



ICESCR RATIFICATION CAMPAIGN ADVOCACY PROGRESS REPORT

PREPARED FOR: MAY – DECEMBER 2011

This is a progress report of the South African Campaign for the Ratification of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) and its Optional Protocol.

1. Drivers of the Campaign

The Campaign driver group is currently composed of seven organisations, namely;

- the Community Law Centre (CLC) of the University of the Western Cape
- Black Sash
- People's Health Movement South Africa (PHMSA)
- National Welfare, Social Service and Development Forum (NWF)
- Global Call to Action against Poverty, South Africa (GCAP SA)
- Socio-Economic Rights Institute of South Africa (SERI)
- Studies in Poverty and Inequality Institute (SPII)

The South African Human Rights Commission (SAHRC) supports the Campaign to ensure the ratification of the ICESCR and assists the Campaign through the facilitation of and contribution to Campaign meetings and events.

The need to expand the driver group had been a recurring item in the agenda of the Campaign driver group meetings in 2011. It was agreed that there is need to expand the Campaign driver group to involve additional organisations that can strategically contribute to the Campaign. This is bearing in mind the need to balance between academics and activists within the Campaign.

In September 2011, four organisations were invited to join the Campaign driver group namely; Socio-Economic Rights Institute of South Africa (SERI), Economic Justice Network (ENJ), SECTION 27, and Studies in Poverty and Inequality Institute (SPII).

Socio-Economic Rights Institute of South Africa (SERI) and Studies in Poverty and Inequality Institute (SPII) expressed interest to actively participate in the Campaign as part of the Campaign driver group, and are now part of the Campaign driver group.

2. Campaign Driver Group Meetings

Members of the Campaign driver group meet every two months. The intention of the meetings is to discuss Campaign progress, activities and outputs. From May to December 2011 Campaign driver group held six meetings.

Meetings were held on the following dates;

- Fourth meeting - 11 May 2011
- Fifth meeting – 6 June 2011
- Sixth meeting -27 July 2011
- Seventh meeting -17 August 2011
- Eighth meeting - 5 October 2011
- Ninth meeting - 11 November 2011

3. Parliamentary Engagement

The Campaign was invited to participate in a two day (September 5-6, 2011) Parliamentary *Consultative Seminar on the Role of Parliament and Provincial Legislatures in the Achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)*'.

Rajesh Latchman made a presentation on behalf of the Campaign.

Read Rajesh Latchman (GCAP): Blog post on the event:

- MDGs and the Long Road to Parliament (Monday, September 5, 2011)
Access : <<http://www.ngopulse.org/blogs/mdgs-and-long-road-parliament>>
- Falling Asleep in Parliament (Tuesday, September 6, 2011)
Access : <<http://www.ngopulse.org/blogs/falling-asleep-parliament>>

Read the report on the role of the South African parliament and the provincial legislatures in the achievement of the MDGs.

Access: <http://www.parliament.gov.za/content/MDG%20Report2011_Web~1.pdf>

4. Engagement with Government

The Campaign engaged two government departments, namely the Department of International Relations and Cooperation (DIRCO) and the Department of Justice and Constitutional Development (DoJ&CD).

On behalf of the Campaign, a letter was sent to the Presidency ahead of the UN treaty event on 20-22 and 26-27 September at the United Nations headquarters in New York. The letter was copied to the Department of International Relations and Cooperation (DIRCO) and the Department of Justice and Constitutional Development (DoJ&CD) and the Office of the Presidency: National Planning Commission.

The letter urged the South African government to sign and ratify or accede to this Protocol and fully implement it without delay.

5. Mandela Day Seminar

On 18 July 2011, in commemoration of Mandela day, the Campaign held a seminar to advocate for the ratification for the ICESCR and its Optional Protocol. The seminar was designed to inform and discuss the ICESCR with Parliamentary researchers, political party researchers and members of the civil society

with an objective to enrich the policy debates at parliamentary and political party levels.

The seminar was well attended. Deputy Chair of the South African Human Rights Commission (SAHRC) Deputy Chair Ms Pregs Govender gave the key note and opening address.

Anthea Van Der Burg (SAHRC) presented a paper on 'why should South Africa ratify the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR)'. Phelisa Nkomo (Black Sash) presented a paper 'linking the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR)'.

