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SOCIAL CHANGE THROUGH INTEGRATED SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

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INTRODUCTION

The political transition in South Africa created a legal framework for democracy, which guarantees the human rights and dignity of all South Africans (Terblanche, 2002:30). It could, however, not "surmount its deep social and economic divisions" (Harsch, 2004:4). The 2006 Budget Review (2006:102) emphasised the sharp divisions between the modern economy and marginalised communities, between formal employment and the insecurity of the unemployed, between rich and poor. Terblanche (2002:425-426) accentuates the 'two worlds' character of the economy as follows:

> One modern, smart, professional, efficient, and globally oriented; the other neglected, messy unskilled, downtrodden, and thriving on crime and violence.

The 'modern' and the 'other', second economy is, as President Mbeki acknowledges, "without a connecting staircase" (Harsch, 2004:4). Socio-economic development cannot be separated from the country's political economy. Schoeman (2001:316) describes this as the way in which the production, distribution and consumption of wealth are organised within a society; in other words, it determines who gains and who loses, and how.

The South African macroeconomic framework, the Growth Employment and Redistribution Strategy (GEAR), is embedded in neoliberal capitalism which relies on the market and economic growth to address poverty and inequality. Despite the economic growth strategy resting on a sound and sustainable macroeconomic platform (Budget Review, 2006:5), Terblanche (2002:114) laments its loss of contact with "the imperfect reality of and deep-seated inequalities in South Africa".

It is well documented that, in itself, the growth of the economy does not erase inequality (Midgley, 1996:5; Schoeman, 2001:317), but could, in fact, magnify it (Prigoff, 2000:157). Inequality is linked to structural causes, such that the probability of becoming

poor is not the same for everybody but varies systematically with socially ascribed characteristics (Rosner, 2003:309).

What economic growth brings, the Minister of Finance, Trevor Manuel, said in his Budget Speech (2006:5), is a broadening participation in the world of work and improved opportunities for those who rely on marginal and vulnerable second economy activities. The Budget Review (2006:2) acknowledges that South Africa's development challenge is not only about faster growth, but also about broadening participation and accelerating the pace of social advancement to overcome poverty and inequality.

The original Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) of the ANC (1994) listed the integration of social and economic development as a key task of the new government. In line with the adoption of the neoliberal capitalist macroeconomic policy of GEAR, this role was scaled down in the White Paper for Reconstruction and Development (1994). It was the RDP White Paper that led to implicit criticism of government for beginning to embrace a neoliberal economic framework and policies. The criticisms focused particularly on the RDP White Paper's downgrading of the role of government to mere *management* of transformation, and subsequent policy proposals regarding the privatisation of state assets and trade and financial liberalisation (The Star, 1995, as cited in SA Human Development Report, UNDP South Africa, 2003:63).

Being very aware of its critical role in a country such as South Africa, with the apartheid legacy of deeply entrenched socio-economic inequality (Schoeman, 2001:330), the government continues to assert that its basic policy aims remain reconstruction and development, i.e. meeting basic needs, growing the economy and promoting social development (Budget Review, 2006:1). According to the Budget Review (2006:47), this commitment is reflected in the consolidated national budget for social security and RDP funds. What is in doubt, however, is not the government's commitment and policy, but its ability to implement policy and social development intervention at grassroots level, where deep-seated poverty and inequality reign. This raises questions such as: How can one reconcile a developmental state with a neoliberal macroeconomic policy? How can

economic growth, and its accompanying socio-economic development, benefit *all* South Africans?

The government's recent Accelerated and Shared Growth Initiative (ASGISA) seems to herald a change of direction and a national effort for faster and shared growth. Thus Seepe (2006:13) notes that "[f]inally we have a project, with measurable outcomes, to address the country's skills challenges". While ASGISA brings the desperately needed hope for social change through integrated social and economic development, only time will tell whether this initiative will deliver on its promises. Despite Seepe's (2006) optimism, there are concerns, not least skepticism, about its propensity for achieving the country's development goals, given the President's opening statement:

> I must also take advantage of this occasion to explain that ASGISA is not intended to cover all elements of a *comprehensive development plan*. Rather it consists of a limited set of interventions that are intended to serve as catalysts to accelerated and shared growth and development – structural reform of the economy. Otherwise we will continue to engage the nation and all social partners to address other elements of a comprehensive development plan to improve on our current programmes, and deal with other issues, such as the comprehensive industrial policy, keeping in mind the objective to halve poverty and employment by 2014 (State of the Nation Address, 2006:10, emphasis added). (Compare Robinson, 2005.)

