



## Conference report

South Africa House, London, 26 June 2009

Organised by ACTSA and AAM Archives Committee

## Introduction

The 'Making Hope a Reality' conference marked the 50th anniversary of the founding of the Anti-Apartheid Movement (AAM) and reaffirmed the need for ongoing solidarity with the peoples of Southern Africa. It was generally agreed that it found the right balance between reflecting on the past and discussing future solidarity campaigns. There was unanimous agreement on the need to campaign within Britain and with international partners in support of democracy, development, justice and rights in southern Africa. The conference was attended by a capacity audience of around 170 people representing a wide range of interests and organisations. This report focuses on building the future, one of the main themes of the conference.

The conference highlighted three action points:

1. It is important to tell the story of the Anti Apartheid Movement in a way which stimulates the interest of people today and motivates them to take action.
2. There is a continuing need for solidarity between people and organisations in Britain and partners in southern Africa.
3. The 2010 World Cup is a key opportunity to inform and involve people on South and southern Africa.

## Follow-up

Since the conference the Steering Committee has met to consider the workshop reports and make proposals for implementing them (see box). The aim is to ensure that the conference discussions result in action. The proposals reflect the fact that not all the suggestions can necessarily be taken up: there is need to respond positively to enthusiasm and ideas, but we must also be realistic about what can be achieved with limited resources.

## Conference proceedings

The conference was opened by **Her Excellency Lindiwe Mabuza**, South Africa High Commissioner. She began by asking participants to stand and remember all those who had struggled so bravely against apartheid who are no longer with us. She said that the people of South Africa would always remember those who provided such steadfast support in the most difficult of times with no expectation of any reward, but because they believed it was the right thing to do. She stated there had been progress in southern Africa but great challenges still existed and the region wanted and needed renewed international solidarity.

The conference received warm greetings and best wishes from, President Jacob Zuma, Minister Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma, Thabo Mbeki, Archbishop Desmond Tutu, the Nelson Mandela Foundation, the Congress of South Africa Trade Unions (COSATU) and Kader Asmal. Her Excellency Lindiwe Mabuza read the greeting from President Zuma. The greetings are available on the ACTSA website.

The *morning session* reflected on the history of the Anti-Apartheid Movement and what could be learnt from it for current and future campaigns. The first plenary was chaired by **Lord Hughes**, Chair of the AAM Archives Committee and Honorary President of ACTSA. He introduced Ambassador Abdul Minty, founder member and Hon. Secretary of the AAM, 1962–1994; Albie Sachs, South Africa Constitutional Court Justice and former AAM campaigner; and His Excellency Antonio Gumende, High Commissioner of Mozambique.

**Abdul Minty** said that it was important to remember that AAM campaigns were not always easy – there were challenges, dirty tricks, low days and difficult times. Yet driven by the commitment to right the terrible wrong of apartheid, people were highly motivated. The AAM clearly had right on its side but that did not mean people necessarily supported it. He said it is important to tell the stories that up to now could not be told and to have an authentic memory and history.

**Albie Sachs** talked about the experience of exile. He cited his own experiences and the impact of international solidarity – how important this was to people such as him as it redoubled their resolve.

**Antonio Gumende** told the conference how the apartheid regime had fomented civil war in Mozambique and how international solidarity provided crucial support and help keep people's hopes for a better future alive. The High Commissioner also described the development of the Southern African Development Community (SADC).

The speakers were followed by a panel discussion chaired by *Guardian* journalist and writer Jonathan Steele. Former AAM activists Abdul Minty, Paul Brannen, Brian Filling and Christabel Gurney talked about their experiences of campaigning in the AAM, together with Jenny Duncan, who was too young to have participated in the AAM, but shared what had brought her into activism on southern Africa now.

The *afternoon session* was devoted to 'building the future': brainstorming, sharing experiences and discussing ideas for future campaigns.

The conference broke into five workshops:

- **Education, youth and students** – developing links between young people and the education sector in Britain and southern Africa
- **Economic empowerment** – how to ensure the economy, including trade and tourism, creates decent and sustainable employment
- **Local democracy and delivery** – beyond the ballot box: local democracy is important as is local delivery of services; how do we build mutual support between local government and communities in southern Africa and Britain
- **Health** – how to use established health links between southern Africa and Britain to support equal access to health facilities in the region
- **Sport** – how can the 2010 World Cup, the biggest international event ever held in Africa, be used to support development and build solidarity

The workshops were followed by a plenary session chaired by Frank Dobson MP in which participants gave brief reports of the main issues and recommendations that emerged from each workshop. Frank Dobson concluded the session by telling of his pride that the AAM was founded in his constituency, Holborn and St Pancras. He stressed the importance of looking to the future and argued that fair trade was better than aid in southern Africa. He said the AAM began with a call to boycott South African fruit – we must now reverse the boycott and encourage people to buy southern African produce and to visit the region.

