



WORLD STUDENT
CHRISTIAN FEDERATION
AFRICA REGION

*“WSCF HIV and AIDS Economic
Justice Platform of Action”*



WHY ECONOMIC JUSTICE IS NECESSARY?

The economy is always a realm in which power operates in many different ways-some hidden, some quite open-whether in the access to and use of resources like oil or grain, in the way men treat women in their household, in the attitudes of rich people to their poor neighbors, in the policies of the richer nations and in institutions like the world Bank and the IMF.

It is also evident that, “economic problems” have to do with increasingly interdependence in the context of glaring inequalities of power. This means that all national economies are being drawn in a single global network of power, thereby reducing the scope for independent national policies. Our advocacy work will therefore include awareness of power in economic life.



CRITICAL ISSUES IN HIV/AIDS AND ECONOMIC JUSTICE

The Following are Economic justice issues which need to be addressed in order to effectively combat HIV/AIDS

1. Debt and the inadequate Highly Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Initiative
 2. Structural adjustment programs (SAPs)
 3. Trade-Related Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) and the unavailability of cheap drugs
- If this three economic, financial and economic policies continue to exist, countries especially Africa will not combat HIV/AIDS successfully

DEBT AND THE INADEQUATE HIPC INITIATIVE

There are 41 highly indebted poor countries. 22 Highly indebted poor countries are under the relief scheme of the HIPC initiative of the G7. 18 of these HIPC are in Africa a home of 75% of the world's HIV positive people. In 1999, the HIPCs repaid 1680 million dollars more than they received in the form of new loans (World Bank, Global Development Finance 2000) this is a net negative transfer in favor of their creditors.

Each day 19000 children die as a consequence of debt related problems: Funds for clinics, dispensaries and medicines are still siphoned to debt payment. The 24 million signatures by Jubilee 2000 activists did not change the hearts of the rich.

Debt relief does not go far enough to make HIPCs debt sustainable. Its delivery has taken a very long time as well and so far only 4 countries have actually received it. It is spread out for 20 years.

STRUCTURAL ADJUSTMENT PROGRAMS (SAP)

SAPs are a set of neo-liberal policies demanded by the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank as conditions for receiving new loans or debt relief. These programs have been imposed on all HIPCs. Instruments which finance SAPs:

- Enhanced Structural Adjustment Facility (IMF) now renamed Poverty Reduction and Growth Facility to be carried through Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs)

- Poverty Reduction Credits (World Bank)

It has been realized by one of the IMF studies that 77% of countries undergoing structural adjustment saw the per capita rate of growth fall significantly over a twenty year period. They were also responsible for prolonged stagnation in Africa.

SAPs diverge resources from the public sector to the private sector. This move has

negatively affected the provision of health and education and hence meager resources to combat HIV/AIDS. Tanzania saw the increase of the poor rise to 51% of the population.

While others see these initiatives as not going too far to eliminate poverty others see that they are simply wrong. They benefit the minority while excluding the majority and hence unjust. HIV/ AIDS increases with poverty.

TRIPS AND AFFORDABLE PRICES FOR DRUGS NEEDED BY THE POOR SUFFERING FROM HIV/AIDS

Trade-Related Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) is an intergovernmental agreement signed under the WTO establishing international rules with respect to patents, copyrights and trade marks.

The Problem as far as drugs for AIDs are concerned:

- Companies which own or control patents on production of essential drugs needed for HIV/AIDs have been able to block competition from other lower cost generic producers.
- The prices of branded, patent products are often higher than the prices of similar medicines produced by alternative or generic sources.

For Instance when the Brazilian government began producing AIDs drugs generically, for example, the prices of equivalent branded products dropped by 79%. The same brand is sold at higher prices in countries where there is no competition from producers (prices range from US \$ 150-300 per year per patient compared with \$ 10000-15000).

WSCF believe that solution to HIV and AIDS can not be effective if Economic Justice issues listed above are not addressed and solved.

WSCF understands that a youth activists need to be cultivated educated and supported in order for them to be successful in implementing their progressive visions for the future. In an effort to assist young Christian leaders in their anti economic injustice campaigns, WSCF is here developing an initiative focused on developing youth leadership through youth led coalition activities.



AIM AND OBJECTIVES OF THE PROJECT

This project aimed to enable WSCF to establish an effective economic justice advocacy framework for its response to HIV/AIDS pandemic.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

- To Explore cutting edge analysis on economic justice and HIV/AIDS
- To Demonstrate how HIV/AIDS pandemic can be resolved through economic justice
- To Develop strategies for youth in the African churches and encouraged churches and youth movements to use this perspective in their advocacy work
- To Establish a coalition of Ecumenical youth movements to advocate for the critical issues of Economic justice and HIV/AIDS

STRATEGIES

WSCF intend to organize a consultation which will lead to the formation of a platform of action and advocacy points. Four SCMs will be selected from each sub-region (East, Central, South and West) to carry out advocacy work at the national level with the support of the Regional Office.

On the issue related to debt and inadequate HIPC Initiative, our Campaign should be: 100% debt cancellation for HIPCs: Funds out of this action be used for improving health with a focus on combating HIV/AIDs.

On the issue related to SAP's and PRSP's , advocacy work should be to stop SAPs and devise peoples- centered programs which will focus on availing resources (Credits, Education, Skills, information and access to markets) to the poor enabling them to take care of their own health.

On the issue related to TRIPS and affordable price for drugs Advocacy Work should support the Developing countries on the following:

1. TRIPs Agreement should not take precedence over the

fundamental human right to health care and the ethical responsibility to provide life saving medicines at affordable prices.

2. TRIPS should have a provision on compulsory licensing and parallel importation which will help developing countries to produce or buy drugs for AIDs at affordable prices.
3. The Highly AIDS affected Countries (HAACs) which are incidentally also HIPC's should be allowed to circumvent TRIPS in order to save people's lives.

4. Create philanthropic drug companies (no loss no profit companies) which will produce life saving drugs at prices affordable by that part of the world population which lives on less than one dollar a day. Churches could own such companies.
5. Have a global emergency campaign to raise the about 10 billion dollars needed to address the HIV/ AIDs pandemic in Africa where 25 million of the 36 million people infected with HIV live.

WSCF will form a ten member Youth advisory council specifically to provide on-going support to this initiative. The initiative will promote HIV/AIDS economic justice in a variety of ways which include National and International campaigns.



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CAPACITY BUILDING

WSCF will train and support young people fighting for HIV/AIDS economic justice at all levels to increase their knowledge on this issues. This will include planning, implementation and monitoring of the same activities

REGIONAL RESOURCE CENTER/ WEBSITE

Develop a comprehensive collection of information and materials on issues affecting the youth and HIV/AIDS and Economic justice. It will provide information, referrals and materials to WSCF members and the coalition. It will also offer information on issues concerning the youth.