



PRESS RELEASE

30 November 2006

This weekend will see an historical gathering of 150 women farm workers at Elsenberg in Stellenbosch, organised by the Women on Farms Project. 2006 marks the 10th anniversary of the Women on Farms Project, the only organisation in South Africa exclusively focused on the rights of women who live and work on farms.

Much has changed in South Africa in the last 10 years. 1996 saw the introduction of the first laws aimed at directly strengthening the constitutional rights of farm worker communities. It also saw the introduction GEAR, as well as the adoption of the South African constitution, the cornerstone of South African democracy.

But, are farm women any better off today than they were 10 years ago? While the constitution and all related laws serve to provide the framework of rights' protection for farm workers, women still struggle to realise their basic rights as South African citizens. Specifically, farm women:

- Face the ongoing scourge of gender-based violence on a daily basis, with very little access to state protection;
- Can only access farm worker housing through a relationship with a male worker, even where this relationship is abusive;
- Struggle to access decent healthcare services, including access to ARVs;
- Face gender discrimination as workers in the agricultural sector.

Despite these ongoing challenges, through WFP's work over the past 10 years, we have seen a growing number of women being able to find their voices and assert their rights. How have women managed to do this within such a hostile environment?

The theme of the conference is *Changing Lives: What has Changed and How Change Happens?* Women will share experiences with each other and define our vision for change on the farm lands for the next 10 years. The programme will include a keynote address by Deputy Minister of Provincial and Local Government, Ms Nomatyala Hangana.

WFP extends an open invitation to all members of the press to attend the conference.

VENUE	Percheron Hall, Elsenburg Agricultural College, Stellenbosch
DATES	2 – 4 December 2006
DIRECTIONS	Map attached
PROGRAMME	Attached

FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT:

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