of thing in Ghana.

And in talking about work, one can also say this whole restructuration of the formal and private sectors has reduced openings for jobs, and women and men have been retrenched. And women are doubly affected because it is mostly support-services that suffer at lower levels of employment. And, of course, the informal sector has become a very poor haven for the people who are displaced from the formal sector. A recent study, by T. Manuh and Gracia Clark, on the market-sector found that women are faced with keen competitors, namely drop-outs from school, young boys and girls, who have swamped this trade sector. The trading and business-sector is the theater of a fierce competition and dynamism. If you happen to go along streets you can see a lot of selling shops and stores in large numbers, but women keep on saying that people don't buy. That is recurrent in Manuh's study: many are complaining that people don't buy. So in this sector you need capital funds to stay and evolve in this trading sector, but unfortunately there's poor access for women to credit because of the banking sector's very rigid demands.

Discussion

Augustine Koshiga, from Groots International (Ghana), focused on the difference between the Zimbabwe and Ghana cases in respect of land control and food security: Ghanians control their land.

Fatou Sow put the question about the relationship between the Franc CFA, which is the currency of francophone Africa, and the Cedi, and its impact on the Ghanian economy. It is often said that the use of the Franc CFA as a trade currency by Ghaneans

was part of the country's success story. It was not a statement from the World Bank experts, but from many African economists who worked on the impact of the CFA franc in the neighbouring countries. For many years, travellers to Ghana, Nigeria, Rwanda or Zaïre, always changed their Franc CFA on the black market for a better rate. She asked what the impact of the devaluation of the Franc CFA by 50% had been on the Ghanian economy. Ghaneans are used to selling their cash-crops to Côte d'Ivoire, instead of trading them within their own country. In fact, the Côte d'Ivoire's national production increased, not because the peasantry produced more, but because other crops sold to Côte d'Ivoire were taken into account.

The issue of devaluation of the currency was raised often in the debate. As stated by Dina Nfon Priso, the devaluation exacerbated the situation already affected by economic crisis and Structural Adjustment Programmes. In Cameroon, it led to a deeper pauperization of the masses and especially women. In some cases, starvation occurred. All the effects of SAPs in Ghana and Zimbabwe can be encountered in Cameroon and most African countries. So, the goals of SAPs was not to solve social issues, but to refund the debt, which was incurred to pay for state expenditures. The crisis also raises the issue of power: What type of power is needed? What type of State? After the 1990 Franco-African meeting at La Baule (France), where President Mitterrand proposed democracy as a conditionality for aid, the same country (France) in Cameroon, imposed President Biya whose regime was all but democratic.

In addressing the question of the impact of the CFA franc on the Ghanian economy, Dzodie Tsikata advanced the idea that only an economic and monetary integration could help overcome some of the economic problems created by the differences in currencies in the same sub-region. She pointed out that local traders constantly go to Nigeria, Cöte d'Ivoire, Togo, or to other countries, to buy goods because they are cheaper. After the devaluation of the CFA franc it was observed that it had returned to its previous level (i.e. approximately 1,000 CFA/F to 2,000 Cedi, the Ghanian currency). However, even when prices went up, as a result of the devaluation, Ghanian traders still found it better to shop in those countries, rather than do nothing.

Viviene Taylor emphasized the manner in which the two country case studies reflected the links between the type of political restructuring occuring in countries of Africa and issues of economic development. Even where there was the political commitment and will to promote the interests of the poorest citizens, it

seems that the global environment is hostile to such approaches. She reflected on the need to link political restructuring and economic development with a rigorous democraticisation process that centers the women and those people who have been historically and economically excluded. She went on to state that for this to happen, women activists had to claim the space and take the power to act decisively and collectively through multiple strategies that would improve conditions in households, communities, nationally and regionally.

Devaki Jain summed it all up by raising the central question: How do we reverse the horror story African countries have been enduring for forty years after the leaders of the liberation struggles joined the government and passed from socialist ethics to adopting the World Bank agenda? How can the women's network say 'no' to the current confusion, reverse the horror story, shift the thinking from TINA to TEMBA ('There Is No Alternative' to 'There Must Be An Alternative')? She acknowledged that women would need political and economic strength in order to prevail against the current power structures. However, she expressed the strong belief that it was only women, working together across the regions, who could develop the strength to throw out the 'devil'.

