

SIR RICHARD JOLLY INAUGURAL LECTURE

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When I was invited to give this inaugural lecture I asked myself what could I, who had spent thirty years of my adult life in clandestine struggle against apartheid say that would be relevant to the eminent career of Sir Richard Jolly? How could my quite different career as a life-long South African freedom fighter talk to his trajectory? In a lecture to commemorate the more than four decades of work in international development of my friend Richard Jolly, how could I do justice to the full scope of the subject of our celebration here?

Richard's career spans the period of decolonisation and its school of economic development; the end of the cold war, the surge of unfettered market capitalism; the rise of new paradigms of human development; and now, don't we all hope, a move towards a more principled approach to relations between states, and between peoples within states.

I too, have lived through those times and seen their evolution from various and varied vantage points, and in particular from the vantage point of developing countries that gave me shelter: Tanzania, Angola, Mozambique, Zambia, amongst others, and now South Africa. With ten years in government my forty years has run parallel to Richard Jolly's and what I have found intriguing is how similar our commitment is and has been.

A famous Southern African author, Bessie Head, said that it doesn't matter where a human being lives, as long as their contribution to life is constructive, not destructive. Richard Jolly has brought to his life integrity, passion and commitment, and a great constructive energy. It seems to me (and I may be accused of some bias here) that in many ways the democratic project in South Africa has followed that same path of passion, integrity and commitment. And at the end of the tunnel, the vision is the same, the vision of a world in which people can live in dignity, in which women and men can achieve their full human potential, a world based on a common set of human values and mutual respect.

South Africa has, for many years, been described as a World in One Country, both by the apartheid apologists who sought to sell the image of happy ethnic communities living contented lives in their separate enclaves and by those on the other side of the barricades who saw in the huge divides between rich and poor, developed and developing within the country, a microcosm of the global picture.

So what I propose to do is to tell you a little about how the struggles for peace and democracy, for justice and development mirrored the broader challenges we face in this rapidly globalising world; how they were nurtured by the international system of which Sir Richard has been a role player for so many years; and how indeed, the progress that we made was helped so greatly by the global institutions which he holds so dear, including his very own Water Supply and Sanitation Collaborative Council (WSSCC) which he led to a new height by putting the people in the centre of the global development agenda through his fight to get the sanitation goals in the WSSD agreed. I will also raise some of the challenges that we face, both in South Africa, and in the world, if we are to achieve our collective vision.

And I will use the prism of water through which to reflect on these themes.

KEY THEMES

Inheritance - World in one country

The tourist spin-doctors of South Africa's apartheid government used to refer to our "world in one country", highlighting the mountains and the beaches, the wildlife and the city life, eastern and western cultures, the traditional and the modern, glossing over the racial brutality of the time.

We are still a "world in one country". In 1994 we inherited a grossly unequal society whose divisions in wealth and poverty closely reflected the global picture. (Our PPP adjusted GDP per capita is just over US\$8000 - the world average has passed US\$5000. Our GINI coefficient is around 75; estimates of the global number, depending who you talk to and what methodology is employed, range between 55 and 80).

In his most recent state of the nation address, our President Thabo Mbeki referred to the dual economy still present in South Africa, a dual economy that is clearly visible in the world around us.

In South Africa, we are implementing a major process of national reconstruction and development to address the inequities of the past and to build a single economy and a single nation. We envisage what will be a whole and more prosperous nation because it will recognise the dignity and draw upon the strengths of all our people not just protect the affluence of a minority. Again, you may choose to draw global parallels.

The challenges faced by South African society were reflected in the water sector. It is not just that our water resources in a semi-arid country of variable rainfall are limited, unreliable and unevenly distributed - in this, we have a tougher challenge than most, with only 32 out of 182 countries having less water per person than we do. In 1994 one third of our people, of a population of forty million at that time, were without a safe water supply, a half without adequate sanitation - in this too, the divisions were even more acute than at global level.

Anti-apartheid - Programme to Combat Racism

But to be able to address the simple challenges of water and sanitation, we had to end apartheid.

Four decades and two generations later, a younger generation could be forgiven for forgetting the challenges of the process of decolonisation which brought to an end centuries of what was correctly described as imperialism.