Clearly, in line with its neoliberal capitalist approach, government intervention in the economy will continue to be limited, and will shift the reconstruction and redistribution process to its 'social partners', who are presented with the challenge to achieve integrated social and economic development within the broader macroeconomic, growth orientated framework. Social workers are crucial role players in post-apartheid South Africa, where the divide between rich and poor keeps growing (Sewpaul and Hölsher, 2004: vii). Gray (2006:63) echoes this sentiment: "Surely the time has come for social workers to speak out against the injustices of structurally induced poverty and the widening gap between rich and poor." What is social work's mandate for this role?

SOCIAL WORK'S PROFESSIONAL MANDATE

Social workers work with the highly sophisticated *modern* world, as well as 'the other' socially excluded and marginalised, *second economy* world. Social problems do not have class boundaries, whereas poverty, inequalities and social injustices are class stigmatised. Social justice, which is increasingly being seen as the organising value of social work (Swenson, 2001:218), has been seriously eroded in South Africa under Apartheid. In a democracy, social work is therefore well positioned to take up its role in social change for a just society.

This role is mandated by the White Paper for Social Welfare, which was adopted in 1997 as South Africa's social welfare policy. Within this mandate the White Paper challenges the welfare system to devise appropriate and integrated strategies to address the alienation and the economic and social marginalisation of vast sectors of the population who are living in poverty, are vulnerable and have special needs.

In line with the theme of this paper, I will focus my address on the challenges facing social work, and its role in addressing poverty and inequalities within its social change function, and hence its role in "speaking out against the injustices of structurally induced poverty" (Gray, 2006:63). This 'speaking out' should be contextualised within the macroeconomic policy framework of South Africa, since it cannot be divorced from the social sphere of society, albeit Schoeman (2001:329). Hence the question: How does the developmental framework for social work combine with a neoliberal capitalist macroeconomic policy framework?

Neither neoliberalism nor the market can be regarded as a problem *per se*. If economic growth is best promoted within a neoliberal system, as argued by South Africa's economic planners, the income from this growth must be *re*distributed to sustain development and to guarantee economic security for all. As long as poor people are excluded from active participation in the economy, poverty and inequality will be solidified and the gap between the rich and the poor will continue to grow.

Access to resources is the key, for South Africa's 'social partners' are well-positioned to meet the challenge of integrating social and economic development if government was to channel more funding to them within its strict monetary and fiscal parameters. The government recognizes that the "budgetary choices (it) make(s) give life and meaning to the *Age of Hope* of which President Mbeki so rightly spoke in his State of the Nation Address" (Trevor Manuel, Budget Speech, 2006:2 emphasis added).

Clearly then, the government remains committed to development. However, there seems to be tension between its 'welfare' and 'development' priorities. Increasingly, the former has become linked, in the public's eyes, with an unsustainable social security program. Government continues to promote 'development' while growing 'welfare' and this is having a major impact on the role of social work in service delivery. On the one hand, government has adopted a 'developmental' approach to social service delivery - to promote the goals of *sustainable* development in order to redress past imbalances (Department of Social Development, 2006a:7). On the other hand, government's focus on social security – mainly through social grants and pensions – has consumed the lion share of 'welfare' funding, such that there is very little left for 'developmental' service delivery. The First Lady, Zanele Mbeki, has herself criticized the government's policies on fighting poverty, warning that more welfare will not *buy the poor out of their misery*. She said: "We should not make a welfare state and call it a developmental state" (Boyle, 2005:1). Clearly, the First Lady's remark is critical for those concerned with social change through the integration of social and economic development. At least now the government is recognizing that "[o]ver the past decade, the notion of what constitutes developmental social services has been a matter of debate, misunderstanding and misinterpretation" (Minister of Social Development, Dr Skweyiya, Department of Social Development, 2006a:2). Certainly government's mixed messages have confused both clients and social workers in South Africa.

With the shift of the social security budget and its administration to the national Social Security Agency from 1 April 2005, the glaring neglect of social welfare services, especially at the provincial level, became strikingly clear to all. Nowhere has this neglect

been more severely felt than in the non-governmental sector which, by 2005, was in a state of crisis. So stark was this neglect that the media has given it a high profile and protest marches have been mounted to raise awareness of the critical state of NGOs (Koelgelenberg, 2003; McKay, 2003). Government could no longer avoid this issue, as acknowledged on various occasions (Department of Social Development, 2005:2; Department of Social Development, 2006a:9) and, as a consequence, additional funds to expand social welfare service delivery in the NGO sector, were approved. However, the allocations in the 2006 budget are not sufficient to remove the backlog caused by the neglect, or to repair the damage. It cannot be erased in this decade and, possibly never will, unless the resources for social services are in place to strengthen the community based infrastructure for social development.

What is significant, however, is that the White Paper for Social Welfare (Ministry of Social Welfare and Population and Welfare, 1997) marked a turning point in the history of social welfare service provision in South Africa. Not only has it redressed decades of historical imbalances, but it has also repositioned social welfare in the new democracy. While it sought a developmental agenda, the government has entrenched social security, albeit widening its ambit to all citizens. In this sense, it has democratised welfare benefits but it has yet to discern a way in which to free the majority of its citizens from the trap of poverty and inequality through development.