Jacqui Khumalo/Thenjiwe McHarris, (Amnesty International) made a presentation on 'ratification of the ICESCR from an international perspective'. Rajesh Latchman (GCAP SA) wrapped up the day with a presentation on 'Identifying advocacy actions going forward'.

Sam Waterhouse (CLC) was the moderator of the seminar.

6. Media and Publicity

To ensure visibility, it is important that the Campaign maintains its media presence as it advocates for South Africa to ratify the ICESCR and its Optional Protocol.

The following dates are important for the Campaign to maintain media presence:

- July 18 – Mandela Day
- September 24 - Optional Protocol was opened for signature on 24 September 2009.
- December 10 - Optional Protocol was adopted by the UN General Assembly on 10 December 2008

18 July 2011 – OP-ED on Mandela Day prepared by Dr Chenwi (CLC)

24 September 2011 – OP-ED on UN Treaty signing ceremony prepared by Gladys Mirugi-Mukundi (CLC)

7. Campaign Resources and Material Development Booklet

A Campaign publication in form of a booklet was proposed in 2011. The booklet would reflect the background, progress, activities and opportunities of the South African Campaign for the Ratification of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) and its Optional Protocol.

The purpose of the booklet as an advocacy tool is to:

- provide Parliamentarians and parliamentary researchers with information needed to understand the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) and its Optional Protocol from a South African context.
- be a guideline to the implementation of the ICESCR in South Africa.
- give a brief background of the ICESCR Campaign in South Africa by consolidating all the materials produced by the Campaign over the last few years.

Parliamentarians and parliamentary researchers are the target audience of the booklet.

In terms of time line, it is anticipated the booklet will be published by April 2012.

It was proposed that instead of the Campaign publishing a whole new booklet, it would be appropriate to update of the booklet by Dr Chenwi (*Economic, Social & Cultural Rights at the International Level (2009)*) by adding a chapter or two on the national perspectives of the implementation of the ICESCR, and a chapter on the background / activities of the ICESCR Campaign in South Africa.

8. 2012 Upcoming events/opportunities

8.1 Ratification of the ICESCR

In the Campaign meeting of October 2011, Rajesh Latchman indicated that there was a possibility that the ICESCR would be ratified in 2012. As such the Campaign would need to follow up with the DIRCO representative with regards to this communication.

8.2 People's Health Assembly Global – July 2012

The PHM Global (PHM SA) seeks collaboration with ICESCR Campaign leading up to the Third People's Health Assembly (PHA3).

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Campaign for South Africa's Ratification of the ICESCR

the Community Law Centre (CLC) of the University of the Western Cape ,Black Sash ,People's Health Movement South Africa (PHMSA) ,National Welfare, Social Service and Development Forum (NWF) ,Global Call to Action against Poverty, South Africa (GCAP SA) ,Socio-Economic Rights Institute of South Africa (SERI) ,Studies in Poverty and Inequality Institute (SPII)

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Visit these websites for more information on the Campaign:

www.blacksash.org.za

www.peopletoparliament.org.za

Organisations that are currently signed up to the Campaign:

Amnesty International South Africa; Black Sash; Centre for Applied Legal Studies, University of the Witwatersrand; Centre for Human Rights, University of Pretoria; Centre on Housing Rights and Evictions; Citizens' Advice Bureau, Khayelitsha; Community Development Resource Association; Community Law Centre, University of the Western Cape; Foundation for Human Rights; GCAP SA (Global Call to Action Against Poverty); Global Water Foundation; Johannesburg Child Welfare Society; National Welfare Social Service & Development Forum; National Council of Women of South Africa; Nelson Mandela Children's Fund; People's Health Movement South Africa; PASSOP (People Against Suffering, Suppression, Oppression and Poverty); Planact; SANGOCO Western Cape; School of

Public Health, University of Cape Town; South African First Indigenous and Human Rights , Organisation; South African Council of Churches; Treatment Action Campaign; Tshwaranang Legal Advocacy Centre; Unity for Tertiary Refugee Students; National Women’s Coalition, Socio-Economic Rights Institute of South Africa.; SECTION 27; RAPCAN (Resources Aimed at the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect).