



NEWSLETTER

Letter from SAWID Patron and Isigodlo Chairperson Ms. Zanele Mbeki

Welcome to the first edition of the South African Women in Dialogue (SAWID) Newsletter. We hope that it will be one of many more to come.

When we accepted the responsibility of coordinating the annual dialogues in 2003, we had no idea what level of energy these events would unleash! The result is that the fledgling SAWID secretariat has become a hub and hive of activities, radiating a wide variety of initiatives arising mainly from the 2003 SAWID Plan of Action, as well as those imposed upon the secretariat by externally raised expectations.

SAWID has no membership. It embraces all South African women who wish to participate in our forums for finding solutions to our collective challenges. There are, however, many who think that SAWID has a membership from which we can source women to represent 'our view' on various platforms. For this SAWID depends on women volunteering as individuals and as organisations representing themselves or the views of their organisations. This is because one of the founding objectives of SAWID was to strengthen the South African Women's Movement in all its formations.

Because of our dependence on volunteers, the Secretariat entertains such requests for participation by identifying individuals and organisations that stand to benefit from these external invitations.

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This newsletter therefore is a chronological pot-pourri of events highlighting SAWID-related activities up to June 2006. Fortunately most participants to national and international forums are encouraged to write reports, most of which you will find on the SAWID Website (www.sawid.co.za).

I am elated by the reports of the young women who attended the 50th & 51st United Nations Commission on the Status of Women NGO forums in New York in 2005 and 2006 (see reports). Alidia has already booked her seat as First South African UN Secretary-General! Ms. Hazel Shelton was not only co-opted into the drafting of the Global Youth Millennium Development Goals (MDG) document, she has since been elected as the South African delegate in the formidable UN/Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) Committee after the end of term for Ms. Mavivi Myakayaka-Manzini who represented South Africa from 1998 – 2002.

Equally pleasing is the fact that SAWID provided a platform for the impending launch of the South African Chapter of the International Federation of Women Lawyers (FIDA). Seven women lawyers and one NGO activist against women trafficking (Nandi Msezane) represented South Africa in Malaysia.

We are thankful that women on the SAWID Commission for Peace and Reconciliation gave support to the Liberian TRC delegation that was hosted in our country by the Foundation for Human Rights under the leadership of Ms. Yasmin Sooka.

We congratulate Marthe Muller for producing this newsletter just over a month since she took up her position as SAWID Documentation and Information Coordinator. This appointment would not have been possible except for the support of our partners who continue to build our capacity to enable the Steering Committee to fulfill the vision and mission of the SAWID 2003 founding participants.

Consistent with the appeal of the African Heads of State, who in the AU Constitutive Act enjoin all African people: men, women, youth and children, to build development partnerships with their governments, the private sector and civil society structures in order to eradicate poverty; Isigodlo Trust, SAWID's principal sponsor, is gratified that it has been able to reach agreement on a significant partnership with the Independent Development Trust (IDT), a leading state-owned enterprise. We hope that through this partnership the women in all our communities will find a helping hand in the existing IDT infrastructure, while local women in every corner of our country will gird their loins and assist the IDT fulfill its own mandate of eradicating feminised poverty from the face of South Africa. They will do this by initiating relevant development projects through and in tandem with the SAWID Development Caravan.

Do send us your comments and suggestions for the improvement of this newsletter which we hope will be published quarterly in print and on our website.

Zanele Mbeki

"We are the ones we have been waiting for"

SAWID is an independent South African women’s platform committed to hearing the voice of every woman and to improving the status of women by engaging national government, the private sector, civil society, (including non-governmental organisations, community-based organisations, faith-based organisations and donors) in partnership to shape community, provincial and continental agendas. The SAWID Forum is impartial and not-for-profit and is tied to no party-political interests.