Terblanche (2002:441) argues that a first step towards ending systemic exclusion within a truly developmental policy would imply a new vision of, among other things, what constitutes (or defines) *social welfare*. Architects of welfare policy have consistently defined welfare within a *developmental* paradigm, premising it on social justice, human rights and the integration of human, social and economic development at all levels of government (compare Patel, 2005:95). The Integrated Service Delivery Model Towards Improved Service Delivery (Department of Social Development, 2006a) is yet another positive attempt from within welfare to bring clarity to what developmental social services constitute but government has yet to allocate much needed resources to facilitate its implementation.

The biggest challenge for welfare, or more specifically, the Department of Social Development, is to demonstrate that the integration of social and economic development has a positive impact on the poor. Such *evidence* would convince the Treasury of the need to *invest* in developmental social services, in the same way it has in social security and the Expanded Public Works Programme. At this stage, these are the cornerstones of government poverty alleviation agenda. Government needs to explore the relationship between social security, the Expanded Public Works Programme and developmental welfare services.

SOCIAL SECURITY: SOCIAL ASSISTANCE AND SOCIAL GRANTS

There is no doubt that South Africa's social assistance system of grants is a particularly important aspect of its poverty alleviation strategy (SA Human Development Report, UNDP South Africa, 2003:87). Social security through social assistance and social grants now amounts to R70 billion per annum – 3,4 percent of GDP – and reaches more than 10 million beneficiaries (Trevor Manuel, Budget Speech, 2006:2). From a structural, redistribution and a human rights perspective, it is an important pro-poor programme. Government, as well as its social partners, are key role players in informing eligible citizens of their right to access social grants. Rosner (2003:319) identifies two objectives of social assistance in helping the poor: (i) reducing actual poverty and (ii) empowerment to escape from poverty. There is significant research evidence that social grants are reducing actual poverty (compare Rosner, 2003:321 and Department of Social Development, 2006a:2).

Interpersonal redistribution of income is an important objective of social policy, and whether that is desirable in South Africa is hardly an economic question; it is a political and ethical issue (Rosner, 2003:22). According to Finance Minister, Trevor Manuel, social grants contributed more than half of the income of the poorest 20% of households (Malefane, 2006:7). The ethical question is who will, and how will they provide for the other half of the income of the poorest 20% of households?

Government wants to promote self-reliance to discourage dependency, and this has been its avowed intent from the inception of South Africa's democracy. The claim about the shift from a 'welfarist' to a social developmental perspective (Department of Social Development, 2006a:2), may, however, be questioned. The Minister of Social Development, Dr Skweyiya, is often reported to request more money for social security. I have never heard or seen the Minister lobbying for social development programmes. In fact, millions of rands, earmarked for alleviating the social and economic plight of the poor, are reported to have been handed back to international donors because it has not been spent (Njwaban, 2006). What the Minister should be lobbying for, is distribution of these funds. In this way mixed messages, perhaps even contradictions, are conveyed as government struggles to deal with its 'welfare' and 'development' policies and its role in poverty alleviation. As Rosner (2003:4) notes, there is no *economic theory* that can answer the question of how much should be given to poor people on ethical grounds because it is a question that belongs to the realm of *theories of justice*. However, one thing is certain: The debate about whether or not to increase grants and pensions is not providing the necessary *practice-related* shift from welfare to empowering development.

Without attention to Rosner's (2003) second social assistance objective, i.e. empowering people to escape poverty, dependency is created and, given the "short-termism" of social security, it is highly possible that people will fall deeper into the poverty trap because grants could well come to an end. Income grants, such as the child care and foster grants, and the old age grant, usually terminate when an age band is reached or when a person dies. These grants provide for the two most vulnerable groups in society, i.e. children and the elderly.

Having access to a social grant when eligible, is a human right. However, accessing a child care grant for a child of, e.g. seven years old, with the prospect that it will impact on his/her poverty level only for the next seven years – until the age of 14 when it lapses – is a *violation* of that child's human right to adequate social care and development. While the objective of addressing actual poverty through immediate income relief is achieved for a time-limited period, the second empowerment objective *should not* be neglected.

Even though 10 million people may be reached with social grants, a very small percentage of these millions are reached with developmental social welfare services. Social grants can provide in the basic needs for food, clothing, and shelter. However, they do not erase the social stigma and exclusion undermining the dignity and self-esteem of human beings. They can assist children and prevent them from dying of hunger, but they do not address their spirits dying from neglect, sexual exploitation, violence, and the devastating consequences of HIV and AIDS. The level of poverty in any society is directly proportionate to the efficacy of its *social* programmes (Rosner, 2003:310). Therefore, it is not the existence of the social security programme that is in dispute – though economists now worry about their financial sustainability (Gray, 2006:60) – but the way in which, as a short-term measure of poverty alleviation, it is linked to *social* development in order to ensure integration of social and economic development, and moving the poor from the margins of society to the inner circle of economic activity.

