



The 3rd Annual International Conference on Social Justice and the Law: Restitution – 11 October 2022

Conference Concept Note

The International Conference on Social Justice is in its third iteration. This year's theme is Restitution. Previous years' themes were: Leveraging the Sustainable Development Goals and the Global Human Rights Agenda to Advance Social Justice (2019) and Law, Policy and Social Justice: Taking Economic Equality Seriously (2021). This global platform seeks to bring together social justice researchers and other stakeholders to advance social justice and mobilise South Africa and the international community to accelerate progress on ending poverty and inequality in pursuit of the global Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It also seeks to deepen social justice scholarship and integration of social justice perspectives in all policy processes and academic pursuits. The conference on Restitution will focus on the theory underpinning restitution, discourses and models of restitution in the 20th and 21st centuries and the link between restitution, justice (including social justice and restorative justice), accountability, social inclusion, social cohesion and peace. The main aim of the conference is to answer the question regarding the rationale for and models of restitution in societies with a history of legalised injustice on various grounds such as race, gender, disability, ethnicity and space. The conference will further explore the role of universities in leading and catalysing the advancement of social justice, including remedying the legacy of past injustices and resourcing through research, skills and innovation. The outcomes will also contribute to accelerated implementation of South Africa's Musa Plan for Social Justice (M-Plan) while catalysing effective pursuit of and accelerated progress on SDGs, in the African continent.

Date: 11 October 2022 (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: R500 per delegate (Fee can be waived on request)

Objectives

The key objectives of the conference are:

1. To provide a forum for sharing ongoing research outputs and engaging in dialogue on social justice and mobilising South Africa and the international community to accelerate progress on ending poverty and inequality by 2030 in line with the UN SDGs, while anchoring the dialogue in restoration, peace/reconciliation, development, redress and accountability.
2. To contribute to the deepening of social justice scholarship and the systematisation of the incorporation of a social justice lens in policy design, law reform, legal practice, academic offerings and other endeavours that have implications for advancing equality and ending poverty by 2030 through the presentation and discussion of research papers and publication of outputs.
3. To provide space for the ongoing exploration of good practices in justice, including social justice theories and models aimed at advancing equality through restitution as part of restorative justice in transitional societies with a legacy of structural inequality due to past unjust laws, policies and programmes. The focus is on: (1) wealth, income and economic justice, (2) psychological, family and social life, (3) land, housing and spatial equality, (4) education and epistemology, (5) access to justice, (6) digitalisation and innovation, (7) health and well-being, and (8) public governance and democracy leadership.
4. To contribute to an awareness of the global SDGs and incorporation thereof in academic scholarship and teaching as well as policy design and law reform that incorporates redress and accountability in justice and human rights models.
5. To showcase research, teaching and innovation and promote collaboration on social justice, research, teaching, policy reform and monitoring of progress while anchoring accountability.
6. To highlight the work that has been done and recognise what remains to be done by universities, corporates, government, civil society and faith communities, to advance social justice meaningfully.
7. To share good practices on leveraging data analytics to prospectively assess the likelihood of policies, laws and programmes retarding or advancing progress on ending poverty and advancing equality in pursuit of social justice.
8. To generate policy briefs to enhance the capacity of states and development partners to design and implement policies and programmes that meaningfully reduce inequality and poverty while advancing constitutional governance and accountability.

Benefits

1. Present and obtain feedback on work being conducted on research, innovation and teaching on varied dimensions of social justice.
2. Learn from good practices demonstrated across various academic disciplines.
3. Utilise the opportunity to learn about trends and emerging pathways to achieve restorative justice through restitution aligned with the M-Plan key objectives and the SDGs.

4. Meet multidisciplinary peers engaged in social justice research on restitution to share what works and what does not and identify synergies and opportunities for collaboration.
5. Be part of key social justice policy development that feeds into concrete recommendations for action on various dimensions of historical harm that requires redress to ensure substantive equality while promoting social cohesion, the rule of law and peace.
6. 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 that have the potential to effect restitution and redress.
7. Participate in 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 platform that undertakes research, innovative policy tools design, training and stakeholder management to promote social justice scholarship and consciousness, public policy design skills and collaboration, in academia and society, to accelerate social justice reform. The International Social Justice Conference will precede the Fourth Annual Social Justice Summit.

Our philosophy is that an investment, anchored in shared humanity and prosperity and equitable life chances for all, enhances the country's sustainable productivity and resilience while fostering social cohesion, the rule of law, sustainable democracy and peace. To ensure the realisation of these goals, this conference seeks to deepen social justice scholarship focused on identifying, discussing and engaging restitutive practices which prioritise social justice, reconciliation, redress and accountability 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 past injustices, to understand the prevailing conditions that continue to hinder access to opportunities and growth for all Africans on the continent, particularly those that have been left at the margins.

The backdrop of the conference will be an appreciation of the fact that despite efforts of transformation in many sectors, globally, much work still lies ahead to effect deep-rooted changes that transform power relations in societies with a history and legacy of legalised discrimination and dispossession. Many opportunities tend to be missed particularly on matters such as psychological harm, social attitudes, broken families, special disparities, wealth and land disparities, the default outlook of societal institutions such as education, epistemology, justice and implications of these for substantive equality, social cohesion, the rule of law and peace. Lack of accountability for previous human rights violations, including torture and disappearance of democracy and human rights activists, also often remain unaccounted for and unremedied. Without remedying the legacy of past injustices, justice in the present tends to be elusive and the same applies to social cohesion and peace.

Call for Abstracts and Expressions of Interest

The Law Trust Chair in Social Justice of the Law Faculty at Stellenbosch University invites academics and researchers working on various aspects of social justice to submit abstracts on social justice focusing on restitution. Accepted abstracts will form the basis of research papers to be presented and distributed at the International Conference on Social Justice scheduled for 11 October 2022, leading to the Fourth Annual Summit on Social Justice that will take place on 12 October 2022. The papers will be edited, peer reviewed and published as a special

edition. Those willing to display posters on the topic of restitution at the conference and summit are also invited to submit an expression of interest.

Submission Process

To facilitate the submission and follow-up process, topics and abstracts of 300 – 500 words should be submitted in English by 31 May 2022 to mlourens@sun.ac.za. Expressions of interest to submit a poster are also welcome.