SAWID was founded by a forum of around 1000 women, drawn from all sectors of South African society, who met at the University of Pretoria in July 2003. They had been convened by a Steering Committee of volunteers, facilitated by Ms. Zanele Mbeki, spouse of the President of South Africa. The convenors had been inspired by the outcomes of a Peace and Reconciliation Dialogue with women from the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) which had taken place in March 2003. (See website for report on this interaction.) Women gathered at the July 2003 SAWID Forum to break the barriers of race, language, culture, age and geographic divide that still separated them, and they articulated their vision, mission, values and objectives as follows:

Vision

Our vision is that of South African women united in our diversity and acting together for a better future.

Mission Statement

We, the women of South Africa, stand together for women’s participation on issues of national, regional, continental and international importance. Through our dialogues, we seek to establish a common agenda for the development of women and to ensure that women’s views are taken into consideration whenever decisions are taken on all issues that impact on our lives. We commit ourselves to work together to ensure that fundamental rights gained through our liberation are entrenched and protected, and emergent challenges are addressed.

Our Values

We are patriotic, accountable and responsible citizens of South Africa. We are self-reliant, independent and tolerant. We are women of integrity who are confident and committed in our actions. We engage with one another with honesty, empathy and respect for our differences. We are guided by the spirit of ubuntu which underpins all the above values.

Our Objectives

- to build cohesion in a previously divided society
- to promote creative dialogue among the women of South Africa in order to break down communication barriers that impede genuine and meaningful interaction



- to promote women's leadership for addressing ongoing challenges faced by women and the rest of the nation
- to promote Pan-African women's solidarity for peace, reconciliation, equality and development
- to support and strengthen the local and continental women's movement
- to give support to the African Union, NEPAD and APRM objectives
- to utilise dialogue forums, workshops, seminars, conferences and training as a means to support the above objectives

SAWID has hosted three national Dialogue Forums, in 2003, 2004 and 2005, and a Youth Forum in Saldanha in December 2004. During these forums, South African women, united in their diversity, came together to agree on a Plan of Action for the development of their communities and to find ways to engage with their sisters in South Africa and on the continent on similar issues. In addition to the Peace Dialogue with women from the Democratic Republic of the Congo hosted in March 2003, a Peace Dialogue was held with Women from Burundi in July 2004. SAWID takes place within the framework of the vision of the African Union and NEPAD for the development and regeneration of the African continent.

SAWID supports local government initiatives such as the Integrated Sustainable Rural Development Strategy, (ISRDS) The Urban Renewal Strategy (URS), the Local Economic Development Project, (LED) and the Accelerated and Shared Growth Initiative for South Africa (ASGISA). In this respect, SAWID is aligned to developmental goals and priorities summarised in documents such as The United Nations Millennium Development Goals, The United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 of 2000 on Women, The Beijing Declaration on Women of 1995, The Key Objectives and Principles of NEPAD and The Draft Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights, on the Rights of Women in Africa, adopted in Ethiopia on the 28th of March 2003.

The **IsiGodlo Trust** was established in June 2004 to promote the objectives of **SAWID**.

The People of the IsiGodlo Trust:

Ms. Zanele Mbeki (Chairperson)
Dr. Thandi Ndlovu (Deputy Chairperson)
Ms. Wendy Lucas-Bull
Ms. Irene Charnley
Ms. Mathabo Kunene
Ms. Audrey Coleman
Dr. Khosi Khumalo

SAWID Founding Steering Committee:

Dr. Brigalia Bam (Chairperson)
Dr. Thandi Ndlovu (Deputy Chairperson)
Ms. Thoko Mpumlwana
Ms. Baby Tyawa
Ms. Gernia Van Niekerk
Ms. Mandisa Tsotsi
Ms. Wendy Lucas-Bull
Ms. Bibi Suraya Khan
Ms. Pat Mothoane

RECENT SAWID ACTIVITIES

FIDA Conference in Malaysia November 2005

Ms. Nandi Msezana, an NGO activist against trafficking in women, joined Ms. Khanya Jele, Ms. Puli Moloto, Judge Yvonne Mokgoro, Professor Karen Muller, Advocate Lindiwe Vilakazi, Ms. Joyce Maluleka and Ms. Hazel Shelton in representing South Africa and South African women in Dialogue at the International Federation of Women Lawyers, (FIDA) in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia in November 2005. The conference aimed at empowering female lawyers to continue playing a meaningful role in addressing the plight of women.