There is, however, a paradox: The same social grant that temporarily provides the poor with relief from actual poverty through income supplementation, simultaneously keeps them captive in the poverty trap, given the argument of the Minister of Social Development, Dr Skweyiya, that "by and large the targeted recipients of social grants are not expected to fully participate in the labour market" (Department of Social Development, Minister Skweyiya, 2006a:2). Compare the following example: The mother or caregiver of a child who qualifies for a grant has the capacity to take up a job if exposed to skills training. Through this training she gains access to the Expanded Public Works Programme or to the possibility of opening a day care facility for children in the community, and could earn a livelihood. However, taking up employment means losing her benefit.

There should be a significant overlapping period for beneficiaries to continue receiving the grants until the risk to a more sustainable income is overcome. This initiative will do justice to the Finance Minister, Trevor Manuel's observation during his Budget Speech (2006:22) that the challenge remains *to balance these income support commitments with continued strengthening of expenditure on infrastructure and service delivery*. In this

way, the income support of the vulnerable may be sustained while facilitating social and economic integration, which could, in turn, provide opportunities for escaping from the poverty trap. One such an opportunity, as already indicated, is linking the social security programme with the Expanded Public Works Programme, which will be discussed next.

EXPANDED PUBLIC WORKS PROGRAMME

The Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) *must* be seen in relation to the social security programme and developmental social welfare services if the government's intention with the EPWP is taken as the yardstick. During his State of the Nation Address (2006:121), President Mbeki referred to this programme as "an important bridge between the two economies and a significant part of our poverty alleviation programme". This programme is significant for addressing poverty and inequalities as it targets the unskilled, marginalised, unemployed – in particular women, the youth and people with disabilities (Budget Review, 2006:108). **These vulnerable groups are the clients of social workers**. There *should* be a close collaboration between NGOs in the social welfare sector on the one hand and provincial and local government on the other, to provide the names of qualifying families. Allow me to give a few examples to illustrate this point:

1. Social workers are those who know of child-headed households where an older child caring for siblings could possibly benefit from skills training, if only he/she was given the opportunity.
2. They know the women who have fallen victim to cruel and violent crimes that undermine their dignity as well as their ability to earn money (Terblanche, 2002:44), and who could benefit from employment.
3. They can identify the children who are abused, neglected, and exploited by families and society (Terblanche, 2002:44) and there is evidence for this: Simpson (2001) reported on the stories of social workers. She mentions the case where a mother had allowed her neighbour to sexually abuse her child in order to provide for the day's bread, as well as cases where mothers fostered their own children – reporting under

oath that they were abandoned children – just to access the foster grant. Mathe (2003) reported how a family's only income in a deep rural area relied on the dagga crops, while fully aware that it was illegal and morally unacceptable. These are the people to whom Steinberg (2006:12) refers in the words of a mother whose daughter puts food on the table through prostitution: "It is the cry of a woman who watches herself and her children living lives she has not chosen, does not like, and cannot change". They are the survivors of a socio-economic system in which poverty and inequality are entrenched, instead of mechanisms to sustain productive households.

The claim that working is a way out of poverty (Rosner, 2003:277) or that economic growth and poverty are opposites, is oversimplistic, given the structural violation behind the so called security of having a 'job'. Although work could provide the income required to alleviate or even eliminate poverty, it cannot bring instant healing to the wounds caused by humiliation, trauma and despair of decades of injustice. Here, again, social workers have a role to play.

To facilitate permanent social change through integrated social and economic development, government, in collaboration with social partners, *should* therefore seek other ways to unpack and address the deep-rooted structural causes of poverty and inequality. There is a dire need for an integrated development and human resources plan for social and economic development. Without such a plan, there could be no claim that social security is the "cornerstone of a developmental state" since the social welfare budget would not be expanded to "empower those escaping from poverty". Social security should, therefore, never be an end in itself (Department of Social Development, 2006a:16), neither should the Expanded Public Works Programme nor developmental social service delivery.

The social work profession is, as already outlined, close to the poor and marginalised in society, and its professional mandate is not only geared towards care and service provision, but also towards advocacy and justice, through helping clients claim their socio-economic rights. The social obligations of the profession position it to effect social

change through the integration of social and economic goals: empowerment and production.

Let us now examine the challenges for social work in meeting this goal at both the macro and the micro level.

CHALLENGE: INTEGRATING SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The challenge for the social work profession is to integrate social and economic goals within their current scope of service delivery.

Adopt development approaches to social work practice

Developmental social welfare cuts across individuals, families, communities and organisations, and in line with a development focus it should include intervention approaches and strategies of social justice, empowerment and social development of which community development is a key strategy.