And it is easy to forget that the establishment of a non-racial democracy in South Africa in 1994 effectively marked the culmination of that process of national liberation in Africa (give or take a few historical anomalies).

It is easy to forget the critical role played by the global organisations, the UN family, in providing an environment within which we could press our case. The work that was done on decolonisation, on racism, on human rights, was all quite fundamental to the process of liberation in SA.

Annie Besant, a British social reformer closely associated with the Indian freedom struggle, speaking on India early in the last century, remarked, "Either all human beings have rights, or none have any". That comments refers as much to human rights in different countries as the need for human rights to apply to women and men equally. The framework provided us by international campaigns to promote human rights provided a vehicle through which to challenge the iniquities of apartheid. And the framework has matured into an instrument that has provided the ethical basis for a democratic South Africa, in many areas, not least the provision of basic water services and sanitation.

Social rights, Human Development: Putting people first, at the centre of development

Like our attitude to discrimination, our management of water and with it sanitation and hygiene issues, is a reflection of our values and an instrument to reach the goals we are trying to achieve as societies. While people talk disparagingly about "parish pump politics", the reality is that, in many communities, politics begins with the management of water. Just as early civilisations emerged along, or even

between, rivers, so early forms of local democracy in Europe emerged in the 11th century in the prototypes of the Dutch water boards

Through the medium of water, we can:

- * Help to empower individuals and women in particular through personal knowledge
- * grow social capital in communities
- * establish effective organisations that become means of governance
- * initiate economic transformation and liberation
- * create the conditions for a sustainable future
- * take the small but a giant step for the poor towards improvement of the quality of life

As I said, water is about values.

Convenient access to safe water (and, with it, sanitation) is about more than health. Using the language of the South African Constitution, it is firstly about the basic value of human dignity. It is also about human rights: aside from the right to sufficient water, proper management of water is also about the right to have an environment not harmful to health, an environment protected for the benefit of present and future generations.

All this is very pertinent to Richard Jolly's life and commitment. It is significant that the language of the water and sanitation programme in South Africa derives from the common ground created by the global programmes to promote social and economic rights. It is also significant that Richard Jolly has recognised and promoted the role of women in the delivery of effective water supply and sanitation services. It is perhaps opportune to remind one of the words of the Brandt Report on development: "any definition of development is incomplete if it fails to comprehend the contribution of women to development and the consequences of development for the lives of women."

So I am going to talk briefly about what we are doing in South Africa to turn the dream of the right to water and sanitation, and the right to an environment not harmful to health, into a reality. And I will say a little about what this may mean for the wider world, which will perhaps provide some context for the world in which Richard Jolly has been working.

RDP as a practical reflection of those values, those ideas

The Reconstruction and Development Programme of South Africa's first democratic government was published after perhaps the most massive consultative process ever undertaken in South Africa - and equalled in few other countries - that ran between 1992 and 1994, up until our first democratic elections, involving hundreds of thousands of people throughout the country.

It is worth quoting at length:

It recognised that South Africa's objectives aimed to:

- * eliminate poverty, and create a better life for all;
- * address economic imbalances in the society,
- * create productive employment opportunities for all,
- * promote development in our Southern African region and the African continent, and
- * integrate into the world economy.

One element of the RDP focused on improving the physical conditions of life including the provision of water and sanitation.

Arising from this we developed in the years since 1994 a national water and sanitation programme, the key elements of which include:

- * a policy and legislative framework within which the national programme has been implemented
- * a major capital works programme
- * recognition of the role of women in sanitation and water supply delivery and maintenance
- * a "free basic water" and sanitation policy, which aims to ensure that affordability is not a barrier to access to safe water, health and dignity

* devolution of responsibility from the national government to local government.

Human development - people first

One role of Richard Jolly within the UN system was to take over from renowned Pakistani economist Mahbub ul Haq the task of producing the UN's annual Human Development Report. This has been an important counterpoint to the traditional focus on economic growth, placing, as it does, equal emphasis on the social outcomes of government policy.

The importance of this has been well demonstrated in South Africa where the programme of government since 1994 gave priority to key social dimensions of transformation. One element of this has been the high priority afforded to the provision of basic water and sanitation services.

As a consequence, in the first ten years of democracy, the Department of Water Affairs and Forestry will have provided basic safe water supplies to 10 million of 14 million rural people without service in 1994, and government as a whole (through housing and related urban programmes) has improved service to over an additional 3,4 million people or in total 30% of the present population. This leaves just over four million of our population of 45 million people unserved at present.

However, provision of infrastructure does not guarantee ongoing access to services and here again, it has been through a rights based approach that the "right to water" has been given effect.

We learnt quickly that while financial contributions from users are vital to keep services running, poverty, that "hard old hag" as D.H. Lawrence politically incorrectly described it (1), can be an absolute bar to access to the basic services, which are needed for health and dignity and are rights in terms of the South African Constitution. When we found that many poor people were reverting to dangerous water sources because they could not afford a dollar a month for safe supplies, we changed, just 3 years ago, our policy of requiring some payment from all. Our local governments are now funded to provide a free basic water amount, currently 25 litres per person per day. This was seen as heresy by the development orthodoxy, but it was a logical conclusion of applying a people centred rights-based approach.

I should emphasise that the institution of non-racial, non-sexist local government is something very new that we are still building in South Africa. The provision of water and sanitation is a crucial focus and one of the responsibilities as we roll out the water programme is to ensure that the institutions of effective local democracy are nurtured and given practical effect.

But the translation of human rights into practical public finance was not that difficult. Using straightforward tax-and-allocate public finance approaches and institutional reforms as basic as voting for municipal councillors, it is proving possible to bridge the divides in our society in a very practical way. We aim by 2008 to have largely eliminated the water supply backlog and made the right to water a reality. And, since a severe cholera outbreak in South Africa's KwaZulu-Natal province gave us a wake up call in 2000, matching achievements in water supply with progress in sanitation and hygiene awareness is a priority at both political and community level with a 2010 target for providing basic sanitation for all. Like the rest of the world South Africa too had neglected the sanitation issue, which had significantly lagged behind the provision of clean water. We were fortunate to have the experience and wisdom of Richard Jolly and his indefatigable WSSCC team to draw upon and help us to address the sanitation and hygiene challenge. As John Donne's saying goes: no man is an island unto himself. Neither is any one country. The dark clouds of our cholera outbreak had a silver lining ushering in our partnership with the WSSCC; a partnership that has radiated throughout Africa in a few short years and linked my country and continent with a movement that now encircles the globe as the WASH for all programme.

Every people's based movement needs its movers and shakers, its motivational leaders, and in this Richard Jolly is a trailblazer, wonderfully witty, irreverent and wise, who this ageing revolutionary will happily follow on to the barricades.

Ladies and Gentlemen: While South Africa's priority has been basic services for the poor, we continue to meet the needs of the core economy as well as provide higher levels of domestic service in our

urban areas. These users pay for themselves, with at least 70% of the sector's annual cash flow of over a billion dollars funded from user charges. The financing of long-term infrastructure projects (the largest of which, the Lesotho Highlands Water Project, has cost about \$2 billion US dollars) now comes almost entirely from our internal markets. From government, there is an investment flow of around \$200 million US dollars annually and an operating subsidy of \$100 million.

Because it is so relevant to today's theme I need to add that, aside from delivering basic water and sanitation, we have also made substantial progress in the integrated management of our water resources, as we have to do in our arid environment. Some indeed say that we are in the vanguard of environmental management (amongst developing countries at least, although we can claim that our legislation is almost certainly better than the USA's, in part because we have not fragmented water resource management between states and we drew directly from our Constitutional values in writing our laws).

We all know that just because an issue is important does not mean that it is easy to deal with - often the contrary. So one final point from South Africa: We have demonstrated in a very practical way that by addressing poverty, we could mobilise the social and political support we needed of all sectors of our population, to protect our natural environment. This is surely a lesson with global implications.