WTO Workshop December 2005

The Gender and Trade Network in Africa (GENTA) and SAWID co-hosted a workshop at the SABC Offices in Auckland Park on the 5th of December 2005. The objective of the event was to intensify the understanding of women regarding the importance of international trade and the effect of World Trade Organisation (WTO) processes on women's lives. Keynote Speaker, former Minister of Land and Agriculture Thoko Didiza, who had led the South African delegation, provided an illuminating introduction to the WTO negotiation. During the workshop the context of the power dynamics of global economic forces and decisions were explained, and how they relate to and influence retailers, communities, households, and the lived experiences of South African women. Ms. Lebohang Pheko and Mr. Elijah Wachira facilitated the workshop. Amongst the participants, who included key opinion makers, including journalists, captains of industry and academics, were Ms. Futhi Mtoba, Dr. Teboho Maitse, Ms. Lerato Mbele and Ms. Gloria Serobe.

SAWID APRM Workshop January 2006

From the 28th to the 30th of January 2006, women of South Africa, representing mainly NGOs from all nine provinces, gathered to participate as members of civil society in the African Peer Review Mechanism, a system created by the African Union to encourage African countries to improve their governance, and to provide a mechanism for monitoring the political and developmental issues on the African Continent.

Women presented the following recommendations: They identified an urgent need to build the leadership capacity of women, to harmonise traditional and informal systems of governance, to establish a national coordination, monitoring and evaluation mechanism and to strengthen the relationship between government and civil society. They also urged the protection of women's mental, sexual and bodily integrity at home, work and in public places.





UN Commission on The Status of Women (CSW) NGO Committee New York, March 2006

SAWID was represented at this event by four participants who attended workshops on the main themes. Ms. Mandisa Monakali of Ilitha Labantu led on the theme of "Violence Against Women," while Ms. Alidia Seabi and Ms. Zanele Bengo of Youth SAWID scanned all NGO workshops, and especially those dealing with young people. Ms. Bibi Suraya Khan showcased the grassroots SAWID initiatives. Their reports are available on our website. The attendance of the UN NGO-CSW 2006 follows SAWID's attendance of UN NGO-CSW 2005, where the SAWID participation contributed a lot to the official South African delegation inputs, particularly as they were the only South African youth participants. At the 2005 forum Hazel Shelton was co-opted into the Global Youth Millennium Development Goals (MDG) Forum and she has now been elected as official South African representative to the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) Committee, among four other Africans on this global committee. SAWID has now been invited to apply to be a forum with consultative status in the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). All organisations with consultative status have automatic invitations to attend all UN NGO CSW events.

SAWID UK Chapter April 2006

On the 8th of April 2006 a grouping of South African women living in the United Kingdom, supported by a delegation from SAWID South Africa, gathered for a workshop at the South African High Commission in London to initiate a UK Chapter of South African Women in Dialogue.

The main objectives of the workshop were for women to be informed of the activities of SAWID South Africa, to experience a barrier-breaking and healing exercise, and to dialogue in order to identify the issues and challenges that most affect South African women living in the United Kingdom.

South African women living in the United Kingdom expressed their need for healing and barrier-breaking workshops to promote self-development, address ongoing racism, create reconciliation and overcome cultural isolation, and requested a system of mentoring and support. They also identified a need for a web-based communications network for information sharing, newsletters and updates.

SAWID Development Caravan Workshop May 2006

On May 17, 2006, around 34 people, (amongst whom development practitioners, development funding agencies, academics working in the field of development and women working in grassroots development projects) convened at the Holiday Inn in Beatrix Road, Hatfield, Pretoria in order to formulate a SAWID Development Programme Strategy and Action Plan with specific focus on the Development Caravan.