In South Africa, social workers have in the past demonstrated their expertise in community development, especially during the years of mobilising communities for political liberation (compare Cobley, 1997:133), and in more recent years reflected in research by Lombard (1992), Gray (1998); Potgieter, (1998), Green and Nieman (2003) and Patel (2005).

It is important that social work obtains political recognition and support for including community development as an intervention strategy in fulfilling its social change function and to be fully valued as a social partner in development.

Influencing policies for inclusion of pro-poor foci

Having world class policies means nothing if they are not implemented. Social workers can play a critical role in influencing policies for the inclusion of pro-poor foci in

legislation, regulations and institutions. Involvement in policy-making upholds the basic values of social work, including advocating for justice, equality, the protection of human rights, and the promotion of family values (Ng & Chan, 2005:80). Although advocacy and policy intervention are the forte of social work (Gray, 2006:63), policy-making is, a neglected area of social work practice (Sewpaul, 2001:309; Gray & van Rooyen, 2000). Many social work authors have consistently reiterated the importance of policy analysis and development in South Africa. This engagement emphasises the social worker's political responsibility in implementing, influencing and changing social policies, which all have political implications (Gray, 1996).

Professional unity

The impact of apartheid has left a very deep divide, which is a major and ongoing concern, especially because the profession is embedded in the value of social justice. Although major progress has been made over the last 12 years, including a submission to the TRC on 20 February 1998 (Lombard, 2000:128; Patel, 2005:78), acknowledging the profession's neglect in responding to the social injustices of the past, as well as the transformation of the professional council to incorporate other social service professions than social work, professional associations are still racially based (Mazibuko & Gray, 2004). As a consequence, South Africa is, despite its 12 years of democracy, not yet a member country of the International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW). The positive outcome of a recent referendum has, once again, paved the way for launching an initiative in favour of a unified professional body for social work. Having a unified professional body is not only critical for the profession, but also for its ability to play a recognised role in policy debates and to respond to poverty and inequality and other profession related issues on a national, regional and international level.

Building a strong civil society

South Africa needs a strong civil society to ensure social change through integrated social and economic development. To achieve this, Terblanche (2002:312) cogently argues that

we need the same *people's power* the Black Consciousness Movement had in the late 1960s and early 1970s as an organised voice of the disadvantaged majority.

Social workers are well-positioned to contribute to and/or to build a strong civil society, as our history testifies. Charlotte Maxeke, Ellen Kuzwayo and other black pioneers of the profession in the 1920s and 1930s actively engaged in the ideological struggle in South Africa and played a significant role in establishing a black social work profession (Cobley, 1997:133). During the launch of the Charlotte Maxeke collaboration in the Faculty of Economics of the University of Pretoria on 16 January 2006, the Minister of Social Development, Dr Skweyiya (Department of Social Development, 2006b:1), saluted her as a pioneer and leader in the educational, social welfare, faith, and political sectors of our society.

Social work educators can inspire students to continue the struggle for social reform in South Africa in a similar way that the earlier pioneers did, and they should learn about these role models.

Community Economic Development (CED)

Community Economic Development has emerged as an appropriate strategy for social work to revitalize community economies and stimulate productive households. Many of these community focused initiatives start with a traditional community development project and grow into small, micro and medium size enterprises (SMMEs) (Harris, 1998:36; Shragge, 1997:1).

For sustainable CED it is critical that people are selected for income generating projects based on already acquired skills or their potential to acquire them. CED builds on the personal wealth, talents, and skills of its people (Homan, 1999:373).

The Little Elephant project, launched by the Christian Social Council in Middelburg under the leadership of a social worker, the late Lynette Odendaal, is an example of a

project where existing local skills were cultivated to build capacity through additional business skills development. Some of the participants became successful entrepreneurs who started their own businesses independent from the project, some of which expanded to the extent that other women in the community could be trained to produce for the market.

CED provides an opportunity to integrate human, social and economic development and to address deep-rooted poverty and inequality by facilitating social inclusion and economic participation. In addition, this participation enhances broad-based black economic empowerment since many of these micro-entrepreneurs create employment opportunities for others in the community, and hence share wealth and economic power with the poor - for which BEE was intended in the first place. This fits within the government's pledge to create new opportunities for small-scale entrepreneurs through the Accelerated and Shared Growth Plan, ASGISA, (Clark, 2006:21).

Understanding the politico-economic context

Social workers cannot impact on poverty and inequality outside the socio-economic and political context of society (compare Cobley, 1997:147) and should, therefore, understand its impact on social policy and social welfare. According to Oosthuizen (University of the Free State, 2006:20), there is no other way for people to escape from poverty than to become economically literate. He adds that economic as well as political freedom could be lost in a young democracy such as South Africa if people do not understand the principle of economic freedom (Bult, 2006:20). To achieve this, social workers have to engage in the policy debates, and know about and know how macroeconomics work. They must understand how economic growth can release people from poverty.