6. Challenging the Given

Peggy Antrobus

At the end of the day , Peggy Antrobus tried to pull together some of the foregoing discussion, in the light of similar discussions which had taken place over the years since 1984, when DAWN's first meeting took place in Bangalore. She reflected on the fact that it was from those discussions in Bangalore that she had first understood, from the Latin American women, the implications of the debt crisis and the policies of Structural Adjustment that were being introduced to deal with it. The discussion had special meaning for her, as a woman from the Caribbean, because Caribbean Heads of Governments, at a meeting held only a few weeks earlier (in June), had adopted structural adjustment as the policy framework for the region's development. At that time no one questioned this. Perhaps because no one understood the implications for Caribbean people.

That was ten years ago, and since then there has not been a single meeting where there has not been a discussion about what these policies do to people and countries. Often, at these meetings there would be some women who would be hearing about the policies for the first time: the impact is always catalytic.

Today we have the critiques. We know what needs to be done; but we do not seem to be able to prevail against these enormous power structures. We even know why we cannot prevail against them!

If we had time we could continue this analysis which would allow us to see the links between the economic, political, social and

even cultural structures, which make it so difficult to change things.

It is extremely important for this analysis to be shared with women from the grass-roots, because again and again people do not know what these policies mean. The educational work has to continue; it has to be taken to communities so that women can understand the links between the economic, political, social and cultural factors. The cultural factors are critically important in all this.

If we are to prevail we need different strategies. Discussions among people like ourselves are not sufficient. Critiques alone are not enough. Here I want to reflect on the significance of this place, Dakar, for someone like myself. Just off-shore of Dakar is the island of Goreau, the place from which thousands of Africans were enslaved and transported to the Caribbean, and the Americas. It reminds me that 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. I think men have made a mistake in trying to 'challenge the master's structures using the master's tools' - economic arguments, formal, political strategies. I think 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.

At this point I want to return to Gita's presentation yesterday. 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 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, it's 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); 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. 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. Yesterday we rejected the idea that NGOs could be a substitute for government, and we know that poor people cannot afford to pay for private services, so these services are left to the household, meaning women's work.

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.

Our male-colleagues can be important allies. They can begin by listening, and help to secure political space for us. If they listen they will understand that women have something important to offer to the discourse on development, to the formulation of political action that is not about arms, or about statistics, or about money, but about ethics.

But we, women, must first be clear about our own agenda. So ultimately what we have to do is to build other kinds of organizations, other kinds of NGOs. Organizations that will deal with women's strategic as well as practical gender interests.

Some women's organizations are dealing with both practical and strategic-gender interests, but it is not always feasible for the same organization to do both. There needs to be a more strategic division of labour: DAWN is not a service-delivery project; researchers in our institutions are not well-placed to address the practical gender interests. However, those of us working on women's strategic gender interests must have legitimacy with those working on practical issues: those of us who are academics need to ensure that we have links with women at community level and to the community of activists.

But it is also important to encourage the creation of those organizations that actually do try to do both. The organization for which I work in Barbados is one which seeks to address practical as well as the strategic gender interests.

We also need to try to make links between local and national levels, and from these to regional and international arenas. One of the things that gives me hope is that there are networks of women

working inside policy-making circles that see the need to link with networks outside these circles.

So there are women in our countries who are woking within government bureaucracies, universities, banks and corporations, who are reaching out to make the link with women outside. Their strategies are necessarily different: the women on the outside are those who have nothing to lose in terms of their status within the mainstream, so they can be as radical as the women on the inside cannot be. At the same time, women on the inside who have made a choice to work with women on the outside also take risks and must not be rejected. We need both, a double strategy.

We can think of the inside/outside strategy in North/South terms as well. There are networks of women who seek strategic alliances between North and South. The story of the success of the women's movement in Cairo at the ICPD is a story of North/South strategic alliances. DAWN had allies in the North dealing with the international organizations, as well as direct links to the movement in the countries. The strategy that took place at the last Prepcom was mind-blowing: there were women (like Gita) inside the delegations and women outside the delegations who had direct links with the movements in their countries and were able to influence decisions from that level. Those were the kinds of possibilities that we have today, using the technology - fax-machines, e-mail and telephones.

DAWN has also challenged the women in the North, in the United States, in Canada, in Europe to study their own situation and to change things in their own countires. Some have taken up the challenge and we now actually have links with networks of women in the United States, Europe and Canada who have been using similar conceptual frameworks to DAWN's to challenge the 'givens' in their own countries. (Structural adjustments policies are not restricted to use in the South. Indeed, they were first adopted in the United States under Reagan and in Britain under Margaret Thatcher. And their consequences were similar). This, after all, is the kind of strategy that offers the best hope of success.

Discussion

The afternoon session started with a discussion reinforcing Peggy Antrobus' premises: how to Challenge the Given? Viviene Taylor from South Africa indicated that South Africa's Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP), a programme intended as the vehicle for national reconstruction and poverty eradication is

relying on the same sources of funding (World Bank, IMF) as other African countries. The challenge therefore is to ensure that "borrowing" does not have the same conditions, prescriptions and impacts. Women have to consider how they might influence those State policies that have links to the global economy.