The meeting was facilitated by Dr. Japhet Ngubane, an Associate from ResourceAfrica, and the strategic objectives of the meeting were to arrive at a consensus regarding the outline of the Programme, to discuss the profile of a Development Caravan Programme Advisory Team, to agree on the initial pilot areas for the establishment of a Local SAWID Development Caravan Hub, and to reach consensus on the structure of the Development Caravan Machinery.

Presentations were made by SAWID patron Ms. Zanele Mbeki, Development Commission Convenor Ms. Vuyo Mahlathi, Assistant Director, Health Promotion of the Department of Health, Ms. Maredi Modiba, and the Tunisian ambassador to South Africa, H. E. Mr. Ali Goutali.

Tentative plans have been made for visits to Tunisia and Chile to learn how they managed to bridge the gap between the first and second economies, thereby fulfilling the Millennium Development Goals of halving poverty before 2015.

SAWID Meeting with the Liberian TRC Delegation, Hosted by the Foundation for Human Rights June 2006

An interactive information-sharing meeting was held on Thursday, June 8, 2006 at the Union Building between members of the Foundation for Human Rights, members of the Inter-African Peace and Reconciliation Commission of South African Women in Dialogue, and the 9 members of the recently appointed Liberian Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Liberia is grappling with many of the issues that South Africa had grappled with in the move towards democracy, and the meeting had been organised to allow South Africans and Liberians the opportunity to share experiences and strategies to end the violence in Liberia, promote a pro-woman agenda in democracy-making and reconstruction, and usher in a period of reconciliation, peace and prosperity. Presentations were made by Mr. Jerome Vervier, Mr. John Stewart and Ms. Massa Washington of the Liberian TRC, and South Africans who made presentations included Major General



Jacqueline Sedibe (retired), Ms. Yasmin Sooka, Ms. Mbangiseni Dvizhani, Ms. Mavivi Myakayaka-Manzini, Dr. Anne Letsebe, Ms. Lydia Meshoe and Ms. Viwe Qegu.

SAWID Strategy Planning and Leadership Workshop June 2006

SAWID has firmly taken root in the provinces during the past two years, and we will soon report on the launches, activities and partnerships that have taken place at provincial level.

SAWID organised a Strategy Planning and Leadership Workshop from the 23rd to the 25th of June 2006 at the ABSA Conference Centre in Montana Park for national and provincial steering committee members and members of South Africa's National Gender Machinery. The participants reflected on national and provincial initiatives since 2003; assessed the impact of their interactions on the lives of women, communities, private and governmental structures, and discussed the appropriate supportive yet independent relationship between the National Steering committee and its provincial counterparts. The leadership workshop was facilitated by Colin Hall and his team from Learning to Lead. Thiru Pillay and six colleagues from Deloitte facilitated the Strategy Planning Session. The outcomes of this workshop will be available in the next newsletter.

Young Women Knowledge and Leadership Programme June 2006

Three young women nominated by SAWID attended a Young Women Knowledge and Leadership Institute (YOWLI) programme in Senegal, sponsored by the African Women's Millennium Initiative on Poverty and Human Rights (AWOMI) organisation. They are Naledi Kekana from YSAWID, Lerato Mofokeng of the Girl's Education Movement (GEM) and Ms Nikiwe Kaunda from the Gender Health and Research Unit of the University of Cape Town. They were in Senegal from the 24th of June to the 23rd of July. They were sourced through the youth structures represented in the Presidential Working Group which now includes YSAWID.



