

ACTSA

Annual Review 2009



FIGHTING FOR DEMOCRACY AND RIGHTS REQUIRES ACTION AND THAT IS WHAT ACTSA IS ALL ABOUT.

*Vimbai Mushongera, Parliamentary & Advocacy
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*Front Cover: In 2009 the UN adopted proposals to form a new
UN women's agency Credit: Gerry McCann*

WELCOME

One of the great strengths of the Anti-Apartheid Movement (AAM) and a key factor in its success was the way it worked in solidarity with those fighting against apartheid in South Africa and around the world.

In 2009, we celebrated the 50th anniversary of the founding of the AAM. We were reminded of its achievements as well as learning lessons from the organisation that are relevant to the way we campaign today, including the need for continued solidarity between Britain and southern Africa.

15 years since the first democratic elections in South Africa and the transformation of the AAM into Action for Southern Africa (ACTSA) we recognised the developmental success, but also the ongoing challenges facing southern Africans as a result of the legacy of apartheid and colonialism. The enthusiasm to discuss these issues, with conferences, a museum exhibition, a reception at Downing Street and wide press coverage, demonstrated the commitment of people to building a better future for southern Africa based on justice, rights and democracy.

ACTSA takes inspiration from this as we work on the major issues affecting the region today. In this review you will read a brief overview of our major campaign work in 2009. You will hear about our achievements, including helping to secure a new UN women's agency and a patent pool for HIV/AIDS drugs.

Our members and supporters are crucial to ACTSA. You actively support our campaigns and help us raise money to fund our work. Thank you all for your continued support. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank our National Executive Council for their continued dedication and to all our staff and volunteers for their hard work, commitment and enthusiasm in 2009, and I am sure this will continue in 2010.

I hope that you enjoy reading about our work last year and our plans for 2010, a year which will be of major significance for the region. Thank you for your interest and support and I look forward to working with you this year.



Tony Dykes
Director

ACTSA CAMPAIGNS

50th Anniversary of the Anti-Apartheid Movement

June marked the anniversary of the founding of the Anti-Apartheid Movement (AAM) 50 years ago. In 2009 ACTSA worked with the AAM Archives Committee to mark the occasion with a series of activities, including an exhibition at the Museum of London on the Movement and the liberation of southern Africa from apartheid and colonialism.

We organised a conference at South Africa House, 'Making Hope a Reality: Celebrating the Past; Building the Future'. 170 people attended the event, which considered the achievements of the campaign and its relevance today. There were inspiring contributions from Abdul Minty, Justice Albie Sachs and Antonio Gumende, Mozambique High Commissioner to the UK.

Angola

Following a review of the monthly Angola Peace Monitor the new quarterly Angola Monitor was launched in April 2009. The publication, which follows the progress of peace, stability, development and human rights in the country as it seeks to overcome the legacy of nearly three decades of war, is now produced in both English and Portuguese.

In July, we contributed to 'Angola as a Global Player', a major conference to mark the 10th Anniversary of the Chatham House Angola Forum.

HIV/AIDS

On World AIDS Day in December ACTSA launched a briefing paper on mother to child transmission of HIV (also called vertical transmission). The paper called on the British Government to encourage the UN to prioritise the issue.

As a member of the Stop AIDS Campaign, ACTSA demanded the implementation of a patent pool of HIV/AIDS drugs designed to drive down the cost of treatment in developing countries. In December, UNITAID, the agency responsible for scaling up access to treatment for HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis, approved plans for a voluntary patent pool. Potentially, this will have a major impact on the availability of new drugs and paediatric HIV/AIDS treatments in southern Africa.



PRIME MINISTER GORDON BROWN ADDRESSES AN AAM RECEPTION AT DOWNING STREET IN JUNE 2009. CREDIT - DOWNING STREET PHOTOSTREAM



ACTSA DIRECTOR, TONY DYKES, HANDS SUPPORTERS' CLIMATE CHANGE CAMPAIGN CARDS INTO NUMBER 10.