Playing 'devil's advocate', Gita Sen critiqued the post-liberation policies that Zimbabwe undertook particulary in the area of land and the absence of any serious attempts at land redistribution. On the other hand, she recognized that there are persuasive arguments made along the lines of prudence and pragmatism: Zimbabwe's ability in the post-independence period to survive and not go through what some of its neighbours, particulary Mozambique and Angola, have gone through by way of a full-scale and bloody confrontation for power was probably due to their more cautious approach. One can, in retrospect, be at least sympathetic to the kinds of positions that President Mugabe took at the time of independence.

She felt that the government had also dealt with drought in a positive way. It was able to provide food to rural areas and prevent famine and death. Some critics alleged Zimbabwe's approach was not really different. However these can be questioned. Secondly, even if that were the case, could it be a reflection of the fact that, when it comes to the social sectors, unlike other aspects of the economy, the State maintained a socialist position due to the mixtures of forces, as was the case with industrial workers in Ghana? In most countries in Africa there are simply not enough lobbies, or groups that are vocal and articulate in support of these 'soft' sectors.

In the case of Ghana, unlike other countries, women workers were able to articulate their own issues. The inability of women generally to articulate their concerns is a major problem. The constituency that is most affected by the cuts in those sectors are women, and yet, up to this point, they have not been very organized to defend them. It is only very recently that, in some sectors, there has been an attempt by women to say: 'this is ours; don't touch it !'

The absence of resistance to such policies allows the World Bank and IMF to go and literally do as they please. The staff of these agencies seem to be able to make any statements they wish, and experiment in any way they wish. No one holds them accountable for their failures. It is ironic that the Bank, which is always talking about the accountability of the State, is guilty when it comes to holding its own bureaucrats accountable for policies and pro-

grams that don't work. In the case of both Ghana and Zimbabwe, indeed in all our countries, reform is needed, but not any reform.

Discussing women's responses in Ghana, Dzodzi Tsikata indicated that some of them were similar to what was happening in Zimbabwe and others were not. One response was to pool resources (e.g. through the 'susu'). There was also a link between women's religiousity and the economic crisis: many have turned to the church at times of crisis. In reality, she felt that in Ghana the response was not very broad-based. Women's NGOs could be more effective if they were not so close to the government and to the ruling party. If they had engaged in economic literacy projects as was the case in Kenya, for instance, they could widen their issues to include a clearer critique of the policies. The other major issue for women is equity in gender relations.

Dzodzi agreed with Gita's point about the need for women to mobilize in defense of the social sector, and that there is a bias from policy makers and social scientists who think that it is not a major sector. For example, the 'State of the Ghana Economy Report', published every year, has no input from the other social sciences, because the economists believe that they understand the situation and have the answers. In addition, there is a tendency for people to accept the dominant discourse, to dichotomize the social and economic sectors and to give priority to economic growth.

Dzodzi Tsikata's analysis of Zimbabwe's approach was different from Gita's: she recalled that just after independance, there was the so-called 'dissident problem' which was contained in Zimbabwe, as opposed to what had happened in Angola and in Mozambique, where Savimbi has continued his resistance. What was called the post-elections crisis formed the object of a settlement attempt by the side of Savimbi and his peers because, despite the fact that Joachim Chissano had won the elections, there still was post-electoral controversy stemming from other parties' eagerness to be in power, though international observer's perceived, the elections to have been free and fair. And indeed, everybody knew that Chissano had a significant lead over his rivals. What one can infer from this is that there is a different way of settling issues in the different countries. In the specific situation of Zimbabwe, the country was faced with drought (1981/82) and with the dissident problem that was wreaking havoc in terms of badly needed resources: assisting Mozambique in the Renamo-problem; it had to contain the violence between ZANU and ZAPU. But President Mugabe was clever enough to dialogue with Nkomo. They agreed on a power-sharing arrangement, so, in a way, the war-situation stopped.

In Zimbabwe right now, anybody can literally go anywhere. There is no distinction between ZANU and ZAPU because they have now become one. Now there is no longer a one party-system in Zimbabwe; there are many others in the opposition e.g. Ndabaningi Sithole, Bishop Musorewa, Dumbu Jenna (ex Minister of Justice under Mugabe), the head of the Forum-Party, etc. But they are not strong enough to challenge Mugabe since he commands the masses, all the rural areas and the working classes. Those are the internal politics that have to be addressed and analyzed.