Further, social workers must know *about* economic principles and processes (Prigoff, 2000:152) as well as about sources available for human, social and economic development and *how* to access these funds.

Like in the times of Jane Adams' settlements, there are practitioners today who argue that social workers do not have a role in business and economic activities (compare McKinlay, 2004). However, others concur that the overall concept of economic thinking and a businesslike orientation contain real benefits for the profession (Sewpaul & Hölsher, 2004:93). A study by Lombard (2005) revealed how welfare organisations and social workers bridged the socio-economic divide by not only engaging their clients in community based economic development activities, but also in directing welfare NGOs on a business path.

Engaging in environmental issues

There is a complex relationship between the environment, inequality and economic development (SA Human Development Report, UNDP South Africa, 2003:xix). Socio-economic and environmental impact assessments create an opportunity for the inclusion and/or participation of communities in Integrated Environmental Management (DEAT, 2005:4), where social workers such as Aucamp has entered groundbreaking territory for social work. This opportunity is linked to the White Paper on an Environmental Management Policy for South Africa (Government Notice 794 of 1998), which introduced a new paradigm of sustainable development requiring governments to integrate social, economic and *environmental* planning (DEAT, 2005:4). Therefore, social development is not just about social and economic integration but also about the integration of environmental concerns in social and economic development.

Caring and services for children affected by HIV and AIDS

Currently, there are close to a million children in South Africa who have lost one or both parents to HIV and AIDS (Department of Social Development, 2005:4). The majority of these children are not only struggling with historically determined structural causes of poverty and inequality due to the socio-economic legacy impacting on their parents'

lives, but they face a repetition of this history in the extreme marginalised position they find themselves.

If the government, in collaboration with its social partners, wishes to grow a new generation of leaders in South Africa, children affected by HIV and AIDS should not only be cared for by providing social grants, but also by opportunities to continue schooling and furthering their education to access economic activities that will ensure productive households. In the absence of family structures and support, social workers play a key role in providing protection services to children and, at the same time, integrate them in communities that will support them in sustainable development (compare September, 2006:70).

Social workers and NGOs, such as Heartbeat, play a major role in linking children affected by AIDS with the private sector as well as other resources, to ensure an educated next generation of leaders. If South Africa fails to reach these children, we will witness another generation of unskilled and uneducated youth and adults. The main responsibility of society towards these children is to educate them.

Refocusing on the private sector

Matube (2005:192) observes that the private sector should be challenged to measure the impact of its businesses on society, especially on the communities in which they operate. She alludes to the private sector's involvement in corporate citizenship, which now incorporates social investment (CSI) (Matube, 2005:191). When NGOs approach the private sector for funding it is therefore important that they understand how the business world is operating and what the angle for the engagement request should be. Large corporations should, therefore, be approached not only because they have a social responsibility, but because they have a constructive role to play in social change in South Africa, premised on the fact that they are one of the main beneficiaries of a neoliberal capitalist system. President Mbeki summarised it well during his State of the Nation Address (2006:14): "The years of freedom have been good for business".

Examples of how social workers can engage the business sector into social development programmes are:

1. Corporates could provide infrastructure on the model of the Ford Motor Company of Southern Africa, who provides space as well as support services to Child Welfare Tshwane for their HIV and AIDS project. This project offers psycho-social support as well as skills training and income generation opportunities for people who are HIV positive. After a year attendees are empowered to cope with their HIV status and to generate an income as able-bodied members of the community.

2. Adopting a project such as the People Upliftment Project (Pop-up), as undertaken by Old Mutual Northern Region, is another example of the role that business can play in social development. Old Mutual does not only contribute to skills training. This year, as part of a team-building exercise, all staff members had to get physically involved in the environment by preparing a garden around the building where the training was conducted (Selaluke, 2006:10).

Creating an enabling environment for social change and development

Given the current realities and barriers in social work practice, the burning question is how social work will manage to *adapt* current practice approaches and strategies to take up the challenge, and facilitate change through integrated social and economic development. These barriers in themselves pose a huge challenge, which requires a sound partnership between government and NGOs to provide an enabling environment for social change.

Shortage of social workers

Social work was declared a scarce skill in the South African Department of Public Services and Administration, and as a response the Department of Social Development formulated the Recruitment and Retention Strategy (2006). The impact of the shortage of social workers - and hence overburdened social workers carrying huge caseloads – is a

direct result of the neglect of social services which, as already mentioned, has enjoyed a high media profile over the last two years. This skills shortage seriously undermines social work's capacity to respond to its social change and development function and to deliver on socio-economic development goals. Although both NGOs and government experience a human resource capacity problem, it is particularly the NGO sector that has borne the brunt of the crisis on social service delivery.

