

VOICE OF THE PEOPLE.....

A Publication representing People's Views at the SADC People's Summit in Lusaka, Zambia - 14 - 15 August 2007

SADC IS NOT A PRESERVE OF OUR LEADERS

By Susan Mwape

Delegates attending the on-going Southern African Development Community (SADC) People's Summit, running under the theme "Reclaiming SADC for People's Development: Let the People Speak" at the In Service Training Trust (ISTT) in Lusaka, Zambia, have expressed disappointment at the SADC Leadership. About 25 Zimbabwean delegates on their way to People's Summit were yesterday sent back by the Zambian Immigration department.

According to a representative of the conveners of the 'SADC People's Summit', Patricia Kasiyamhuru of Zimbabwe from the Southern Africa People's Solidarity Network (SAPSN), expressed extreme disappointment on the deportation of would-have-been participants to the People's Summit. "SADC is not a preserve of the Leaders, they need to understand that people need space to express themselves and the leaders are obliged to listen. People cannot be protected from thinking because wherever they are they will think."

Meanwhile, Sara Longwe, a Gender Activist from Zambia said she was extremely ashamed of the act taken by the Zambian Immigration department. "I am extremely ashamed of this act and if I could or had my way I would have turned into 'Kanyelele' an ant. I never thought the day would come when Zambians would do this," said Longwe.

In her address during the plenary session, Longwe said that Zambia had gone against its very principles and foundation of being a front line state which protected and fought and even though it already was independent it still fought for the independence of its neighbours. She suggested to the other delegates that a special spot be picked out so that a chair can be placed there with a list of names of the 25 people that were



Sara Longwe addressing the SADC Peoples' Summit (left) and Joy Mabenge SAPSN Secretary General (right)

detained at the border.

On the other hand, Sitali Muyatwa a representative of the Jubilee Zambia which is the host organization of the Summit said the police have refused to give the organizers of the Summit clearance to have a social march. As has been the history of the Summit, after the deliberations participants usually go and submit their resolutions and recommendations to the Heads of State Summit. Police's denial in giving the gathering clearance to carry out a peaceful march has left a scar on the Zambian Government.

"Granting this gathering clearance to do the march would have been a sure sign of Zambia's growth in

democracy but these acts show the lack of that growth", said Muyatwa.

Muyatwa added that the government's excuse for the denial to march was that they were short of manpower and yet the heavy presence of police in Lusaka is adequate for the march and it does not justify the refusal.

The Summit will go on and make its submission to the Heads of State Summit at the end but nonetheless the onus is on the regional leaders to take an active role in addressing the issues which will be raised from the grassroots.

Over 70 Zimbabweans deported and arrested

By Sarah Ngwenya

OVER 70 Zimbabweans were yesterday arrested and deported for carrying what is termed as "arms of massive destruction".

Among the 70 people arrested over 15 people have so far not being accounted for.

"It is sad to note that the Zambian immigration authorities facilitated the arrest and subsequent detention of the Zimbabwean activists, the few who braved and defied the odds. The spirit of the second Chimurenga is seriously being undervalued, maybe the Patriotic Fronts were then formed as individual nourishing meal pieces," one of the defiant victims, Mehluli Dube, narrates.

Dube said that the whole group was cleared on both sides of the two borders. Dube said that when the bus they had boarded, they started off heading for Lusaka but were later stopped by the Zambian immigration police officers who started searching the bus.

"The regime of Mugabe is just but illegal, illegitimate, unlawful and criminal. The state continues to sharpen its tools of oppression in a bid to save their already hit ship. The regime has spread its wings of dictatorship to create a SADC network of dictators." said Dube.

Dube, who is also a National Student Union member said this is evident clearly by the immediate deportation of 70 Zimbabwean activists from various organizations at the Chirundu border post on Monday while in transit to the SADC People's Summit being held parallel to the SADC Summit, attended by Heads of State. He dismissed vehemently the fact that we allow dictators to continue to exist.

"Dictators thrive and live on repression and oppression of the people. They therefore cannot do without the violation and gross neglect of human rights".

Dube said while we are embarking on a genuine regional advocacy campaign to clearly set out the Zimbabwean

situation and give the true reflection to SADC as a whole, the regime is busy organizing diabolic and satanic campaigns within the SADC, so as to smear fear on us and in a desperate attempt to silence the voice of the voiceless.

"The SADC heads of state should wake up from their slumber and repent so as to create an environment which is conducive to human habitation. It is however saddening to note that. "When the law becomes lawless, when it can no longer represent and protect the innocent, defenseless people expressing their dissatisfaction and their progressive views, it then becomes a critical and alarming issue".