How to contain a situation under conditions of adversity? The drought in Zimbabwe created just such a situation. NGOs played a very pivotal role in terms of food-aid and transportation, deploying food-aid in the remotest areas of the country, which the government had not reached. In this area there was a measure of cooperation between the Government and NGOs. However, at the same time, the Government failed to increase producer-prices, consequently grain-stocks were depleted. The Zimbabwe Trade Union had come up with a platform, but it was accused by the Government of trying to set up political foundations.

People are also living in a climate of fear: a kind of 'Big Brother is watching you', the social and political situation described by George Orwell in his novel '1984'. People cannot move around without being harassed, if they fail to have their identity card. This is the political situation one has to contextualize; and one also has to contextualize structural adjustment. On the one hand, there is the consolidation of power, and, on the other hand, the creation of a national unity, around the economic plan. The issue is how to combine the two? Food is fundamental, because no transformation can take place when people are hungry. People must empower themselves to have food and prevent the government from depending on food-aid-businesses since this undermines local capacity in food production.

Bene Madunagu (Nigeria) pointed out that most of the presentations made during the meeting highlighted case-studies of structural adjustment policies in Africa and analyzed them in the context of gender issues as they affect women. The question was what kind of development can best promote human resources and human development. The challenge before the group was how to bring our discussions into the document that goes out from the African region to inform positions in Copenhagen and Beijing; how to ensure that the positions coming out of the official meeting will reflect the aspirations and concerns shared during the DAWN meeting.

Christine Naré (Burkina Faso) was concerned about the the World Bank's new interest in the expansion of the informal sector, as a consequence of SAPs. The number of women in this sector is increasing enormously. The World Bank urges the State to organize the sector in order to get more taxes out of it. What are the alternatives for women? Do they have to struggle for the suppression of those taxes?

Viviene Taylor built on Dzodzi's analysis in respect of the complex pattern of power relations within countries and how negotiated settlements (such as Zimbabwe and South Africa) often resulted in compromises that constrained the new government's capacity to promote redistributive policies with regard to land and social security. She urged participants to develop common strategies for Africa. She was supported by another South African participant (Navi Pillay) who also spoke of the need to bridge the gap between people of different political persuasions. She claimed that in South Africa, nobody could afford to be neutral. People have to belong to an organization, and if it is not the ANC, then they are judged as being anti-democratic.

7. Critique of the Economic Commission for Africa Report

Ayesha Imam

What I am going to do is first to talk a little bit about the background to the crisis for which SAPs is supposed to be a cure ; and then I'll outline what the programme of SAP says and talk a little bit about in what way it has positive or negative points. I will then look at possibilities for structural transformational adjustment and directions that these might take.

I'm not going to talk very much about structural adjustment, because I think most of us in this room have heard enough about structural adjustment. But there are a number of things that are important to say or to reiterate.

One of them is the often unstated assumption or implication that Africa's economy started going down with independence, that colonialism was a good phase, and when we got independence we started having problems. But if you look at the statistics, this is not the case. Until around 1980, from the immediate post-independence-period until around 1980 the weighted average growth-rate of GDP in Africa was 5.6%. This is not great but this is comparable with other non-industrialized countries. And it is very clear that it is around the late seventies and eighties onwards that the rate of growth of GDP and so on started dropping. It's not an independence-phenomenon per se.

Because of this implication that it is a post-independence thing, Africa's economic problems are attributed very often to internal

causes, and we had some of them mentioned and rejected yesterday: policy-failure; personal role; cultural explanations, pro-industry-bias; rent-seeking, corruption, and it's true we do have groups like that and I, for one, in my country, have been involved in criticizing local leaderships and the rulers of the state; but to suggest that the poor performance and particulary the crisis since 1980 in Africa is solely due to these causes, just does not make sense. If they are an explanation, how did they happen after 1973? What happened, all of a sudden, that we had all these things after 1973, but not before ? They don't corrolate to the period at which the economy started doing badly.

We get an explanation from the common saying:'when London, Rome and Paris sneeze, Africa catches cold', which is to say, with the oil-crisis, with rises in interests-rates, with world-recession - none of which are caused by Africa - relatively small debts escalate into massive ones. And I find that there is a problem with the way in which our production is organized, and with our economic dependence and so on. The crisis was not caused by them. But its effects on Africa have been worse than on other regions of the world.

And I think that it is very important to get that clear. It is because of this mis-specification of what is the cause of the crisis in Africa that it is possible to argue about why structural adjustment programmes don't work in Africa. And for Africa as a whole they don't work. They also have not worked in micro-economic terms.