There are currently 11,432 social workers registered with the South African Council for Social Service Professions. To implement the new Children's Bill (Bill 70D of 2003), 16,000 additional social workers are required over the next three years. For the first year 3, 671 social workers are required (Kela, 2006), while universities in South Africa only provide approximately 500 students per annum (Du Toit, 2006:12). Even a hundred percent growth rate will not meet this requirement.

The shortage of social workers is aggravated by professionals leaving the country to practise in other countries, or leaving the profession. This is mainly attributed to the poor working conditions and meagre salaries that social workers earn, especially in the NGO sector, where salaries are significantly lower than in government. Although salaries of social workers are on the agenda the Department of Social Development, this issue has not yet been seriously addressed on a political level, as in the case of teachers' and health workers' salaries (Budget Review, 2006:106; 108).

Partnership between government and NGOs

As alluded to earlier in this address, NGOs in the social welfare sector, and the government's relationship with them, has come under huge threat over the past three years. A key area of tension in the relationship is the subsidy of social welfare services and the disparities between subsidies in various provinces, as well as the migration of social workers from NGOs to government due to better salaries and better working conditions in government. It is in no-one's interest, not least the poor, if communication and trust were to break down completely between the government and NGOs, to the level

of despair that was experienced in 2005. A good working relationship does not mean that government should not be challenged in terms of its role in addressing poverty and inequality through pro-poor policies and social development programmes. There must be a healthy amount of tension between the NGO sector and government to ensure a vibrant civil society and effective social service delivery.

What is urgently needed is a partnership model that will strengthen the social welfare sector's capacity both in government and NGOs (compare Gray & Crofts, 2004 and Lombard and Du Preez, 2004). NGOs and the Department of Social Development are crucial partners in providing research-based evidence to lobby the Treasury for increased budget allocations. With regard to the recruitment component of the Recruitment and Retention Strategy (2006), the challenge is to attract students into the profession amidst the non-attractive practice realities, and to ensure that those students who are in the programme graduate and join the social work labour market.

Let us now examine how the University of Pretoria and, in particular, the Department of Social Work and Criminology perform in relation to the above challenges.

UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA'S RESPONSE

The Bachelor of Social Work (BSW) programme prepares students for generalist social work practice, but also includes a module on business management and one on entrepreneurship to teach students basic economic principles and processes. To remain relevant for social work's social change and development function, the BSW curriculum *should*, however, be revised to include more syllabus themes on development approaches to social work intervention. The Department has a unique and valued partnership model with welfare organisations for field placements, which contribute to locally and culturally relevant training. In these placements students work with various target groups, including socially excluded and vulnerable groups.

Crime and violence is an abuse of human rights (RSA Constitution, Act 108 of 1996). The undergraduate criminology modules, offered from first to third year as ancillary subjects to other programmes, are targeted at facilitating social change from both the victim and the perpetrator's perspective. The curriculum includes intervention approaches and strategies to respond to, as well as to prevent, various types of crime and includes restorative justice.

At the postgraduate level, the Department prepares students to engage in social change in its BA (Hons) programme specialising in Criminology, as well as in specialised, taught master's programmes, research master's programmes and doctoral programmes. Further, the Department effects social change directly in society through its community engagement programmes, facilitated by both colleagues and students.

The University of Pretoria produces about six percent of the 500 BSW graduates in South Africa annually. The total intake at South African universities, including the Department of Social Work and Criminology's BSW programme, is below the current Department of Education's capped norm, and mainly for two reasons: (i) an insufficient number of applications and (ii) limited human resource capacity. Like most other universities, the Department could increase its first year intake. However, social work training is funded at a low level, and intensive one on one practice training in the BSW programme makes it almost impossible to run on full intake capacity. In addition, it is extremely challenging to recruit social workers, given the current remuneration scales, subsidies and working conditions in the profession. Despite these challenges, the Department is fully involved in initiatives surrounding the Recruitment and Retention Strategy for Social Work (2006).

The vacancies for student intake and the shortage of social workers in practice run counter to social work's identity as a scarce skill. The Department is a member of the Association for South African Social Work Education Institutions (ASASWEI), one of the stakeholders, among others, who work in collaboration with the Department of Social Development to gather research based evidence to advocate for recognition of social work as scarce skill in order to secure earmark funding for social work training from the

Department of Education. To attract students to the profession, the Department of Social Development has made scholarships available for 2006, and has approached the Treasury to fund scholarships for the next three-year Medium Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF) period, as reported by Kela (2006). The government's investment in the education of social workers also includes field placements with stipends for final year students. Despite the fact that many of our students struggle financially, the Department of Social Work and Criminology has decided not to respond to this opportunity due to the inequality created for students placed at NGOs, who cannot afford stipends to students.