He said that Mugabe's antics of extending his unlawful rule of oppression and repression, his continued leading of the state into political, social and economic melt down extends into the SADC and the states still continue to facilitate and enable him to sharpen his artillery and machinery to thwart and silence the human rights defenders.

Call for good political and economic governance

By Brenda Zulu

In reclaiming the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) for People's Solidarity and Development Cooperation, the SADC People's Summit has called on the region to insist on good political and economic governance, constitutionalism, human rights and gender equality.

Zimbabwe Civil Society Demand Role in Talks

By Sarah Ngwenya

Zimbabwe Civil Society has demanded to be included as an intergral part to the dialogue process between the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) and the Zimbabwe African National Union - Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF).

Speaking in Lusaka at the Taj Pamodzi press Cocktail ahead of SADC Summit, Crisis in Zimbabwe Coalition (CIZC) director Thabita Khumalo said the crisis in Zimbabwe can not be left to Thabo Mbeki alone.

"Zimbabwe has witnessed enormous challenges during the last seven years, and the social, economic and political sectors have collapsed"

Khumalo noted that the retarding economy has had a far reaching impact on the quality of life for ordinary Zimbabweans.

She said that on the political front violence is on the increase with opposition and civil leaders being arbitrarily detained and tortured.

Khumalo said that there is an analysis of the position paper produced by the various civic players over time which reveals close similarities in the issues that Zimbabwe needs to deal with to work towards a democratic society.

'In view of the above, civil society would like to emphasise the following aspects as being key to the resolution of Zimbabwe's crisis.'

She said that there is need to work towards a people-driven constitution that would entrench democratic governance, as a prerequisite to the new election.

The electoral framework must be looked at and adjusted to comply with the barest minimum of SADC guidelines and other recognised international standards. At the moments the electoral laws and framework falls short of SADC guidelines.

Khumalo said the repeal of repressive laws such as the Public Order and Security Act (POSA) and Access to Information Privacy and Protection Act (AIPPA).

"We need the elimination of the infrastructure of violence, which includes illegal arrest, abduction, murder and assaults of political activists, journalists and legal practitioners".

She noted that there was no respect for the rule of law, in particular adherence to court judgments, the independence of the judiciary and human rights; access to public media by all sectors of society should be made possible and there should be a removal of the severe restrictions that are being placed on the print, audio and visual media.

Speaking at the SADC People's Summit held at the Natural Resource Development Centre (NRDC) yesterday, Non-governmental Coordinating Committee (NGOCC) Chairperson, Marian Muyunda said there was need to be creative in formulating strategies to make our governments in the region practice good governance tenets and listen to the people.

She added that there was need to build networking and solidarity of Civil Society Organizations (CSO) within the SADC region for more concerted efforts.

Indeed, the well being of the region depends on the rooting of these matters in the SADC countries as does the fight against poverty and disease.

She gave an example of the Mauritian legal system that has remained one of the best in guaranteeing the enforcement of constitutional and human rights of citizens, embracing the objectives of transparency and accountability and use of parliamentary democracy and judicial control.

The rest of the SADC region - economic rights, equality and women's human rights. Processes that ensure wide consultations, participation and consensus building in the constitution making process should be the norm in the region. Zambia was a case in point here, where the constitutional making process generated heated debate and interactions

between government and civil society.

Muyunda noted that the framework for gender equality and women's empowerment in Southern Africa has been the SADC Declaration on Gender and Development of 1997.

This SADC Summit of Heads of State and Government in Lusaka will be considering the framework for adoption as a Protocol on Gender and Development.

She hopes that this protocol will be adopted and that CSOs will take a critical role in engaging SADC Governments in a call to action on the many SADC protocols.

SADC governments should devise systems to closely monitor the implementation of these commitments. She also noted that even if the region continues to make steady progress in the area of women in power and decision making there are, however, still gaps in the region in this area.

She noted that very few countries managed to reach the SADC Gender Declaration of 30 percent women representation by December 31, 2005 due to lack of political will and inadequate legal frameworks in the countries. This could be attributed the non-domestication of regional and international instruments by most SADC countries.

Another SADC is Possible!