According to the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), Africa as a whole has recorded during the period of structural adjustment sad figures : its GDP has decreased from 2.7% to 1.8% ; its investment:GDP ratio has decreased from -6.5% to -7.5% and the proportion of export earnings that go to service debts has evolved from 17.5% to over 23.5%. These are fairly dated figures but the newest figures don't indicate a change in the pattern. As Tandika said yesterday you can see one country doing well during two years and happens to do badly in the following two years. So you can see that as a trend this does not work. Most of us know; each in one's own country, about such sad figures. There is a criticism that has been made by many people, including the African Alternative Framework, the ECA critiques, which is that the structure of the international economy in which, by and large, African countries continue to produce primary products for the world-market and don't control the terms of trade, is not touched by structural adjustment programmes. You can do all you want internally but the external situation has not changed.

The argument that state-entreprises should be cut ignores the

difficulties in African economies; for historical reasons the state is the major investor, and when it withdraws the slack cannot be taken up by private investors (foreign or national).

SAP denies the effectiveness of economic protection - through subsidization, state-intervention, or even import-substitution that the late developers, for instance Germany in the 19th century, used and what are now called the newly-industrializing countries e.g. Japan or South Korea, are using.

Structural adjustment has resulted in damaging a great majority of the population. It's very difficult to talk about recovering for the future if you agree that it's people who make development and not the other way around ; and we all know the statistics on infant-mortality, on illness-rates, on malnutrition-rates that have gone up for most countries during the period of structural adjustment ; and the way structural adjustment has been organized is such that women have been more affected than any other group in the society.

These critiques have been made very strongly, including the ECA critique that resulted in the African Alternative Framework for Structural Adjustment (AAFSA). Like the UNICEF study, the ECA mentions the international framework but, by and large, what it does is focus on internal policies for individual countries in Africa, presumably on the grounds that present international political conditions preclude any substantial alteration in terms of trade and the financial system. And rather than criticize orthodox structural adjustment program (SAP) for ignoring the effects on the poor and the vulnerable, they suggest policies which aim at some economic growth that protects the poor and the vulnerable. AAFSA sees the root of the crisis as ESD (the economic structure of dependency) which is to say, production for export of goods which are not much used in Africa. In very many cases countries produce goods for export, but there is at least a large internal market for those goods so that they can absorb internally the stuff which is produced if it is not wanted for export.

But the problem with AAFSA is they also don't mention a number of features of our African economies, some of which are partly due to the crisis as a post-effect of the crisis, some of which are being affected by the crisis: environmental degradation, urban-bias and physical infrastructure, the fragmentation of Africa into small markets, the openness of the African economies to external factors, weak institutional economy and the existence of a large sector of subsistance production. Certain other things have however been mentioned, such as linguistic affinities and ethnic na-

tional groups and gender-relations, among reasons for the particular economic difficulties in Africa. And as Gita said yesterday there are also areas of social differentiation all over the place which do not always and in every circumstance, become the reasons why there are crises. There are very often fault-lines which get produced because of the reasons for which people organize; they don't necessarily create crises in themselves.

AAFSA does argue that the point of economic development is the well being of people and not vice versa, which is a good point. Therefore the first objective, they say, is the alleviation of poverty and increase in living standards of people. However, and this is where the problem comes in, the second objective which they see as essential to the first objective is increased or expanded production and diversified productive capacities that will not suffer unduly from outside shocks. Maybe we should not be talking about increased production, but about shifting the kinds of production we have from one area to another. The third objective is national and collective self-reliance which, I think, many of us will not have a problem with in principle.

To attain these three objectives, AAFSA says we need: first of all, food-self-sufficiency through improving people's access to factors of production, particularly land (and they do specifically mention "to improve women's access to land"); the creation of employment-opportunities; the improvement of distribution of national wealth; and then two things that seem a little problematic: changing food-consumption so that people eat what they grow - in principle, it's a very good idea if we all learn to eat what we can produce at home but the way in which it is put suggests that we have to change their consumption to match what they produce. It sounds a bit authoritarian, but in principle, I would think personnaly it is a good idea; it similarly talks about increasing the internal consumption of mass commodity goods and, again, matching people's tastes to them.

AAFSA also talks about maintaining the national environment and I think we have a problem with the way in which they consider 'maintaining the national environment'. They conceptualize it in terms of people not cutting trees without tree-planting, telling people not to start bush-fires, and people not keeping too many animals on poor grazing land. But not all environmental degradation is caused by individual people cutting trees as there is also a significant timber industry; and we could talk about improving grazing land or improving people's access to land for grazing. So, as an objective, it is fine; but the means of dealing with that objective seem to me slightly suspect.

