

SA WOMEN, SPORT AND RECREATION

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1. INTRODUCTION

The role and position of women in South Africa has changed dramatically over the past decade, as the country has moved irresistibly on a path of democracy towards a non-racial, non-sexist society. Our constitution entrenches and guarantees the right of everyone to equality, as well as prohibits all forms of discrimination, (both direct or indirect) that may be based on race, gender, disability, ethnic origin, creed and any other.

Sport has played a major, and often leading role, in effectively facilitating the democratizing process at all levels and in different spheres of the South African society. Sport has been identified as one of government's national priorities due to its potential of taking a leading role in addressing gender issues and equalising the playing fields for women.

For many years women have been disadvantaged by being afforded relatively limited access to active participation in physical activity, physical recreation and sport. Women were also relatively absent in decision-making roles in sport such as in coaching, refereeing and as far as administrative positions are concerned. The lack of affirmative policies, gender focussed development initiatives, training, as well as educational and motivational programmes aimed at facilitating women's participation, impacted negatively on gender equity in sport. The needs of women should be addressed to challenge gender inequality and institute women in their rightful place in sport and in society. One of the main challenges remains the serious lack of representative female sport stars who should act as role models for eliciting participation and perseverance amongst the younger generation.

To address these challenges, a structure, Women and Sport South Africa (WASSA), was established. The proposed way forward on gender equity in this document, intends to provide a rationale and framework for actively and

concretely promoting sport and recreation among girls and women, in all spheres of society and specifically within the sport fraternity.

2. BACKGROUND ON WOMEN AND SPORT

WASSA is a structure that was launched in 1996 as an initiative from the then Department of Sport and Recreation (DSR) and the former National Sports Council (NSC). The purpose of this structure was to address the development of girls and women in sport and recreation with the emphasis on empowering them for optimal active participation and roleplaying. This initiative came after the realisation that girls and women are relatively underrepresented in local and international sport events.

A national planning and strategy workshop was held from 29 November to 1 December 1996 to discuss the development of sport and recreation for women and girls. The National Advisory Council was established and constituted with representatives from each of the nine Provincial Governments, NSC, National Paralympic Committee of South Africa (NAPCOSA), Department of Education (DOE) and the DSR. The purpose of the Council was to advise the Minister of Sport and Recreation on all issues relating to woman and sport. A draft national strategy document on women and sport was developed. The Sports Information and Science Agency (SISA) also conducted a research on the status of women and girls participating in sport. Before the establishment of the South African Sports Commission (SASC), the former DSR played an important supporting role in the activities of WASSA, i.e. in funding and the active role of the Minister.

WASSA initiated some programmes after realising that National Federations (NFs) were not committed to gender issues in sport. WASSA'S aim was to address inequality and to capacitate women and girls for optimal participation in sport and recreation. Confusion, however, was experienced when NF's complained that these programmes were running parallel to their

own programmes. In an attempt to resolve this issue and to give direction to gender equity in sport and recreation, WASSA was perceived to be a separate structure challenging the existing NFs with regard to the development of women in and through sport. Due to this situation, and for various reasons, the National Advisory Council of WASSA has become non functional the last couple of years.

The SASC organised a women and sport workshop on 14 July 2001 in Pretoria. Representatives from WASSA, Provincial Governments, the National Olympic Committee of South Africa (NOCSA), Sport and Recreation South Africa (SRSA) and the SASC were represented. The main purpose of this workshop was to review the role and responsibilities of WASSA. The main outcome of the workshop which was unanimously supported by all role-players, was that the strategy document 1997-2000 on Women and Sport should be reviewed. The representatives consulted with relevant role players and had forwarded their comments and proposals to the SASC by the end of September 2001.

On 28 August 2001, the Chairperson of WASSA and a representative from the SASC made a presentation to the Sport and Recreation Portfolio Committee on the status of WASSA. Subsequent to that, the chairperson of WASSA resigned.

3. PROPOSED WAY FORWARD

3.1 Governance

VISION

SAWSAR aims to address gender imbalances in South African sport and society by facilitating active participation of women and girls in sport and recreation from grass roots level to elite performances.