Participants listen attentively during the Solidarity Messages from the different countries represented at the People's Summit at the In Service Training Trust, in Lusaka Zambia. Over 400 participants attended the first day of the meeting from 10 out of 14 SADC countries



Participants settle down to the business of the day at the SADC People's Summit held in Lusaka. The People's Summit is running parallel to the SADC Heads of State Summit

Gender organisations to table gender protocol at summit

By Glory Mushinge

Gender pundits in Southern Africa have joined forces to present gender concerns and suggestions for Southern Africa to Heads of State at the ongoing SADC Heads of State Summit.

The concerns and suggestions will be presented by way of a document called the SADC Gender Protocol, which will be submitted in draft format, aimed at advocating for gender equality in the region.

The protocol is advocating for a number of things including a 50 percent representation of women at all levels and in all aspects.

Yesterday, representatives of partner organisations met at Lusaka's Long Acres Lodge to brainstorm and deliberate on how best the submissions would be made with organisations such as The Women and Law in Southern Africa (WILSA), WILDAF, Gender Links, Gender and Media Southern Africa (GEMSA), Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA) and SAFAIDS among others presenting talks on different themes.

GEMSA, through the Zambia office together with other partners has been spearheading the process in the country.

According to GEMSA-Zambia chairperson, Mwiika Malindima, the meeting is a culmination of a two year long campaign towards getting the SADC Declaration on Gender and Development elevated into a protocol.

Representatives have come from all corners of Southern Africa and are hopeful that their concerns will be taken into serious consideration by the Heads of State.

"We will submit the protocol to the Heads of State and can only hope that our concerns will be taken," said Kubi Rama, the Chief Executive Officer for GEMSA regional office in South Africa.

Amongst the objectives of the conference were: to update all members of the campaign on the current status of the protocol, lobbying and advocacy efforts in each country to assess the targets that have been set; country and regional strategies for achieving them

and to agree on the future of the alliance, its functions, strategy, coordinating structures and priorities after the Lusaka Summit.

The discussion revolved around such themes as education, governance and peace building, the economy, women's rights, health and HIV and Aids, gender based violence and Information, education and the media.

Before this meeting, workshops around gender were held last week to prepare partners for effective participation and submission to the document and Zambian government departments such as the Ministry of Gender through the Gender in Development Department (GIDD) and the Home Affairs Ministry through the Victim Support Unit among others, were engaged as a way of beefing up the partnership and getting the good will of government towards enforcing the call for gender equality and equity as well as

eliminating all forms of gender based violence.

This activity comes at a time when gender violations in Southern Africa, are the order of the day especially amongst women and children who are at the weaker end of the gender pendulum.

Women in countries around Southern Africa have most of the time fallen prey to rape, battery and verbal abuse both in the house and outside, while children have been defiled and their rights suppressed through hard labour and other forms of exploitation.

Through this declaration, if taken in by the Heads of State, some of these concerns will hopefully be addressed and result into the execution of acceptable justice.



HALT EPAs SADC Community College a Success!

By Sarah Ngwenya

THE PEOPLES' Summit have called upon their SADC Heads of State to halt the signing of the Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs) in December 2007 when the deadline expires.

"Let the people speak," JCTR Father Peter Henriot advised the SADC Heads of States attending the 27th Heads of State SADC Summit in Zambia.

He said that any process must be a people-driven process not to be imposed, because bad effects of such processes normally last over many the years, and the region is already marked by many policies which are not people centered.

"The current pace is just too fast, what would be the impact, especially on the small-scale produce agricultural sector where most of our people live, and the potential for revenue losses with impact on social expenditures and hence the need to stop EPAs."

Fr Heriot said.

"The choked development is not our own fault. We were pushed into Structural Adjustment Policies (SAPs) by the International Financial Institutions (IFIs) with disastrous social consequences, later strapped into the High Indebted Poor Countries initiative (HIPC) with constraints to reach Completion Point, despite cancellation of debt for Zambia what are the post-period challenges? More debt, according to what the Debt Sustainability Analysis (DSA) guidelines on human impact. More loans are coming in from China".

Meanwhile, the representatives of the Civil Society Organizations and social movements meeting in Lusaka, Zambia on the occasion of the SADC Head of State Summit are concerned with current press, content of the joint African- EU-AU Joint Strategy.

Thomas Deve from Mwelekeo wa NGO (MWENGO) read the communiqué from the CSO's meeting to the press conference held at the Courtyard Hotel yesterday saying, the strategy is being developed against the background of other parallel presses which have divided Africa into regions that undermine regional integration.

He said that takes away policy space for African governments to defend the livelihoods of their citizens and undermine service provision through forced liberalization.

"In December, African governments will head to Lisbon to sign up to a new partnership with European Union governments, yet very few Africans know about this important upcoming event which will have serious ramifications for generations to come.

Participants deliberated on the proposed African-EU strategy and resolved to use it as a platform to interrogate existing policy frameworks that will continue to undermine socio-economic developments in Africa and be used as a tool after the terms of reference that would enhance the repositioning of Africa as an independent key global player and not as a junior partner of Europe-Africa's engagement that are not driven by demands of the African citizens".

Deve noted that Africa, through its regional economic communities, is already engaged in multiplicity of cooperation framework with the EU, not forgetting the Trade and Development Cooperation Agreement (TDCA) with South Africa for example.

By Brenda Zulu

Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) Community College School participants participating in the People's Summit have described the community school as a success as people learned about poverty and democracy issues affecting the sub region.

The aim of the Community College courses sought to give individuals and communities a voice, as well as practical skills that will lead to independence and self improvement. The mission of the school was to integrate Western education with traditional wisdom and encourage critical thinking among communities and Community Based Organisations so as to take informed decision making and promotion of environmental and just social change.

The participants learnt about democracy and poverty because of the current scenario in Southern Africa where, it has been reduced to just voting after every five years. If one can just look back to 1994 in South Africa, one would see that, little has changed in terms of the social-economic conditions of the majority of the people.

Anti Privatization Forum (APF) participant from South Africa Joseph Masetle said it was amazing to hear common problems from Zambian participants on the issue of land as it was also an issue in South Africa. He said that the Community School was relevant and that it is important to have such schools organized every year.

Zambia Social Forum (ZSF) Chairperson Zindikilani

Daka said the Community School was a good opportunity for many Zambians who attended as this was an opportunity for their voices to be heard and also to share and learn from each other with the South Africans.

He said 40 people mainly Zambians from the grassroots organizations and mass movements attended the Community School. He hoped that the ZSF would organize more community schools in future.

Community Networking Forum (CNF) Coordinator Nkwame Cedile said the school which has been going on for that last four days indented outcomes were to raise socio economic, environmental awareness, introduce popular education, nature independent critical thinking amongst CBOs, critically analyze the region, create a platform for CBOs to share their experiences and contribute towards creating critical thinking by bridging the information gap between the mainstream media and civil society.

He explained that community Colleges were initiated from a visit to East African by two CNF members, who learnt about community based networking and sharing experiences and information.

Cedile said the first school was held in 2002 with an international camp in Camp Town and focused on community based networking, and sharing of experiences and information. This linked up to a workshop on youth and Sustainable Development that was held in 2001 umbrella of Masifundisane in partnership with Cape Metropolitan Council (CMC).

The SADC Peoples' Summit 2007

As the SADC Heads of State meets this week at Mulungushi International Conference Centre here in Lusaka, Zambia, the ordinary peoples of Southern Africa are also converging at the In Service Training Trust at the Natural Resources Development College (NRDC) under the auspices of the Southern Africa Peoples' Solidarity Network (SAPSN) to reclaim SADC for peoples' development and solidarity.

This is the third time since 2000 when the SADC peoples through social movements and civil society organisations have organised themselves to claim a peoples' space within the SADC processes parallel to the elitist annual SADC Heads of State Summit .

In 2000 SAPSN convened the Non-Governmental Conference parallel to the Heads of State Summit in Windhoek, Namibia. This was followed by the People's Summit held under the theme; "Reclaiming SADC for People's Development: Assessing the Impact of Neo-liberal Policies on the Peoples' Livelihoods" in Maseru, 2006. This year the Lusaka Peoples' Summit will be held under the banner "Reclaiming SADC for Peoples' Development and Solidarity: Let the People Speak!

Organisers of the Peoples' Summit together with their Zambian counterparts under the Jubilee Zambia Network have called on leaders from the SADC region to make regional integration a democratically negotiated process, to serve the development needs and aspirations of all the peoples' of the region. Currently, regional cooperation is challenged by internal and ex-

ternal resistances to people's participation.

For instance, SADC Peoples' Summit participants have already been denied space to express their views through a peaceful social march to deliver their resolutions contrary to previous experience in Maseru. "It is disappointing that in a perceived democracy like Zambia people are denied the right to express themselves to their own leaders through a peaceful social march" says Joy Mabenge, SAPSN Secretary General. "Our Summit is open to all interested stakeholders as they are people centred and people driven - we hope that this can be emulated by the leaders" he said.

The organizers also called on the media institutions to ensure that they proactively and objectively flag out the ordinary peoples' voices coming out of the deliberations of the Peoples' Summit.

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