There are also a number of proposed policy-measures or instruments, offered as selections in what is called a 'menu', around strengthening and diversifying production-capital; improving incomes and the distribution of income; adjusting public expenditure to satisfy people's needs; and providing institutional support for adjustment with transformation. And if you look at those things the idea is that individual countries can decide which of these particular options under each set they choose and match them to their own particular needs: some of which are used, some of which are not. But what it doesn't do is reconstruct the household. Nor does it use radicalism and insist on grants rather than loans. If aid is going to be aid, give it outright, without strings, without pay-back. We have paid back a lot; we have paid back more in interest than the original amount of the debt itself, the loans themselves. It does not even, less radically, ask for more finance or for a slower pace of adjustment and stabilization. Frankly, I don't hold much hope for that myself.

And, finally, one set of suggestions that have been made: first of all, to use the kind of mechanisms we were talking about in the chart of popular participation; and, secondly, to focus on small horticulture or agriculture production and on small-scale industrialization, because the so-called problem with the informal sector is not that its not efficient or not producing, but that by and large it has not been counted, and its not taxed. There is a whole literature in particular about Zaire on the 'real economy' of Zaire, which is the 'informal economy' on which people live.

Discussion

The first point raised in the discussion was how to negotiate the list of priorities set by the ECA. document (small scale industry, present farming, self-reliance), with the political process in the countries, and the international financial institutions. The decision for the African women's forum actually was to check the list and see if they would like to mobilize themselves on some of these demands that have become the political vehicle or a power vehicle to negotiate it towards success. But the question is how do women get it to be accepted in this particular necklace of international finance, economic governance today, and our countries' own desires. After 1990, what happened to the ECA document? Did countries just ignore it, as they ignored the South-Commission-report, for example. If it was ignored, it is very important for us to know why. Because, again, women can come up with their own list of alterna-

tive economic frameworks, and not get attention, unless they are a political force.

Gita Sen, commenting on why women's alternatives have not been accepted, stated that it is because, within the existing framework of power, the alternative to the international financial institutions at the global level has been provided by some of the U.N. agencies. The U.N. agencies have really been flattened by the onslaught from the Bretton Woods Institutions to the point where the U.N. agencies are themeselves struggling with the accusations. The Bretton Woods Institutions, in attacking the key-U.N.agencies that have been responsible for development - UNCTAD and UNDP - have made exactly the same arguments that they make against states within our regions: they are corrupt, inefficient, overly bureaucratic, they don't deliver the goods. And therefore, the Bretton Woods Institutions - who are really far more inefficient - think that they ought themselves to be doing the job of economic development ; and U.N. agencies ought to do what they can possibly do now, which is peace-keeping somewhere and security somewhere else. It is exactly the same arguments. We should also remember that this is coming from the biggest bureaucracies in the world, one which is fat, top-down and heavily-subsidized. They use the same arguments very highly effectively against the U.N. system as they have against our own governments. They have been able to get away with it because there has been no alternative political forces against them.

The reason why what the E.C.A. says has not mattered is that there is no political vehicle through which that message not only gets across, but is forced across into the policy-making arena. It is where finally women are coming into their own, because there is no other global constituency like them. They are the only potential constituency that can mobilize to make the difference nationally and globally. They have already started making the difference globally: they have done it at the Vienna Human Rights Conference and at the Cairo Population Conference. In Cairo, a great deal is being put in place in terms of follow-up so that the recomendations do not remain something that is at the global level and does not come to the national level. Women have not yet done it for development-issues. They have finally to start saying: 'Enough of all this nonsense!' In doing this, the main problem is the way in which our brothers in the E.C.A. and other kinds of progressive organizations put their message forward. There's no gender in their message. Human development appears but is degendered completely. There is a refusal to recognize that it is women who

have borne the brunt of all of these policies. They do not acknowledge it. Therefore, they are unable to mobilize or to work with the groups that could really make a difference, like women. In the African case, it is actually pathetic to see how simple are some of the things that needs to be done.

In international terms, most of the African debt is official debt, not debt to private commercial banks. If one talks to the international institutions - the Bretton Woods Institutions - their answer will be: "it's not in our rules to write off debt". But one knows that if the Executive Directors of the Bretton Woods Institutions sat together and decided to do it, it could be done tomorrow. Writing off the debt will free up resources that bleed the country. In terms of trade, Africa needs a primary commodity-stabilization fund not aid. Africa needs the stabilization of primary commodity-prices. A number of suggestions have been given on how to get the money into a fund which could become self-sustaining. So the solutions exist. The only thing missing is the political mechanism to make those solutions come true. Mauritius - for instance - has put a great amount of its efforts into social development. How has the country managed to put as much as it has into health, care and education? It ought to be the job of a group like E.C.A. or somebody else, to analyse the case. Instead of complaining, one must start to look at what really went wrong , what needs to be done, how to mobilize the political actors to channel that and move it foreward.It is time now, in the African regions, that women start saying : "Enough ! We know which direction we need to go. We are going to work to make you accountable from now on, whether you are the Brettonwoods institutions or the U.N. institutions, the E.C.A or whoever. You are not going anymore to define development alternatives as if we do not exist".

