

# Action for Southern Africa (ACTSA) Strategy and Programme of Work: 2012

In 2012 ACTSA's overall goal will be to maintain and increase solidarity between Britain and Southern Africa in support of democracy, development, justice and rights.

We support a region free from poverty, based on justice, equality, human rights and dignity for all. We do this through partnership and solidarity with the people of the region.

We will inform people in the UK and internationally on Southern Africa and involve them in support of development of the region through campaigning, lobbying, publications, briefings, media work and delegations to and from southern Africa.

We will seek to influence decision-makers in Britain, Europe and internationally on policies that affect Southern Africa.

This programme and strategy of work is divided into 3 sections;

**A.** Country specific campaigns, activities **B.** Major regional themes **C.** How we sustain and develop ACTSA. Together with the motions approved at the ACTSA AGM 2012 it provides the framework for ACTSA's plan for 2012.

ACTSA makes a difference and we know from feedback from southern Africa that our work, based on solidarity, is much appreciated. We provide information and analysis on Zimbabwe. We ask people here to support of those in Zimbabwe struggling for democracy, rights and development including providing sanitary protection for the women of Zimbabwe. We are increasing awareness in UK and internationally on the situation in Swaziland. We campaign for women's rights and gender equity. We raise the issue of violence against women. We call for effective leadership and adequate resources to meet the challenges of HIV/AIDS. We urge there be a fair and binding international agreement which tackles the causes of climate change; enables countries in southern Africa to reduce poverty and there be new substantial financial support to enable them to deal with its impact. We support fair trade. We call for companies to go beyond corporate social responsibility and be transparent and accountable for their actions and impact. We encourage people to link their communities and organisations with their counterparts in southern Africa. We take delegations including a youth and student delegation to southern Africa and host visitors from there.

At this stage we anticipate the areas from this Strategy and Programme of Work that will demand the most time from ACTSA staff will be; Zimbabwe, Swaziland. Gender, HIV/AIDS, Sustaining and Developing ACTSA. We will be flexible and prepared to adapt to developments from the region

## **A. Country Specific campaigns**

### **1. Zimbabwe**

ACTSA supports and campaigns for democracy, rights and development for Zimbabwe. We do this in solidarity with the people of Zimbabwe and the southern African region. It is Zimbabweans who must lead and decide their future. Zimbabweans must be able to elect and hold their leaders to account without fear or intimidation. They have told us that to achieve this they want and need international solidarity.

We are guided by key partners including the **trade union movement in Zimbabwe** and other leading civil society groups. ACTSA will campaign for international support to assist reconstruction and recovery of Zimbabwe. ACTSA will seek to influence the policy of the UK Government and European Union towards Zimbabwe and monitor what they do and also the response of the wider international community.

The situation in Zimbabwe did not suddenly arise. (See ACTSA position paper on Zimbabwe on the ACTSA website [www.actsa.org](http://www.actsa.org) also available from the ACTSA office) The problems the country faces are rooted in the history of Zimbabwe, in the failures and policies of the Mugabe/Zanu PF government and also those of international institutions. To provide effective support for the people of Zimbabwe we need to understand how and why Zimbabwe's political and economic crisis developed. The UK must play its role in addressing inequality and injustice from colonial rule especially on land and support an effective, transparent and equitable solution to land rights. 2011 marked the third anniversary of the Global Political Agreement and although this has brought some stability, Zimbabwe still faces many major challenges. 2012 may witness a referendum on a new constitution for Zimbabwe and elections. It is vital the processes for these enable the people of Zimbabwe to freely express their will. The Zimbabwean diaspora have a role to play in the reconstruction of their country. ACTSA supports the right of the Zimbabwean diaspora to work and receive an education in their country of residence and not to lose those rights if they return to Zimbabwe. ACTSA will monitor the situation of Zimbabweans living in Britain and where necessary work with our partners to defend these rights.