The final session was chaired by **Anne Grant**, British High Commissioner to South Africa, 2000–2005, who said that the history of the Anti Apartheid Movement showed that when individuals acted together, they could make a difference. She said how important it was to keep southern Africa on the agenda, to report the positive news and developments. The ACTSA website could do this – and the 2010 World Cup was a fantastic opportunity to promote South Africa and the rest of the region. She introduced Paul Boateng, her successor as British High Commissioner to South Africa and Lela Kogbara, Chair of ACTSA.

**Paul Boateng** said that the experience of the AAM showed the importance of having a disciplined political movement – and mentioned Mike Terry as someone who had organised and mobilised to bring about positive and lasting change. He said solidarity was not just a word, but active engagement with others in the world.

**Lela Kogbara** argued that it was important to recognise the complexity of the Anti Apartheid Movement and for memories to be truthful. There were tensions in the AAM around race and gender and their role and treatment should be discussed. She said ACTSA was established precisely because although the apartheid system was defeated, people in southern Africa and Britain recognised there were and are many challenges that must be overcome for southern Africa to develop. She said ACTSA is campaigning on gender and development and calling for a UN Women's Agency, and that gender violence is still a significant issue in southern Africa. ACTSA is campaigning with partners in southern Africa for democracy and rights in Zimbabwe and South Africa. ACTSA provides information, analysis and campaigns, and needs and deserves support.

## **Workshop action points adopted by the conference Steering Committee**

### **A. Education, youth and students**

#### Curriculum and resources

- The AAM Archives Committee and ACTSA will establish a working group to develop materials for schools and apply for grants to develop materials. The group will include Lela Kogbara, Christabel Gurney and Zita Holbourne and will identify teachers to be involved in the project. It will consider applying for a grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund, as well as funding from the Lipman-Miliband Trust to transfer audio material from cassette to a digital format as part of an oral reminiscences project.

#### Engaging young people

- ACTSA will develop a more structured youth strategy.
- ACTSA will consider how to get the history of the anti-apartheid struggle and ACTSA campaigns included in popular entertainment and television/radio scripts.

#### Campaigns and lobbying

- As there are changes to the design and implementation of the curriculum ACTSA will not lobby the government to change the curriculum, but more seek to link educationalists to resources.
- ACTSA will build anti-racism into its World Cup 2010 campaign

#### **B. Economic Empowerment**

- ACTSA will promote fair trade with southern Africa during the World Cup and generally.
- ACTSA will include an action on trade as part of the World Cup campaign.

#### Investment

- ACTSA will liaise with the trade union movement, Banktrack and Bankwatch on investment.

#### Corporate accountability

- ACTSA will discuss corporate accountability in its Strategy and Programme of work for 2010.

#### Tourism

- ACTSA will reflect on previous work on promoting tourism and lessons learnt, including why this was deprioritised.

#### Ethical consumerism

- ACTSA will discuss how to take this work forward.

#### **C. Local Democracy and Delivery**

*Noted that capacity at the local level is a key issue in southern Africa.*

- ACTSA is working with trade unions and civil society in the region.
- Local Authority Action for Southern Africa (LAACTSA) is suggesting a women councillor's development programme to build on work done in 2004.
- LAACTSA/ACTSA to share, liaise and coordinate with groups such as Local the Government Association (LGA), encouraging them to coordinate activity.
- ACTSA will write to relevant agencies such as the LGA and Commonwealth Local Government Foundation (CLGF) to encourage them to coordinate on their southern African work, keeping LAACTSA in the loop.
- LAACTSA/ACTSA to promote what they are doing and also the work of other organisations relevant to local government on the ACTSA website.
- ACTSA will encourage community to community and people to people solidarity, and develop relevant guides.

#### **D. Health Workshop**

- ACTSA will review its Dignity!Period campaign to supply sanitary products to women in Zimbabwe.
- ACTSA will promote the issue of women and health in Zimbabwe.
- ACTSA will consider a way in which people can provide practical health support in its campaigning.
- ACTSA will consider campaigning for the implementation of the recommendations in the Crisp report on the NHS and international development and for the rights of Zimbabwean health workers to be able to return to Zimbabwe without loss of status or rights.
- ACTSA will highlight the need for adequate resources for health, e.g. support to the Global Fund.
- ACTSA will not provide best practice advice on health as it is not equipped nor best placed to do so.

#### **E. Sport Workshop (World Cup 2010)**

- ACTSA will promote information, education and action on South and southern Africa in 2010, working with members, groups, affiliates, teachers, schools, local authorities, local communities and football fans.
- ACTSA will identify links with projects in South Africa through the South African High Commission and the ANC and groups such as Community HEART.
- ACTSA will contact South African tourist organisations to identify areas for collaboration and encourage fans to visit sites in South Africa linked to the struggle against apartheid and for freedom.
- ACTSA will link its 2010 campaign with ethical tourism, promotion of the region, southern African produce, and encourage a fan exchange for the 2012 Olympics.