On having the debt written off, Ayesha Imam spoke on how Africa is going to do it. By and large most of the countries ignored the debate for the kinds of reasons Gita was talking about. In some countries, however it was suppressed rather than ignored. For instance, Nigeria prevented Nigerians from holding workshops and seminars and discussing it. Because nobody was supposed to discuss anything, except the government's own structural adjustment programme ; and even that, Nigerians were not allowed to discuss in terms of the reality of the problems. Also, until the killing of President Sankare, Burkina Faso had a structural adjustment programme that switched public sector expenditures from defence, embassies and missions. The Government asked Nigeria to allow them to send their representatives to the O.A.U-meeting on its

official plane rather than incur their own expense. It was quite a large expense for such a small country of hiring a presidential jet for themselves. The money, they switched from defence, was actually put into health, agriculture and education. Burkina Faso was not only paying its debts, but, for a short period, the rate of the GDP went up with enormous social consequences. Angola is another example. It had similar types of policies, but had to swich a lot of its money back into defence, because of the incursions from the South Africa-supported UNITA rebels. Also, the government could not get foreign aid, which means International Financial Institution aid, without abandoning its mass-education and their mass-health programmes. So it is not just a lack of political vehicle for other alternatives. But in these cases, there is an institutional big stick from outside and, simply, from the I.M.F.

In terms of specific recommendations, very few of them are in themselves new: it is precisely an issue of having a political vehicle. The E.C.A. document is particulary hopeful, because it shows how one can start, at least, making an impact on governments and states, and on mobilizing people and communities to make that impact. It does not pretend to have the answer to everything, but it is suggesting what has to be clear to everybody: if the countries do not make it together, it will not work.Following the same idea, Peggy Antrobus gave the example of Cuba. President Fidel Castro tried to get the political will of the South to resist paying the debt, in 1978. Of course, he failed, but he did try. He called a conference to which many governments were invited and he called on them to resist, and they didn't. One of the reasons why they didn't was because the people who negotiate the terms are the people who are beneficiaries of the system.

8. Conclusions

Viviene Taylor

The DAWN Africa regional meeting provided a forum for a range of Africans to engage in critical debate on issues of fundamental concern to women.

The impact of the DAWN debates and process of sharing information was of particular importance at the Africa NGO Forum Conference for the Fourth World Conference on Women.

The two panel presentations, one on alternative economic frameworks, and the other on reproductive rights, helped to take the debates from the DAWN Regional Meeting into a much broader forum and process. Consequently, the issues raised in the meeting were subjected to a process of broader verification and feedback. Women shared similar views, anger, frustration, energy and recommendations for another kind of development.

"Through analysis and activities, DAWN is 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. Dawn is a feminist network of women from countries of the South who are actively pursuing alternative development frameworks to promote social transformation at all levels of societies. The network is constituted of women who are feminist researchers, policy makers/ advocates and activists." (DAWN documents)

Since its formation in 1984, DAWN continues the tradition of providing alternative frameworks for the critical analysis of devel-

opment. In addition DAWN members ensure that Third World Women's Perspectives are voiced at the global, regional, national and local levels, as was very evident at the Africa regional meeting.

The Africa regional meeting and ebates reinforced the need for DAWN to questions the impact of development on poor people, especially women, particularly in light of the global economic and political crises, and to continuously voice a sense of urgency regarding the need to advocate alternative development processes that would give primary emphasis to the needs of the majority of the world's people. The Africa debates emphasised the commonality and power of the global economic and political processes that set the context for diverse national and regional experiences, and that often constrain the possibilities for alternative strategies and actions.

The shared experiences of many DAWN members with grassroots initiatives, related at the meeting and other forums at the community level, strengthened their resolve to seek to comprehend such actions within a broader perspective: to link, as it were, the micro-level activities to a macro-level perspective. The regional meeting and issues debated with regard to SAPs, increasing inequality, violence and deepening poverty, once again showed that it is the experiences lived by poor women throughout the Third World in their struggles to ensure the survival of their families and themselves that provide the clearest lens for an understanding of development processes.

The debates and issues also showed the inter-relatedness of political and economic processes, the need for a development process that centres on people, particularly poor women. In constructing a future "free of multiple oppressions of gender, class, race and nation, that can form the basis for the new visions and strategies that the world now needs", DAWN is convinced that alternatives should be based on the struggles of oppressed women.