The NEC recommends that ACTSA:

- support democracy, rights, justice and development for Zimbabwe
- monitor the situation in Zimbabwe closely and provide regular updates and information
- deepen solidarity and support work involving trade unions and other civil society activists in Britain and Zimbabwe working closely with the TUC and affiliated unions
- monitor and engage in lobbying, advocacy toward the UK government, EU and international organisations on Zimbabwe
- work with like minded organisations in the UK, across Europe and internationally to further these objectives

### **Dignity! Period**

ACTSA will continue to raise the situation and issues confronting women in Zimbabwe. We will raise the needs and priorities of women. We call for the dignity of women in Zimbabwe to be upheld. We request support for the Dignity! Period Campaign to provide much needed sanitary protection to the women and girls of Zimbabwe.

The NEC recommends that ACTSA:

- support the rights of Zimbabwean women and in particular their rights to dignity and freedom from violence
- review the Dignity! Period campaign and decide its future direction and emphasis in the changing political and economic context
- depending on the outcome of the review, organise events and activities to raise money for and promote awareness of the campaign.

## **2. Swaziland**

ACTSA supports the Swazi people in their struggle for democracy and development. Swaziland has the highest HIV rate in the world. It bans political parties and seeks to repress any opposition from civil society, including the trade union movement. Despite this Swaziland has largely avoided international scrutiny. ACTSA will work to strengthen solidarity, increase awareness of the situation in Swaziland and encourage people to campaign and take action in support of democracy and development. ACTSA has a good relationship with the Swaziland trade union movement, the Swaziland United Democratic Front, the Swaziland Democracy Campaign and the ngo Swaziland for Positive Living (SWAPOL). We also have a strong relationship with the Congress of South Africa Trade Unions (COSATU) which is active on Swaziland and works closely with British trade unions on the country.

The NEC recommends that ACTSA:

- work to increase awareness of the struggle for democracy, human rights and justice in Swaziland in Britain and Europe
- campaign in support of democracy and rights in Swaziland with a focus on women's rights.
- continue to develop links with the Swazi Trade Union movement, United Democratic Front, SWAPOL and other respected civil society organisations in Swaziland, regionally and internationally
- highlight the impact of HIV and AIDS on Swaziland
- support development in Swaziland which benefits the poor and marginalised.

### 3. Angola

Angola has emerged from one of Africa's longest wars. The legacy of colonial rule and civil war is one of devastation and destruction. Angola faces great challenges. It is a country of great potential. This is the key time and opportunity to ensure Angola's great resources benefit all, poverty is reduced, democracy built and rights upheld. It is domestic policy decisions and actions which are likely to be crucial. It is vital though that the international community does not turn its back on Angola, but instead looks to support its future development and contribute to the consolidation of peace and democracy.

Concern has been expressed by some organisations over the Angolan government's actions toward those raising issues of human rights and challenging government policy and actions. We will continue to highlight these issues in the Angola Monitor.

The NEC recommends that ACTSA:

- continue to inform its membership and wider constituency on Angola and lobby to ensure support internationally and nationally to consolidate democracy and promote development which benefits all Angolans
- continue to produce the Angola Monitor quarterly in both English and Portuguese
- consider means of deepening solidarity between people and groups in Britain and Angola e.g. link to the All Party Group on Angola if possible.

### 4. Mozambique

While Mozambique is regarded by many as one of the success stories of southern Africa, for others this is not the whole picture. Despite the global economic crisis the Mozambican economy grew by more than 5% in 2009, which can be interpreted as an indication of its resilience. However, it remains one of the poorest countries of the world – in terms of human development it is the second poorest (to the DRC) within SADC. Both UNICEF (in 2006) and the World Bank (in 2007) pointed to what they both called the "paradox" of rising chronic child malnutrition in the face of rapid GDP growth and praise for the Mozambique success story. Although the then Mozambican High Commissioner to Britain, Antonio Gumende highlighted in a speech in Bristol that the levels of absolute poverty reduced from 69% to 54% over the past decade raising the prospect that absolute poverty can be reduced to below 50% by 2015, other observers have suggested that poverty levels rose in the same period.