GLOBAL ACTION

The Global Goals For Water And Sanitation Can Be Met

Returning to the global issues which bring us here today, this audience undoubtedly supports the commitment made by the world's Heads of State at the UN's Millennium Session to achieve the Millennium Development Goals, including safe water, reaffirmed at the Johannesburg WSSD and expanded to include safe sanitation. The challenge is to make good on the pledge. A pledge, by the way, that Richard and I discussed with the media while seated rather comfortably on VIP toilets at a water sector exhibition - VIP not meaning very important people, but ventilation improved pit-latrines.

One key message that South Africa's experience suggests is that the global water and sanitation goals can be met. What South Africa does is straightforward in public finance terms. Given our inherited inequalities, the redistributive use of national tax revenues to fund investment in basic needs infrastructure and its ongoing operation is appropriate and efficient. Our Constitution's values are the foundation from which local government provides services with national government's support. To be trite, all we needed to do was to end apartheid and establish a government with the necessary political will - a government that puts people (women and men) first.

What is the equivalent source of values, what is the framework and what are the options at a global scale? During the World Summit, President Thabo Mbeki repeatedly referred to "global apartheid" and we need to ask, what is the global public policy equivalent of ending apartheid in South Africa?

The management of water services is often best decentralised so that communities can take ownership of them. Unfortunately, at global level, this does not address one of the key inputs - funding. Most of the global water backlog is found in the poorest countries, which are not able to redistribute between rich and poor, unlike middle-income countries like South Africa.

So funding responsibilities need to be placed at the appropriate level, which, in a world deeply divided between rich and poor nations, may often be to the regional and global level. Is the anxiety of richer nations perhaps that commitment to a goal, however obvious and desirable, may turn into a duty to contribute to its achievement?

It is a matter for the people and their governments in the rich world to decide whether they want to match their current global power and wealth with an acceptance of global responsibilities.

There are many ways to exercise such global responsibilities. When there is talk of assistance for developing countries, attention always turns first to increased development assistance, ODA. Globally, there is of course more than enough money to meet basic minimum needs in water and sanitation. Just the wealth destroyed in North America in the recent IT/telecom bubble would have

done nicely. The additional investment needed to meet the basic needs of the poor by 2015 is a perfectly feasible amount, perhaps US\$10 billion annually.

But more money need not come from formal development assistance. It is unfortunate that the current world order allows free movement of funds while restricting movement of labour and goods. The overall pattern that this establishes is the concentration of capital in the developed countries and the countervailing concentration of poverty in developing countries.

If we insist on barring free movement of people, there are developmental alternatives that can be considered. Managing the movement of goods, trade reform, is another. If the benefits of economic activity were more fairly shared across the world, by allowing poor people to sell their products in northern markets for instance, the ability of poor countries to fund their own water supply and sanitation improvements would be substantially enhanced - more so than by any doubling of Overseas Development Assistance. Investment policies could have the same effect.

Freeing up trade, directing investment in the interests of the poor is difficult and controversial. So, all too often, we are left with the last option, in many ways the least satisfactory option because it is perhaps the least sustainable and that is aid.

But we hope, in the spirit of the Millennium Declaration and the commitments made at the series of global meetings in Doha, Monterrey, Johannesburg and elsewhere, that we will see a real increase in the resources available to address poverty and that water and sanitation will get their just share.

Obviously, there is a great deal that will have to be done by countries and communities themselves if more money is to result in real progress. But we must not go on stressing the current need to first get the policies and strategies right before we start getting things done. African countries have conducted a generation of capacity building and policy reform without seeing practical results. In frustration, many of our brightest stars have long since left for more rewarding climes, with those replacing them having to learn how to re-invent the wheel.

There is a question of trust and sequencing here. It is important that resources be made available for people to use as effectively and efficiently as possible, indeed to learn in the best way possible, by doing. Good approaches and good governance derive from practice and experience. And trust to allow this to happen is essential if we are to overcome the challenge of dependency and allow nations to develop.

Conclusion

The ideas of human development do not just have legitimacy. As the case of South Africa (and many other countries throughout the world) shows, they can be, and are being translated into practical changes in peoples' lives.

The recognition that people are at the centre of development may appear obvious, but when we find that cholera outbreaks can be managed best when people understand the nature of their health challenges and change their behaviour accordingly, we begin to realise the power of people centred development in changing the world. When we recognise the enormous energy and will of poor women to change their lives we realise this power even more.