Appendix 1

Programme of Africa Regional Meeting

Dakar, November 11 - 13, 1994

Programme

11 November 1994 Summary

9:30 a.m.

(1) Welcome and introduction
Bolanle Awe, DAWN Regional Coordinator for Africa
(2) DAWN's history and structure
Peggy Antrobus, DAWN General Coordinator
(3) Keynote Address
Thandika Mkandawire, Executive Secretary, CODESRIA

11:00 am

(4) Presentation and discussion of the outline of DAWN's Platform on Alternative Economic Frameworks (AEF)
Gita Sen, DAWN Research Coordinator for AEF

2:00–4:30 pm

(4.1) African country situations: Responses to the DAWN Outline

12 November 1994

9:00 a.m.

(5) Presentation of African country case studies :
Zimbabwe: Ona Kwanele Jirira, University of Zimbabwe
Ghana: Dzodzi Tsikata, ISSER, University of Ghana

11:00 a.m.

(5.1) Discussion

2:00 pm

(6) Critique of regional/international documents :
Economic Commission for Africa Proposal for the "African Alternative"
Ayesha Imam

3:00 pm

(6.1) Discussion

13 November 1994

1:00–3:00 pm

DAWN panel at Regional NGO Forum: Alternative Economic Frameworks

14 November 1994

1:00–3:00 pm

DAWN panel at Regional NGO Forum: Reproductive Rights

Appendix 2

Minutes of DAWN African Regional Meeting

Dakar, Senegal, November 12, 1994

The meeting was convened at 4.50 PM by the chairperson, Prof. Bolanle Awe, the current African Regional Coordinator of DAWN.

Bolanle Awe explained the difficulties experienced in regional coordiantion in Africa. There were certain historical factors, serious communicaton problems, resources constraints and many others that have resulted in a lack of a coordianted strategy or programme to advance DAWN's work or activities in the region.

She strongly urged the African participants who are committed to DAWN to ensure that in coordianting the regional processes they have the administrative infrastructure such as fax machines, reliable telecommunications networks and other support services. She also cautioned that to engage in DAWN work individuals had to have the commitment, time and energy.

- Need for commitment and readiness to devote time and energy for DAWN work
- Infrastructural backing such as fax, telephone and other such services.

She expressed her delight at the attendance (40 participants) and enthusiasm by African women in DAWN.

This was followed by questions, clarifications and comments on how DAWN operates as a network. What type of global struc-

ture exists and how do regions relate structurally to the global secretariat. DAWN was seen as a forum for African women to express themselves in international fora. Criteria were set for the election of focal points and representatives of DAWN African region on the Steering Committee. It was agreed that in addition to having a Southern African Focal point, the unique situation of South Africa required a specific focal point. The reasons put forth for a South African focal point were

1) To help integrate South Africa into Africa given its prior isolation.
2) The complex nature of post apartheid difficulties and lessons that S.A. can learn from other expereinces.
3) The diversity in the Southern African region, the vastness of the region and communication difficulties.

Patricia McFadden with SAPES and Fatou Sow with CODESRIA were elected by a unanimus vote as the two African Representatives on the Coordinating Committee. The focal points were elected on the basis of North Africa, Francophone West Africa, Anglophone West Africa, Central Africa, Southern Africa, East Africa, South Africa, and Portuguese Speaking Africa,
to respect both regional and language diversities.

After nominations, the following were elected by unanimous voting:

1) Francophone West Africa: Fatou Sow – Sénégal
2) Anglophone West Africa: Bene Madunagu – Nigeria
3) Central Africa: Dina Jeanne Nfon Priso – Cameroun
4) Southern Africa: Patricia MacFadden – Zimbabwe
5) South Africa: Viviene Taylor
6) East Africa: Fatma Alloo – Tanzania.

There were no representatives from North Africa and Portuguese Africa. However, it was reported that Amal El Hadi from Egypt has been in the DAWN network and should be contacted as a North African DAWN focal point. For Portuguese speaking Africa, Marie-Josie Ato, Isabelle Casamire and Graca Machel, were proposed as possible focal points.

The meeting then charged the elected focal points to set the agenda for the DAWN workshop on Economic Frameworks for the Dakar NGO Conference. Viviene Taylor was asked to coordinate the panel's presentation at the NGO Forum. In addition, it was argreed that the focal points would meet with the 2 coordiantors at an agreed date, depending on the availability of funds from the DAWN secretariat, to work out a detailed programme of action.

The minutes of the meeting were taken by Bene.

Appendix 3

Participants List

DAWN African Regional Meeting
Dakar, November 12 1994

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