Climate change

In September, ACTSA published a comprehensive briefing paper on climate change and southern Africa. The paper put the case that those who had caused rapid manmade global warming must pay for the solution; that there needs to be an effective international agreement on climate change which tackles its causes but also allows developing countries to reduce poverty; and, reiterated the need for international fair trade and sustainable tourism.

In the run up to the Copenhagen Climate Change Conference in December we ran a postcard campaign calling on the Prime Minister to ensure that southern African voices were heard at the meeting and for a multi-billion dollar fund, paid for by Western countries, to be established to assist with adaptation and mitigation in developing countries.

We presented over 550 cards, signed by ACTSA members and supporters, to 10 Downing Street, ahead of the summit. The disappointing outcome of the Copenhagen Conference is a challenge to us all to ensure we get an effective global agreement soon on climate change.

Gender

In September, the UN approved plans for a new women's agency to provide international leadership and action in promoting gender equality. ACTSA has been one of the leading voices in the UK calling for the agency.

In the middle of the year we brought Stephen Lewis, former UN special envoy on HIV/AIDS, to London for a number of high-level meetings with ministers and decision makers as well as public meetings to promote the campaign.

Our members supported a postcard campaign calling on the Government to take a leading role in calling for the agency and for it to receive adequate funding. In May we handed the cards to DFID Minister Gareth Thomas MP as a sign of public support. As well as successfully encouraging the British Government to take a leading role in pushing for the agency we lobbied for it at UN and European level.

Swaziland

As one of the few non-governmental organisations in the UK working on Swaziland, we continued to campaign for democracy and rights in solidarity with the Swazi people and to raise international awareness of the problems in this small and overlooked kingdom.

In April, we supported action in Swaziland calling on the Government to meet its constitutional obligation to provide free primary school education. ACTSA held a mock birthday party for the King outside the Swaziland High Commission in London, highlighting the disparities between the amount spent on his lavish birthday celebrations and the inadequate funds provided for schools.

We continued to campaigning for the repeal of repressive legislation, including the Suppression of Terrorism Act. Mario Masuku, leader of the banned political party PUDEMO, was charged under this act in November 2008. Throughout 2009 we supported the campaign for his release from prison and for charges against him to be dropped, helping secure his acquittal in November.

Ahead of the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting at the end of the year, ACTSA supporters wrote to the British Foreign Secretary and their constituency MPs calling for them to ensure that Swaziland complies with the Commonwealth's rules on human rights. We continued to raise awareness of the issues at European level by lobbying the European Commission.

“ACTSA is engaged in unparalleled solidarity initiatives with the progressive movements in Swaziland to assist the people in their quest for a just and democratic society.”

Vincent Dlamini, Deputy Secretary, Swaziland Federation of Trade Unions.

Trade

ACTSA continued to highlight the European Union's unfair trade agreements with southern Africa. In August, we launched a new briefing and action on Economic Partnership Agreements, highlighting the concerns of trade unions, civil society and governments in the region about the deals.



ACTSA DEMONSTRATION OUTSIDE THE SWAZILAND HIGH COMMISSION.

WOMEN IN ZIMBABWE RECEIVE SANITARY PRODUCTS AS PART OF ACTSA'S DIGNITY! PERIOD. CAMPAIGN.



Zimbabwe

2009 was another busy year for our campaign on Zimbabwe. ACTSA continued to respond to the unfair detention of activists, including calling on the Zimbabwean Minister of Justice to drop charges against student activists arrested for meeting to discuss tuition fees and the standard of education in the country.

We took an active role in the establishment of the Zimbabwe Europe Network (ZEN), which works to keep Zimbabwe on the agenda of the European Commission and member states. At regular meetings with the British Government on issues affecting the country, we highlighted ACTSA's position and those of our partners and called for an appropriate response. Our monthly Zimbabwe Update continued to provide an informative summary of the latest news from the country.

In November we supported Unite the Union in hosting the visit to Europe of the General Secretary of the General Agriculture and Plantation Workers Union of Zimbabwe, Gertrude Hambira. She met with a range of individuals and organisations to discuss the plight of rural communities and agricultural workers in the country.

Dignity! Period.

