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International Conference on Social Justice

The International Conference on Law, Policy and Social Justice: Taking Economic Equality Seriously

Conference Concept Note

The *International Conference on Law, Policy and Social Justice: Taking Economic Equality Seriously*, is a global platform that seeks to bring together social justice researchers and other stakeholders to reflect on advancing equality and ending poverty in economies globally, with a special focus on progress, shortfalls and prospects regarding law and policy responses to the Covid-19 pandemic and Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) on the African continent.

The conference will further explore the role of economic equality in sustaining peace, stability and the rule of law in emerging democracies.

- Date:** 11 October 2021 (Preceding the Summit, taking place on 12 October 2021)
- Venue:** Hybrid. Registration link and link to digital platform will be shared with delegates.
- Stakeholders:** The event will bring together academics, lawyers, legislators and other policymakers, judicial officers, civil society, business and international stakeholders.
- Cost:** R350 per delegate

Objectives

The key objectives of the conference are:

1. To provide a forum for sharing of ongoing research outputs and engaging in dialogue on advancing equality and related social justice matters, including ending poverty by 2030 in line with the UN SDGs thus anchoring peace, stability and the rule of law.
2. To contribute to the deepening of social justice scholarship and the systematisation of the incorporation of a social justice lens in academic work, policy design, law reform, legal practice and other endeavours that have implications for advancing equality and ending poverty by 2030 through the presentation and discussion of research papers and related outputs.
3. To provide space for ongoing exploration of good practices in the use of disaggregated data to predict the social justice impact of planned law and policies focused on economic equality and sub-issues such as 1) land reform, property rights, and the distribution of assets; 2) business ownership; 3) financial inclusion; 4) wealth and income distribution; 5) social security and the basic income grant; 6) agriculture and food security; 7) digital inclusion; 8)

social justice resonant economic theories including indices for measuring economic growth; and 9) emerging tools for social impact conscious economic planning.

4. To contribute to awareness of SDG goals and incorporation thereof in academic scholarship and teaching as well as policy design and law reform.
5. To promote collaboration on social justice, research, teaching, policy reform and monitoring of progress.

Benefits

- Learn from good practices demonstrated across various academic disciplines
- Utilise opportunity to present new pathways for the achievement of an equal economy aligned with the Musa Plan for Social Justice (M-Plan) key objectives and the SDGs.
- Meet other academics engaged in social justice research to share what works and what does not and identify synergies and opportunities for collaboration.
- Be part of key social justice policy development that feeds into concrete recommendations for action.
- Receive peer feedback on research directions and outputs while tapping into a broader reservoir of literature and information on social justice scholarship and policy directions
- A programme of activities allowing open dialogue, constructive critique and self-reflection and connection to an emerging global social justice movement.

Background

The Social Justice Chair (CSJ) is a social justice hub that promotes social justice scholarship, consciousness, public policy design skills and collaboration around social justice issues and community access to social justice resources, to accelerate social justice reform in academia and society. The International Social Justice Conference will precede the Third Annual Social Justice Summit. The Summit seeks to reaffirm and give effect to the CSJ and stakeholders' commitment made by government, business, civil society and academia to join hands in implementing the Musa Plan for Social Justice at the Inaugural Social Justice Summit and International Conference, held in August 2019.

At the Inaugural Summit, delegates approved a Social Justice Declaration adopting the Social Justice M-Plan and committed to join hands to accelerate progress on poverty and inequality. The International Conference that followed, further adopted a resolution that committed the academic community, civil society and business community to join hands with government to drive the eradication of poverty and inequality in pursuit of social justice.

To ensure the realisation of these goals, this conference seeks to deepen social justice scholarship focussed on identifying, discussing and engaging socio-economic theory which prioritises social justice and inclusive economic sustainability as a prerequisite for the achievement of peace and for reducing poverty and inequality in South Africa and on the African continent. The conference further seeks to evaluate the African continent's responses to the Covid-19 pandemic and its impact on poverty and inequality in the continent, incorporating food security and income security.