FUTURE PLANS:

Election Observer Mission July 2006

In response to SAWID's engagement in dialogue with women from the DRC, Burundi and the Great Lakes Region, our Department of Foreign Affairs has involved grassroots women in Election Observer Missions through the SAWID Secretariat. In this regard, Ms. Nonqaba Mosonkuthu and Ms. Gertrude Mzizi observed the Burundi Elections in July 2005 while Ms. Bathabile Madonsela and Ms. Bibi Suraya Khan observed the Tanzanian elections in October and December 2005. SAWID has now nominated three women to observe the DRC elections, expected to take place on 30 July 2006. The SAWID delegation is expected to stay for at least 28 days as part of the Official South African Observer Mission. SAWID nominees who have received training for this mission are Ms. Basetsane Thokoane (Gauteng), Ms. Mangaka Modiakgotla (Free State) and Ms. Virginia Bhengu (KZN).

Peace Dialogue with Women of Sudan July 2006

A Peace Dialogue with the women of Sudan was envisaged for July 2006, in support of African Union and Nepad objectives to foster peace and stability on the African continent. A prior visit to the area is under discussion. This Inter-African Peace Dialogue is designed to ensure that Sudanese women claim their rightful place in the post-conflict management and reconstruction of their country, and it will afford South African women the opportunity of sharing their experiences in democracy-making with their continental sisters. Because of time and capacity constraints, this has now been postponed to later in the year.

Partnership with IDT August 2006

SAWID is pleased to announce that the Independent Development Trust (IDT), an organisation that contributes to the broad developmental agenda, has offered to build a partnership with SAWID through a capacity development programme. IDT has set itself an immediate objective to assist SAWID in fulfilling the following challenges for a three-year period:

- sustainable funding to promote SAWID 's institutional capacity and to facilitate the implementation of a Development Commission Programme under the auspices of a Development Caravan
- poverty reduction & other developmental programmes – through linkages to the national development goals & programmes



- strengthening dialogues for women both nationally and within the continent
- peace and stability programmes in the country and within the continent
- building a knowledge management base for SAWID through a resource centre to ensure sustainable research & development

To formalise this partnership, a Memorandum of Agreement has been prepared and agreed upon and will be signed on the 8th August 2006 at a venue to be announced.



SAWID Conference in Chicago September 2006

A SAWID Conference in Chicago is envisioned for mid-September 2006 at the invitation of the South African Consulate General in Chicago. The theme of the Conference will be: Celebrating Women: South Africa and the African continent, promoting economic growth, development, peace and security and the target audience will be prominent members of the Chicago community and South African women based around the area. The objectives of the conference will be:

- To share views on how the dialogues continue as trusted platforms that actively engage South African women in their own growth and development
- to allow the US network to contribute to SAWID's institutionalisation and to create support for the infrastructure created in the Provinces in order to enable ongoing dialogue, agenda setting and implementation of objectives
- to expand the SAWID network to include South African women based in the Midwest and to plan for a bigger and nation-wide network of South African women based in the United States
- to provide the women of the United States (including entrepreneurs and businesswomen), and particularly the strong anti-apartheid lobby, an opportunity to interact with women in a democratic, non-sexist and free South Africa, thus creating channels for future bilateral engagements.

The Isigodlo Trust (Reg. IT 5200/04) can only do its work with the generous assistance of the private sector, government, individual donors and the tireless efforts of the many volunteers who dedicate their time and talents to the pursuit of our goals. We therefore thank our partners and participants for supporting the women of South Africa in their quest to deal with the challenges facing them, and to ensure that the 21st century truly becomes an African century.

SAWID honours the memory of SAWID Western Cape Steering Committee member Mrs. Ntombi Dwane and her husband Bishop Dwane who were both tragically killed in an automobile accident on Sunday, the 2nd of July 2006. Mama Ntombi passionately committed herself to the SAWID mission and vision, and will be remembered as a woman of immense stature, great intellect, gentle humour and deep humility. We extend our deepest sympathies to her children, grandchildren, family, friends, colleagues and all those who knew and loved her and her husband. Go with our love, dearest sister. We are better people for having known you.





SOUTH AFRICAN
WOMEN IN DIALOGUE



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