KEY PERFORMANCE AREAS

SAWSAR aims to work towards its vision through:

- Gender mainstreaming
- Sustainable programmes
- Practice initiatives
- Cultural diversity
- Resources
- Awareness

VALUES

Working Enhancement:

- Commitment
- Discipline
- Innovation
- Efficiency
- Excellence
- Equality
- Self motivation/self-enhancement

TEAM BUILDING

- Team work
- Respect and understanding
- Integrity
- Fair play/Equity
- Leadership
- Communication

STRUCTURES

- The Committee on Transformation of the SASC's Board should take responsibility for the overall strategic direction and policy framework on all matters pertaining to women and sport. A Commissioner will chair this Committee. The Committee can also appoint experts, based on knowledge ability and experience in their specialized field to serve on the Committee.
- Co-ordinators for women and sport, headed by a member of the South African Sports Commission, will assist the Committee on Access and Equity. These co-ordinators will comprise mainly of female representatives and sport co-ordinators from the nine Provinces. The main responsibilities of the co-ordinators will be to initiate, implement and oversee all operational issues.
- Provincial Forums (please find attached, diagram A)
 - The role of these forums will be to:
 - Advise the co-ordinator on equity issues.
 - Assist in dispute resolution.
 - Facilitate information dissemination sessions.
 - Share ideas and address key issues.
 - Assist with equity research.
 - Ensure that key role players establish equity desks.
 - Address cultural dynamics

3.2 **Responsibilities of the SASC**

- The SASC will facilitate the process of the development and determining the role of women in sport and recreation.

- Through a consultative process, the SASC will submit the following documents for inputs and ratification to the SASC Board's Committee on Transformation:
 - A women and sport policy document.
 - Business plans and budgets for relevant projects.
 - Strategic direction and framework on all issues pertaining to gender equity and equality in sport and recreation.
 - Proposals for applied research.

- The SASC will be responsible to manage, co-ordinate and monitor all activities related to women and sport in conjunction with the co-ordinators of women and sport.

- The Committee will be responsible to report to the Transformation Committee on all relevant gender-related sport and recreation issues.

- The SASC will be South Africa's official governmental representative of South Africa at national and international events on gender, sport and recreation issues.

- The SASC will need to inform the following structures about the latest development:
 - IWASA
 - Rehabilitation International
 - Commonwealth
 - Supreme Council
 - SRSA
 - NOCSA
 - SASSU
 - USSASA

3.3 **Joint responsibilities of the SASC and the Provincial Governments**

- Initiate sustainable sport and recreation projects for girls and women in the Provinces.
- Initiate and facilitate awareness campaigns.
- Ensure close co-operation between the provincial co-ordinators and the national office of the SASC.
- Contribute to the development and updating of a women and sport database.
- Facilitate research and publicise, participation trends of girls and women.
- Advise stakeholders on all relevant gender, sport and recreation issues.
- Motivate funding for gender equitable sport and recreation projects.
- Initiate applied research on women, sport and recreation issues.

3.4 **Responsibilities of the Provincial Governments**

- Appointment of a provincial co-ordinator responsible for women, sport and recreation.
- Enable the provincial co-ordinator to fulfil his/her responsibilities.
- Facilitate the establishment of a women sport and recreation desk.

- Work in close co-operation with the SASC on national women sport and recreation projects.
- Submit information and recommendations on women and sport projects and activities in the Provinces to the SASC.
- Provide funding for women and sport projects in the Provinces.

3.5 **Focus areas**

3.5.1 Access and participation

Providing opportunities for women and girls to acquire basic as well as advanced skills for participation at all levels of sport and recreation by means of:

- The implementation, co-ordination and monitoring of a national plan with a view to promote women in sport.
- Empowerment of provincial structures to implement programmes in their regions in support of a national plan.
- Ensuring that facilities are accessible for women and girls to the same extent as they are for men and boys.
- Encourage role models to motivate and encourage participation amongst the younger generation.
- Facilitate and liaise with NFs regarding their initiatives to support women in sport. (Focus will be on the NFs identified by

the SASC as priority sports. It will, however, be expected of all NFs to promote and develop women in sport.)

- Monitor participation trends in clubs and federations.
- Facilitate media campaigns to address gender equity and equality issues in sport and recreation.

3.5.2 Leadership

Focus on decision-making positions in sport and recreation. It also involves the acquisition and transfer of skills, to:

- Capacitate (recruit, educate and train) women as sports administrators, technical officials, coaches and/or referees in order to install gender equity in leadership positions.
- The women who are in sport administration, often fill the lower positions, for example, at club or regional levels. Men dominate the higher positions. Furthermore, women tend to be put into support positions such as secretaries, while men take up the executive positions.
- Ensure that proper and equitable opportunities and 'career paths' are in place for women to advance from junior to senior executive positions.
- Educating and training (capacity building) women for diverse roles in recreation and sport.