Despite political changes in Zimbabwe the need for the Dignity! Period. campaign remained as great as it has ever been. In 2009, ACTSA continued to distribute sanitary pads to the women of Zimbabwe in partnership with the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU). Since the campaign was launched in 2005 we have given out over six million sanitary towels, thanks to the support of our members and supporters.

In March, ACTSA visited Zimbabwe to monitor the impact of the campaign and to meet with some of those involved. We heard about how Dignity! supports women across Zimbabwe and discussed the campaign's development with the ZCTU, manufacturers and distributors.

DELEGATIONS

Democracy and Development Delegation

In November, ACTSA hosted two leading trade unionists from Swaziland and Zimbabwe, Vimbai Mushongera from the ZCTU and Vincent Dlamini from the Swaziland Federation of Trade Unions. As part of their week-long visit to the UK, supported by UNISON, Unite, PCS, USDAW and Community, the delegates attended a range of events and meetings with politicians, trade unionists and ACTSA supporters.

Vimbai and Vincent both spoke at ACTSA's annual Democracy and Development Conference, which took place after our Annual General Meeting. The delegates talked about the struggle for democracy and rights in southern Africa.

Youth and Student Delegation

The 2009 Youth and Student Delegation, sponsored by Coca-Cola, took place in June. ACTSA took ten youth and students leaders to South Africa and Swaziland to raise their awareness of the history of the region and the issues affecting it today.

The delegation sat with representatives of civil society organisations, trade unions, government and international NGOs, to discuss the key challenges facing the region. They also met with members of the University of Cape Town Students' Union to compare student life in southern Africa and back home.

The delegates are now working on individual projects aimed at educating their peers on the issues they learnt about and promoting the work of ACTSA.

"I believe that the trip was highly useful in increasing my understanding of the challenges facing southern Africa. As somebody who had little previous experience of southern Africa, the political make up and contextual social history, it was fascinating to see how poverty, societal change and external influences have affected the region."

Ben Whittaker, National Union of Students.



THE 2009 YOUTH AND STUDENT DELEGATION AT THE UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN.



THE 2009 UNISON DELEGATION. CREDIT - UNISON

Unison Delegation

In March, ACTSA supported and accompanied a delegation of 13 international activists from UNISON to Malawi, South Africa and Swaziland to build solidarity with public service trade unions in southern Africa.

The delegates met with trade unions in the three different countries and heard about the various issues affecting them. They were able to learn about and compare the well-established South African unions with those of Malawi and Swaziland who face many challenges. Both a summary and full report of the delegation is available on the ACTSA website.

"The UNISON-ACTSA southern African delegation gave me a great opportunity to get a wider overview of the challenges that face sister unions in that part of the world and this will help me, my branch and the Greater London region in our own ongoing twinning initiatives."

Ray Mouratsing, Greater London Region, UNISON

ACTSA SCOTLAND

ACTSA Scotland is an integral part of Action for Southern Africa, and works hard to raise awareness in Scotland of the issues affecting southern Africa.

2009 was another successful year for the ACTSA group, who as part of their Book Appeal collected enough books to send another container-load to South Africa's Amathole District Municipality.

The group's annual Burns Supper at the South African High Commission, was this year in aid of Community HEART and raised £13,000. In August they arranged a farewell visit to Scotland by Lindiwe Mabuza in her last few days as High Commissioner. Throughout the year they provided speakers and held stalls at a number of events around Scotland.

For more information on ACTSA Scotland, and for a full report of their activities in 2009 please visit www.actsascotland.org.uk

FUNDRAISING & FINANCE

2009 saw a variety of activities organised by us and our supporters which helped raise essential funds in support of our campaign work:

We raised over £30,000 from the four appeals we launched over the course of the year.

Our London Marathon runners raised a total of £6,600 between them.

In the summer we sent volunteers to work for Workers Beer Company behind the bars at festivals nationwide. Altogether they raised £3,400 for ACTSA.