The University of Pretoria is party to the loss of social work capacity to the overseas market. The international competitiveness of both the BSW programme and our postgraduate programmes in social work, make our students very popular for recruitment overseas. However, we would rather lose graduates to the overseas market and retain them for the profession, because most of them do return to South Africa and continue their careers here. On the other hand the loss of graduates to the international market is a loss in terms of the time and the human resources invested in training (at least in the short term), and, sadly, it impacts on social change in South Africa. The Department of Social Development's scholarships to students will oblige successful applicants to sign an employment contract, through which their skills will be retained, at least for a specified period. Compulsory community service upon graduation is also an avenue that still needs to be explored for the social work profession, as a strategy to curb the skills flight.

In view of the shortage of social workers, and also for the sake of financial survival, many universities decided to terminate their selection process for the BSW intake. This will impact on the quality of students, and on social work capacity. According to the Deputy Minster of Social Development, Dr Jean Benjamin, we are already experiencing a shortage of *competent* social workers in South Africa (Du Toit, 2006:12). However, it is not in the interest of the profession to take in applicants at universities without screening. Social work requires very specific qualities, competencies and a commitment to meet the demands of practice, as already described. Compassionate social workers are needed. *Incompetent* social workers will not find employment and will not solve the critical

shortage of social workers in the field. Therefore, the University of Pretoria will maintain its selection process for the BSW Programme, since it ensures – to a large extent – that graduates meet the competency standard. We will also continue to honour our commitment to meeting the shortage of social workers in the field. This is partially facilitated through our open programme at first year level. The open programme creates an opportunity for attracting students who wish to take social work as an ancillary module. Selection only takes place from the second year onwards. Both the postgraduate programmes in the Department, i.e. for Criminology and Social Work, are subjected to selection criteria.

The Department is represented on professional boards and associations. Criminology colleagues are key members of the professional association for criminologists, CRIMSA, as well as the Standards Generating Body for Criminology. With regard to social work, the Head of Department is a member of the Professional Board (for Social Work) and currently chairs the Standards Generating Body for Social Work, as well as the pilot project for continuous professional development (CPD).

I would like to conclude by presenting you with the Department's vision for continuing to impact on social change and development in South Africa.

VISION FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT AND CRIMINOLOGY

The two disciplines hosted by the Department, i.e. Social Work and Criminology, are both critical for producing students who may facilitate social change and development, as well as taking the initiative in research and community engagement.

Our vision must be set within the short history of the Department since our amalgamation in January 2005.

The year 2005 was marked by structural adjustment for integrating departmental policies, streamlining mechanisms for educational delivery, building cohesion, starting to align ourselves for collaboration, and coming to terms with our 'marital' agreement. Filing for divorce was not an option.

In 2006 the divide between 'us' and 'them' narrowed – not only in the Department but also in the broader academic environment, who finally got the message that we were one. The following is tangible evidence of a successful marriage:

• embarking on cross-disciplinary teaching of research methodology at postgraduate level;

• co-supervision of postgraduate students;

• showcasing the findings of postgraduate research though seminars that benefit both disciplines;

• planning for co-placement of students in community engagement projects – situated on the interface between the disciplines, e.g. violence against women and in schools – for 2007.

Although there has always been common ground between Social Work and Criminology, the recognition of the unique professional identities of the two disciplines will remain one of the core values of the Department.

What lies ahead from 2007 and beyond?

1. The Department is privileged in terms of its high student numbers in both the undergraduate and postgraduate programmes. Our total enrolment figure for 2006 is 2, 899, comprising 2, 492 undergraduate and 407 postgraduate students. However, with a human resource capacity of 25, including the six practice lecturers, our task is challenging, especially in view of the continuing high demand for placement of post-graduate students in the department.

2. Criminology in South Africa has applied to the South African Council for Social Service Professions for professional recognition and status. If granted, the

Department will host two professions, which will imply new challenges for an undergraduate professional qualification in Criminology.

3. The Department is exploring expansion of international collaboration and partnership for the purpose of benchmarking, research and teaching, including exchange progammes for both students and lecturers.

4. The Department will step up its performance in providing leadership in the respective fields of expertise by responding to tenders for research, policy development and continuous professional training (CPD) in social work and criminology.

5. The Department will continue to be actively involved in influencing professional activities, document best practices for classroom teaching, and bring professional experts to the classroom in order to maintain our training focus on local relevance.

6. The Department will engage in activities to build the capacity of NGOs for student placements, such as lobbying for stipends.

7. The Department is also committed to actively participating in government initiatives to help facilitate an enabling environment that will attract students and create a rewarding work environment.

Although young in name and composition, the Department of Social Work and Criminology has age, experience and expertise to its credit: We have combined experience of 134 years (including the 77 years of the previous Department of Social Work and the 57 years of the previous Department of Criminology); and with our **33** committed, dedicated and expert staff we hope to continue as leaders in training, research and community engagement to produce well-rounded professionals for the demanding world of practice.

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