- To accommodate and address family demands and responsibilities that are regarded as major obstacles preventing women from getting involved in sports administration at higher levels.

3.5.3 Information and resources

Data on women in sport and recreation-related issues and resources for projects:

- Inform women about all the advantages of taking part in recreation and sport and provide information that could assist them in overcoming prejudices and misunderstandings they may encounter.
- Solicit resources in partnership with role-players for women and girls for optimal acting and participation in sport development.
- Expose sponsors and the media that have always been biased towards male athletes and sports, in terms of sponsorship and media coverage, to the advantages involved in the sponsoring and media coverage of women sport.

3.6 **Principles underpinning the Policy**

The framework of the transformation guidelines should direct this policy and the following should be considered:

- Recognition of the differences and the inequality against women as a group and taking steps to bridge the gap through empowerment programmes and initiatives. In designing

empowerment programmes, cognisance should be taken that women differ according to factors such as race, disability, class, culture, sexual orientation and geographical location.

- Governmental sponsored programmes, initiatives and structures should provide opportunities to everyone to enjoy and practice his or her cultural, religious and customary beliefs without discrimination on the basis of gender.
- The National Policy Framework on the Empowerment of Women should be supported by relevant structures, programmes, projects and/or initiatives.
- The policy should be consistent with the Brighton (1994) and Windhoek (1998) Declarations. The Brighton Declaration provides the principles which should guide actions to increase the involvement of women in sport and recreation at all levels. The Brighton Declaration has been endorsed by the SA Government and non-government organisations, National Olympic Committees, International and National sport federations and educational and research institutions from 82 countries.
- Timeframes and benchmarks must be set aside to measure progress on gender equity and equality in sport and recreation through an integrated approach to avoid duplication.
- Safety and security of women.

3.7 **Intervention**

- Programmes/Projects
The programmes/projects that are designed to address gender equity and equality, enhance the increase of participation and the empowerment of girls and women in sport and recreation.
- These activities should be well co-ordinated to avoid duplication.
- The programmes should focus on participants and officials by capacitating through formal and informal training.
- Strategies should be drawn up to address women' and girls' development, as this is one of the government priority areas.
- The SASC must ensure that its programmes\projects address gender equity and equality issues.
- Role-players
There should be a data base on role-players responsible for the development of women and girls in sport and recreation. Each stakeholder's role and responsibility must be clearly defined.

3.8 **Monitoring and Evaluation**

It is vital that the implementation and impact of the policy framework are effectively monitored and evaluated.

Why monitor?

- It measures the effectiveness and impact of policy and structures.

- As a new project, it is important to monitor the success and impact of programmes and initiatives that seek to promote gender equality principles. (Impact Assessment)
- Assess participation and multi-level representation of women in sport and recreation trends.
- Assess gender inequality as promoted by the media, sponsors and relevant role players concerning sport and recreation.

International, national, and provincial indicators will be monitored as outlined in the policy document.

National

- Adopted National Policy.
- Seamless co-ordination and reporting to stakeholders.
- Strategic direction on gender-related sport issues.
- Oversee and monitor the policies, business plans, and budgets on gender equity and equality.

Joint National and Provincial Indicators

- Development of National Gender action plan in Sport and Recreation.
- Include gender equality principles in vision and mission statements of all federations and other stakeholders.
- Ability to respond to the needs of women within their respective structures.
- Collection, implementation and publication of data.

- Capacity building.
- Development of gender related targets.
- Increase access of women to management and leadership positions.
- Transformation in the allocation of resources in Sport and Recreation.
- Positive and equitable portrayal of women in the media and access to resources (sponsorships).
- Improved self images.
- Awareness campaigns.
- Research.

International Indicators

Participation and affiliation to International Gender Bodies

Compliance with:

Beijing Platform for Action

Brighton Declaration

Windhoek Declaration

Monitoring should be incisive (effective and clear).

4. CONCLUSION

It is essential that relevant role-players provide inputs for the policy guidelines on the development of women in sport. A broad, consultative workshop should take place early in 2003 to address issues such as:

- Identification and role demarcation of all relevant stakeholders.
- Problem areas challenges and recommendations made on how to deal with them in future.
- The development of a national plan to promote girls' and women's participation in sport and recreation – in all spheres and at all levels.
- Finalise and publish a Women and Sport Policy.

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