The backdrop of the conference will be an appreciation of the fact that there is no gainsaying the fact that, in the absence of meaningful progress on the social justice dimensions of economic equality and

poverty, sustainable peace remains a pipedream in the continent and globally. This is evident in the growth of extremism through the mining, by demagogues, of poverty, inequality and related grievances of communities and groups that feel left behind regarding economic equality. It is further evident that the Covid-19 pandemic and fourth industrial revolution disruptions have worsened poverty and inequality, particularly economic inequality, and food security.

Draft Programme

08:45 – 09:00	Welcoming (15 min)
09:00 – 09:30	Opening Remarks (30 mins)
09:30 – 10:00	Keynote Address: (30 mins)
10:00 – 10:10	Closing remarks (10 mins)
10:10 – 10:30	Tea and Coffee and Photo session
10:30 – 12:30	Plenary: (10 mins each) (6 speakers) Questions – 60 minutes
12:30 – 13:30	Lunch
13:30 – 15:00	Parallel Panels (<i>Papers of 15 mins each to be presented by three presenters per breakaway on the thematic areas, followed by 60 mins discussions</i>)

Thematic areas

1) land reform, property rights, and the distribution of assets; 2) business ownership; 3) financial inclusion; 4) wealth and income distribution; 5) social security and the basic income grant; 6) agriculture and food security; 7) digital inclusion; 8) social justice resonant economic theories including indices for measuring economic growth; and 9) emerging tools for social impact conscious economic planning.

15:00 - 15:20	Tea and Coffee
15:20 – 15:50	Report back from roundtables (<i>Rapporteurs from each group report back on conference proceedings 8 x 5 mins each</i>)
15:50 – 16:30:	Declaration / Statement
16:30 – 17:00	Final words: Prof Thuli Madonsela (15 mins)

*Resolution adopted by the Inaugural International Social Justice Conference 2019,
Hazendal Wine Estate*

I/I. Leveraging the Sustainable Development Goals and the Global Human Rights Agenda to advance Social Justice

The Participants,

Mindful of the reality that as long as there is injustice somewhere there cannot be sustainable peace and that the greatest imperative of our time is social justice as a basis for sustainable peace, whilst acknowledging the inherent worth, value and dignity of the national environment,

Recognising the constitutional responsibility to advance equality, human dignity, freedom and social justice,

Concerned about the systemic disparities that continue to pervade society and the resulting deterioration in social cohesion and environmental sustainability,

Note that socio- economic disparities is primarily as a result of the intersecting grounds of race, gender and class, as well as ceaseless patterns of violence and environmental abuse, and within a common understanding of the psychological and emotional trauma of a large majority of our people,

Acknowledge the important role of academia and civil society in advancing the global Social Justice Agenda,

Welcoming the initiative of the Law Trust Chair in Social Justice, Faculty of Law at Stellenbosch University in leveraging the SDG's as a catalyst for social justice change,

1. *Decide* to give life to the constitutional promise of social justice and to draw on the lived experiences of the people,
2. *Encouraged* by the commitment and willingness of participants to join hands to continue with research and dialogue, even where we disagree, to ensure that the constitutional and universal declaration's promises of equal enjoyment of all human rights for all, is realised for all,
3. *Invite* academia and civil society to expand our common understanding on how to reduce poverty and inequality so that we can move the social justice discourse forward in a manner that is in line with the constitutional objectives of a united South Africa anchored in shared humanity and prosperity,
4. *Agree*
 - to explore the pathways available to address social injustices globally;
 - to leverage opportunities presented by the SDGs, national constitutions and development plans in national and international contexts;
 - to share information on research that is undertaken;
 - to source information for the Social Justice hub at Stellenbosch University;
 - to form a coalition of universities, researchers and civil society that works in a coordinated way to advance social justice;
 - to focus on a multi-sectoral approach for a cohesive future; and
 - to endorse the Social Justice M-Plan.
5. *Request* the Law Trust Chair in Social Justice, SU to convene yearly social justice conferences.

*1st Plenary meeting
31 August 2019*