Clearly, it is not easy to turn round the legacies of colonial rule, a brutal civil war fomented and sustained by Rhodesia and then apartheid South Africa but investment in social sectors is beginning to bear fruits with:

- the number of school children in the education system increased from 2.3 million in 2000 to over 5 million in 2009;
- infant mortality has fallen from 160 to 138 per 1000 children in recent years;
- access to safe water in rural areas increased from 40.5% to 52% of the

The NEC recommends that ACTSA:

- continue to support proposals for deepening solidarity between Britain, Europe and Mozambique

## 5. Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC)

The DRC is the largest country in the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and has the lowest human development indicators (commonly referred to indicating poor countries). DRC has considerable wealth and potential. ACTSA is undertaking a scoping study of ngos active on DRC to establish if, with our limited resources, we can play a useful role on DRC. ACTSA has produced up to date country profiles for each SADC member including DRC and cited examples of violence toward women, including rape as a weapon of war from the DRC.

NEC recommends

- ACTSA highlight the violations of women's rights in DRC
- ACTSA consider the scoping exercise in deciding what the best role it could play on DRC is.

## B. Major Regional Themes

### 6. HIV/AIDS

HIV/AIDS remains a critical issue for the people of southern Africa. It is the most affected region in the world by the pandemic and its impact is experienced by people, families, communities and the state. ACTSA will continue its lobbying, advocacy and public information work on HIV/AIDS.

Effective action on HIV/AIDS requires breaking the silence and stigma that still surrounds it; strong national leadership by government based on including all key stakeholders including civil society groups; timely action and response internationally by donors and by the corporate sector.

We welcome the evidence that the pandemic has reached a plateau, albeit at extraordinarily high levels, and evidence that infection rates are beginning to fall. We also welcome improvements made across southern Africa in providing treatment to those who should receive it. However, we also recognise more needs to be done to ensure all who would benefit from treatment can access it, noting the international community must support governments in the region to achieve this.

In southern Africa, women are disproportionately affected by the pandemic; gender equality and women's empowerment are fundamental to reducing women's vulnerability to HIV and AIDS. Vertical transmission (also known as mother to child transmission) has been largely overlooked by UN and large agencies in the fight against HIV/AIDS. We will highlight that this transmission can be largely prevented if there is effective leadership and action internationally and nationally.

ACTSA will continue to work with the Swaziland Association for Positive Living (SWAPOL) in Swaziland and Treatment Action Centre (South Africa).

The NEC recommends that ACTSA:

- campaign for universal access to prevention, treatment and care, noting this was due to be achieved by 2010 (Millennium Development Goal (MDG) 6b)
- campaign to get the international community to increase its support for work on HIV/AIDS e.g. through a focus on the Global Fund set up to fight AIDS, TB and Malaria
- campaign for the rights of children with the target to halve infant HIV infections by 2014
- campaign for the rights of women, particularly in the area of sexual reproductive health, to be fully addressed, recognising that, "AIDS in Africa has a woman's face."
- campaign for world leaders and the UN to prioritise vertical transmission

- campaign to ensure the needs and rights of those orphaned and those who care for orphans in southern Africa are recognised and met.
- continue to build partnerships and coalitions in the UK and Europe as well as across southern Africa on HIV/AIDS

## **7. Gender and the advancement of women**

Gender and the advancement of women are at the core of eradicating poverty in southern Africa. ACTSA has worked hard to ensure that gender is given priority in debates around HIV, trade and the larger development agenda. We campaign for Dignity for Zimbabwean women and gender is a major focus of our work on HIV/AIDS. We will push for practice to go beyond rhetoric, ensuring that gender and the advancement of women are key features of all our campaign work.

ACTSA has been at the fore of a campaign for the establishment of UN Women's Agency. - UN Women. We are disappointed that the UK government has so far only agreed £10 million in core funding and have requested this be increased to £21 million. ACTSA will campaign with others to ensure that UN Women is properly resourced and has significant influence within the UN and wider so it makes a positive and real difference for women and girls in southern Africa and around the world.

The NEC recommends that ACTSA should:

- campaign for the UN Women's Agency to be properly resourced; well led, effective and visible, mobilising public opinion and influencing decision takers
- mainstream gender into all ACTSA's work, promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women
- build links between our work on HIV and AIDS, trade and gender and campaign on violence against women
- work with women's organisations campaigning for the same objectives.

## **8. Climate Change**

Rapid man-made global warming will have the greatest impact on the most vulnerable in southern Africa. ACTSA recognises climate change as a developmental, social and economic issue which involves needs, rights and responsibilities. ACTSA has a position paper on Climate Change and Southern Africa. We will campaign to ensure the voice of those with the least resources are heard and that actions and solutions address the root causes of climate change and do not contribute to deepening poverty in Southern Africa. In November/December 2011 South Africa will host a climate change summit (formally the Conference of the Parties COP to the Kyoto Climate Change Treaty).