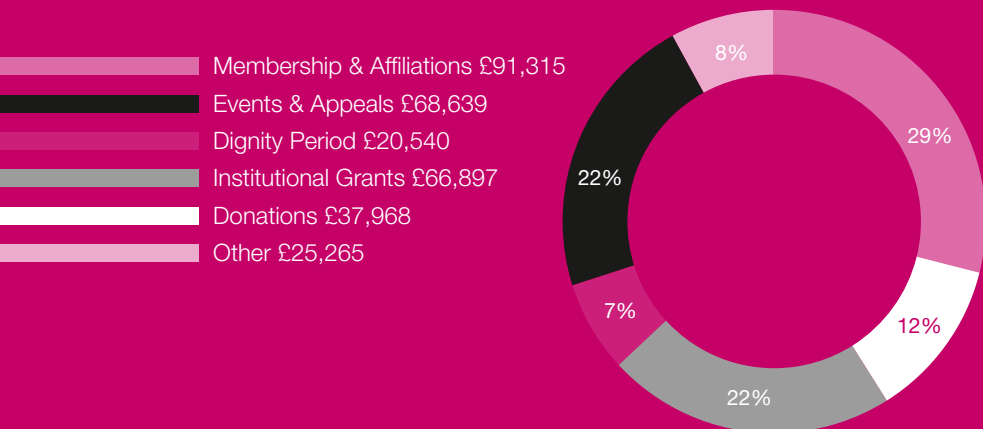
Our annual fundraising dinner in December raised over £20,000 for ACTSA's campaign work. Our thanks go out to Lonmin Plc, Coca-Cola and the Co-operative Group for their support of the event.

Thank you to everybody who took part in one of our events or who held activities of their own last year. Your fantastic support and commitment is essential in enabling ACTSA to work towards its campaigning goals.

Overall ACTSA's income in 2009 was £310,624 and expenditure was £293,634. You can get a full break down of our financial results in our audited reports which are available on our website.



ACTSA RUNNER JENNY ROWE IN THE 2009 LONDON MARATHON



PLANS FOR 2010

All eyes will be on southern Africa this summer as South Africa hosts the biggest sporting event the continent has ever seen, the football World Cup. ACTSA will be using the event to build solidarity between Britain and the region.

Working with the National Union of Teachers we will be encouraging teachers to promote South Africa's history and its development successes and challenges to children, as well as to encourage school linking. ACTSA will also be launching a series of materials for individuals, groups and communities that can be used to promote awareness of southern Africa through the World Cup.

30 years ago this year Zimbabwe achieved its independence from colonial rule. We will continue to call for democracy and rights for all Zimbabweans and to highlight the situation in the country. On Swaziland we will maintain the campaign to internationalise awareness of the struggle for democracy.

With one third of the world's population who are HIV positive living in southern Africa, most people in the region experience the effects of the pandemic. ACTSA will develop its work on mother to child transmission, lobbying the international community to realise its goal of halving infant infections by the end of 2010.

As the global economic difficulties look set to continue this year ACTSA will look at new ways to raise much needed funds for our campaigning work. We greatly value the core support we receive from members, affiliates and supporters and want to deepen and increase this.

We will be holding a range of events throughout the year, including our fundraising dinner, annual general meeting and other public events. Please keep an eye out on the ACTSA website www.actsa.org for details.



CREDIT - MICHEL VAN BALEN

ACTSA NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE 09-10

Officers

Lela Kogbara **Chair**
Peter Brayshaw **Vice-Chair**
Chitra Karve **Vice-Chair**
Suresh Kamath **Treasurer**

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Jenny Duncan
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Brian Filling
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David Hillman
Zita Holbourne
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Maggie Patterson
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Pia Westin
Ben Whittaker

ACTSA Staff 2010

Tony Dykes **Director**
Mark Beacon **Campaigns Manager**
Laura Pollitt **Membership, Fundraising and Communications Officer**
Romesh de Zoysa **Finance and Administration Officer**
Kaya Makarau Schwartz **Membership and Campaigns Assistant**

JOIN ACTSA

Please support ACTSA by signing up to become a member or affiliate today. You can sign up online at www.actsa.org or contact our office for details on other ways to support us.

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