And so, in the provision of water and sanitation, we must go beyond the provision of infrastructure. History is littered with case studies of development projects where infrastructure broke down shortly after the international consultants withdrew, scattering in developing countries the bones of development dreams. We must ensure that the infrastructure will carry on working. We must ensure that the infrastructure will meet the needs of the people who will use it. We must ensure that the interface between infrastructure and people is improved. We must understand that we cannot have clean and safe drinking water in the rural areas, and urban human settlements, without the provision of adequate means of sanitation and the hygiene awareness of the populous.

To this end, we must ensure that we must, as Richard Jolly has done for so long, put both women and men at the centre of development. Development is, first and foremost, about the development of people, and only then about the delivery of infrastructure. Without the two, in partnership,

development will not be sustainable. Once again, you may choose to see the global parallels.

Sir Richard Jolly, who I have had the personal honour of knowing and working with, is a man who has always put people at the centre in his thoughts and actions. He is a man who has brought passion, commitment and immense compassion to his work in the promotion of human development and human dignity. He is a man with a vision, but with the remarkable skill of turning that vision into concrete reality. He is a man to whom we all owe a great deal, not least much of the remarkable breakthrough at the World Summit on Sustainable Development when sanitation was finally put on the world agenda with the challenging target of halving the proportion of people without access to adequate sanitation by 2015. It has been an enormous privilege to travel part of this journey with Richard, amongst a group which he fondly refers to, as "we few, we lucky few, we band of brothers and sisters", rendering Henry V politically correct.

And one counts here his redoubtable CEO, Gourisankar Ghosh, Eirah Gore-Dale with her public relations wizardry, Richard's successor as Chairperson of the WSSCC Jan Pronk, Water Ministers such as Uganda's Maria Mutagamba, Nigeria's Mujaji Shagari, Kenya's Martha Karua and many others. Moreover, we must place amongst these luminaries those working at the grassroots level to transform water, sanitation and hygiene initiatives. Such as Nafisa Barot of Utthan of Gujarat, India; Queen Mokhabela of South Africa, Nelly Guapacha, a community activist in Colombia, David Omayo of Kenya and Dibalok Singha of Dhaka, Bangladesh, the type of people who feature in the excellent new report by WSSCC, entitled Listening. The list actually turns the band of brothers and sisters into an army, in fact a growing international movement whom I came across through Richard and his WASH network.

Finally, let me take a leaf out of Richard Jolly's book of life and say that we should not see the challenge of development as a challenge of removing negative conditions, but as a challenge of opening the doors of hope for all the people of this world. This is the spirit that effuses South African President Mbeki's vision of an African Renaissance. Perhaps the day will come when we will all see ourselves as a country in one world, in which we see people and nations as being of equal value. Just as I believe the Millennium Development Goals, the WSSD targets, can be met, I believe that we can build a just world, a world free from poverty and discrimination. That, I believe, will be a secure world, a stable world, a world in which we would all like our children and our grandchildren to live. A world in which Richard Jolly would like all the people of the world to live, with equal rights and dignity and better health for children and their mothers.

The young Richard Jolly once followed in the footsteps of one of Africa's greatest generals, the Phoenician Hannibal and trekked with an elephant over the Alps and into Italy. I wish to say as I salute him on behalf of "the lucky few" who have journeyed with him; that although Hannibal failed to triumph over the Romans, he had the courage to aspire, and Richard has aspired and triumphed. For you Richard I use the Latin motto: "Per Aspera Ad Astra!"

If humankind aspires to reach for the stars, then surely we can banish poverty and create a dignified life for all. We reach out with you Richard. Richard Jolly's life has been in serving the hungry, the thirsty, the marginalised, the vulnerable, the poor. Lest anybody accuse him of simply being starry-eyed, let them note that you cannot get more down to earth, more close to the grass roots than through the universal provision of water and sanitation.

Notes:

1. Poverty, by D.H. Lawrence "I know that poverty is a hard old hag, and a monster, when you're pinched for actual necessities And whoever says she isn't, is a liar."