We will communicate the impact on the region of measures proposed to tackle climate change. We will engage with civil society including the trade union movement in Southern Africa and in the UK in these debates to inform and if necessary develop our position on Climate Change.

The NEC recommends that ACTSA:

- in dialogue with and guided by partners, key contacts in southern Africa and the UK develop its campaign and advocacy work on climate change linking it with poverty and rights
- further develop its advocacy position on climate change and Southern Africa following the outcome of the Climate Change Conference in South Africa.

## 9. Trade Justice

Trade injustice remains one of the critical barriers to development. Fair trade can assist countries in their development and reduce dependency on international aid. ACTSA has worked to highlight the injustices of unfair trade and campaigned against the EU pressuring countries to sign Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs) which force liberalisation of trade on them. Most southern Africa countries have signed an Interim EPA South Africa has not although in 2010 it indicated it was prepared to sign an EPA it has not done so yet. . The context is of one of a growing food crisis and increasing food poverty. We will aim to influence decision makers to ensure that the eradication of poverty and sustainable growth is central to trade negotiations and they consider the impact of business speculation on food poverty.

The NEC recommends that ACTSA:

- campaign with partners in southern Africa, UK and Europe to increase awareness of these issues and to build support for the campaign for trade justice
- respond to developments on trade negotiations between the EU and southern Africa.
- promote fair trade of southern Africa goods and encourage local groups, members and supporters to promote fairly traded southern African products.

## 10. Corporate Accountability

What business does or does not do has an impact on social and economic development. ACTSA calls for companies to be transparent, accountable, to exercise their power and wealth to, support ending poverty, reduce inequality/discrimination, promote human rights and development. ACTSA has a history of holding companies to account, most notably through successful action taken against Cape plc. ACTSA will seek to work with such as the Co-operative Group to promote effective corporate accountability.

The NEC recommends that ACTSA:

- promotes corporate accountability, transparency and social responsibility
- in close consultation with the trade union movement in the region and Britain explore best and worst practice case studies from the region with a view to publicising these.

## 11. Land

The ownership and control of land was a major issue in the struggle for national liberation and against colonialism and imperialism. It is still a major issue with poverty seemingly endemic, increasing food insecurity, vulnerability and a world wide food crisis. It is clearly a major issue in Zimbabwe. The question of land holding in Zimbabwe was never satisfactorily addressed in the independence settlement and enabled President Mugabe to present his government as being targeted by the west for seeking to right an historic injustice. It is clearly an issue across southern Africa not just Zimbabwe. It needs to be addressed effectively by national governments, SADC and the international community, who cannot simply ignore their responsibility for this legacy. ACTSA will keep its position on land and Southern Africa as set out in the position paper; Land in Southern Africa: Justice Denied? under review.

The NEC recommends that ACTSA:

- highlight the urgent need for sustainable development, the right to land and the right to food
- develop relationships with key partners, organisations in southern Africa to have a dialogue on the land issue.

## C. Sustaining and Developing ACTSA

### 12. Renewing and Developing Solidarity

**A.** Following South Africa's successful hosting of the 2010 World Cup we will see what opportunities there may be for promoting southern Africa and building solidarity using the 2012 Olympic games, Para Olympics, the cultural Olympiad and in the run up to the Commonwealth games in 2014.

**B.** On 8 January 2012 the African National Congress (ANC) will celebrate the 100th anniversary of its founding. It is the oldest liberation movement in Africa. ACTSA has a relationship with the ANC partly due to the contacts made by our predecessor organisation the Anti-Apartheid Movement and that ACTSA moved into what was the ANC London Office in 1994. ACTSA in liaison with others will seek to mark the occasion throughout the year. ACTSA will see if there is interest in a "solidarity visit/delegation" to South Africa, possibly October 2012.

### 13. Grassroots Development

Our ability to campaign and to maintain our core levels of financial support depends upon retaining and expanding our supporter base of individuals, groups and affiliates.

We will do this by looking at ways to recruit new members and supporters and how we can retain all supporters and members – by communications including ACTSA News, appeals, website, and email bulletins. We will provide more opportunities for people to get involved in our campaigns – including campaign cards, invites to events, e-actions. ACTSA has active groups, including ACTSA Scotland and ACTSA Bristol and will continue to encourage the establishment and development of ACTSA groups.

We will work to encourage as many organisations as possible to affiliate to us in 2012 including those not currently affiliated. We will provide opportunities for affiliates and partners in southern Africa to actively campaign with us and ensure they receive regular information about our work.

ACTSA may conclude a service level agreement with Local Authority Action for Southern Africa (**LA ACTSA**) with ACTSA taking responsibility for the administration, organisation, development and promotion of LA ACTSA. This role would be reviewed after a year. There may be need for a LA ACTSA visit to south (ern) Africa. We will encourage councils with links to southern Africa to promote southern Africa in their cultural and social events. This can be done at no additional cost if included in plans for the year.

ACTSA has a Memorandum of Cooperation with **Community Heart** and continues to develop our relationship and partnership.

We will maintain our good relationship and willingness and wish to cooperate with **Canon Collins Trust**.

Building on our links and work to date, we want to build and deepen the work we have with trade unions including Unison, Unite, PCS the TUC and develop our relationships with other unions, such as the teaching/education unions. We will continue to develop links with the National Union of Students. ACTSA will aim to increase our support in the student constituency.

We will ensure our database is accurate and up to date.

The NEC recommends that ACTSA:

- nurture its base to retain and actively seek to increase the number of supporters and members
- actively encourage the formation of local ACTSA groups
- consider if it can improve its communications with supporters
- provide materials for its supporters to get involved in ACTSA campaigns
- develop its work with trade unions, maintain and if possible increase the number of trade union affiliates
- increase its profile amongst students and youth

- organise delegations to and host delegations/visitors from southern Africa to increase support for ACTSA's aims and objectives
- use digital media to maximise our impact

#### 14. Raising funds

ACTSA can only be effective if it has the resources to implement this strategy and programme of work. Fundraising is essential and crucial. ACTSA urgently needs to raise more money. We will seek to maintain and if possible increase funding from our members and supporters source as a priority. Trade unions apart from affiliating generally support specific activity e.g. campaigns, information, visitors, delegations we will try to build on this. We will seek funding from trusts and foundations and the corporate sector. We urgently need to find funding for a youth and student delegation if that is to continue. ACTSA faces a crucial year in 2012. It has to raise more money than it is currently doing.

We have applied to the Big Lottery Fund International Programme for funding to support womens rights in Swaziland. If successful ACTSA would receive approx £425,000 over 3 years, most of this would be spent in Swaziland but the plan is that ACTSA would employ a UK based Swaziland Women Rights Officer to support the project.

The NEC has agreed that ACTSA should apply for charitable status. This was raised at the 2010 AGM and the NEC has discussed over a number of meetings. ACTSA is distinctive and we want to ensure that continues. Charity law changed in 2006. The NEC considered ACTSA's activities and took the view that what we do we could do if we were a charity noting that the advancement of human rights is now a charitable objective. There are advantages in being a charity; individual donations can be gift aided and currently a number of trusts will not consider applications from ACTSA because we are not a charity. If ACTSA became a charity it will of course have to comply with charity law. The NEC has taken the view that given we believe ACTSA's activities are charitable and that we can clarify our aims and objects are charitable the advantages are potentially such that we should make an application to be a charity. The NEC is proposing a constitutional amendment to the 2011 AGM to update ACTSA's aims and objects.

The NEC recommends that ACTSA:

- applies for charitable status
- implements the fundraising strategy, reviewing it regularly
- prioritise the consolidation of core funding through members, affiliates and supporters
- send out regular direct mail appeals throughout the year
- hold an annual fundraising dinner
- raise funding to support speaker tours, events, publications, delegations etc
- make funding applications to, foundations, trusts, corporate sector in line with our ethical funding policy
- seek to increase the level of sponsorship/income obtained from "events" such as ACTSA runners in London Marathon and volunteers at Workers Beer Company bars at festivals
- improve ways of raising money online and through email communications.
- encourage members, supporters and groups to fundraise for ACTSA.