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CENTRE FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE(CSJ) | FACULTY OF LAW

## 5<sup>TH</sup> INTERNATIONAL SOCIAL JUSTICE CONFERENCE

### SOCIAL JUSTICE AND THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOAL ON ZERO HUNGER

“The essence of this matter aptly can be captured as: “For now I ask no more than the justice of eating.” - Potterill ADJP, in *Equal Education v Minister of Basic Education* (2020)

#### Introduction

The International Conference on **Social Justice and The Sustainable Development Goal on Zero Hunger**, scheduled to take place at Boschendal Retreat on **17 October 2024**, aims to interrogate research, policies and legal developments on hunger with a view to helping the pace of progress in addressing hunger as one of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals 2 (“Zero Hunger”). The International Conference will bring together academics, lawyers, judges, civil society researchers who are involved on research on the intersection between hunger, social justice and human rights; to share research outputs, explore innovative solutions, best practices on the integration of data science and neuroscience in social and legal policy design processes.

#### The Problem

In the 2023 Sustainable Development Goals Special Edition Report, the United Nations Secretary General Antonio Guterres warned that halfway to deadline for agenda 2030, we are leaving half the world behind.<sup>1</sup> Furthermore, progress on poverty, hunger has stalled or gone into reverse.<sup>2</sup>

Despite global efforts, in 2022, about 9.2 per cent of the world population was facing chronic hunger, equivalent to about 735 million people. This means a 122 million more than in 2019. An estimated 29.6 per cent of the global population – 2.4 billion people – were moderately or severely food insecure, meaning they did not have access to adequate food.<sup>3</sup>

According to the 2023 Global Hunger Index scores and provisional designations, 9 (nine) countries have alarming levels of hunger: Burundi, Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Lesotho, Madagascar, Niger, Somalia, South Sudan, and Yemen.<sup>4</sup> In a further 34 countries, hunger levels are considerably serious. Despite SDGs, some countries, estimated at 18, have seen hunger worsen.<sup>5</sup> Hunger was further exacerbated by Covid-19, climate change and Russia’s invasion of Ukraine amongst others. <sup>6</sup>The statistics do not include the 2,3 million Palestinians in Gaza that have been plunged into extreme hunger or famine by.<sup>7</sup> Worth noting is the fact that not only do the SDGs commit to ending hunger by 2023, the right to food is also a universal human right under article 25 of

<sup>1</sup> United Nations Report on *The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2023: Special Edition Towards a Rescue Plan for People and Planet* (2023) 2.

<sup>2</sup> United Nations Report (2023) 2.

<sup>3</sup> Oxfam South Africa “The Crisis of Hunger in South Africa requires urgent attention” *Oxfam South Africa*

<sup>4</sup> Global Hunger Index Report on *The Power of Youth In Shaping Food Systems* (2023) 5.

<sup>5</sup> Global Hunger Index Report (2023) 5.

<sup>6</sup> United Nations Report (2023) 2.

<sup>7</sup> Prof Thuli Madonsela

the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Furthermore, studies show that defaulting on the right to food has negative implications for the advancement of other human rights, social justice and peace.

## **Key Conference Objectives**

1. Catalyse progress on SDG 2 (Zero Hunger) by spotlighting what has been done by the state parties and what still needs to be done to accelerate the pace of change so as to end extreme hunger by 2030.
2. Share research and good practice models on overcoming hunger and malnutrition and giving effect to the right to food under international and domestic laws.
3. Discuss pressing threats to the right to food, including climate change and war.
4. Heed the United Nations' call to action on coming up with urgent coordinated and collaborative action, including further research, policy solutions and strategies to mobilize civil society, particularly business and social enterprises to play a role and enhance capabilities of communities facing hunger so as to enhance their agency.
5. Familiarise everyone with SDG 2 targets and foster social accountability through an annual hunger tracking map and conference report/policy brief.

## **Key Outputs and Outcomes**

1. Increased public and leadership awareness of the Zero hunger SDG and responsibilities regarding realisation of the right to food and related rights such as water, energy, climate resilience and equitable resource distribution and the connection to social justice and peace.
2. A conference resolution adopted and circulated with a media statement at the end of the conference plus a summary report on the conference released shortly after the conference
3. A special issue academic publication released early 2025.
4. An agreed research and collaborative agenda to accelerate progress towards zero hunger, with business, civil society and data science community playing key and synergistic roles.

## **Conference Themes and Format**

The International Conference on Social Justice will take the forms of plenary sessions and parallel sessions with keynote speakers, speakers and panels from all over the world. Each panel will have a keynote panellist and one or two respondents/panellists. Speakers will be required to present on their ongoing research on SDG 2 (Zero Hunger) and the right to food viewed from an equality and social justice lens. Key conference themes are:

1. Hunger, poverty, the economy and social justice.
2. The intersection between hunger, human rights and freeing the potential of every person.
3. The impact of hunger on the right to education and vice versa.
4. Hunger, spatial disparities, human settlements and homelessness.
5. The nexus between agriculture, land rights and hunger.
6. Digital inclusion, artificial intelligence and leveraging data science for impact conscious social policy design to avoid exacerbating hunger and food insecurity.
7. Hunger, climate change and the Water, Energy and Food (WEF) nexus.
8. The impact of war and displacement on hunger and nutrition security.

## **Submission and Acceptance of Abstracts**

Interested parties who wish to present at the International Conference are invited to submit their topics, short biography and abstracts of 300 – 500 words (in English) by 07 June 2024 at

[socialjustice@sun.ac.za](mailto:socialjustice@sun.ac.za) . Parties will be notified by 17 July 2024 whether their abstract has been accepted and presentation opportunity allocated. No theme unrelated abstracts will be accepted.

Accepted abstracts will form the basis of research papers to be presented and distributed at the 5<sup>th</sup> International Conference on Social Justice and Hunger taking place on 17 October 2024.

## Draft Programme

Time 08:30am -17:00pm

Date: Thursday, 17 October 2024

1. **Opening Plenary: SA Preamble, Anthems, Opening address, Keynote speech, etc.**
2. **Tea/Photo Session /Media Briefing**
3. **Keynote Panel**
4. **Lunch: Music/Poetry/Art Exhibition**
5. **Eight Breakaway Sessions**
6. **Report Back by 8 Rapporteurs**
7. **Resolutions by Chief Rapporteur**
8. **Closing Remarks**
9. **Closure**

## Conference Project Implementation Process

**Phase 1:** Determination of and Consultations on Theme for the International Conference on Social Justice (11 October 2023-January 2024)

**Phase 2:** Save the Date and Project Implementation Plan (18 January 2024 – April 2024)

**Phase 3:** Publication of Call for Abstracts (01 May 2024 – 06 June 2024)

**Phase 4:** Consideration and Acceptance of Abstracts (07 June 2024 – 30 June 2024 and Finalising Partnerships, Including Media Partner(s).

**Phase 5:** Conference Marketing and Announcement of Speakers & Key Partners (01 May 2024 – 16 October 2024)

**Phase 6:** 5<sup>TH</sup> International Conference on Social Justice (17 October 2024)

**Phase 7:** Publication of Conference Resolutions and Summary Report of Conference and Presented Papers (21 October 2024 – 31 October 2024)

**Phase 8:** Publication of Special Academic Journal Issue on Refined and Peer Reviewed Conference Papers (October 2024 – June 2025)

### The Project Team

**Project Manager:** Themba Seyisi: tseyisl@sun.ac.za

**Project Sponsor:** Prof Thuli Madonsela

**Conference Organising**

**Committee Members:**

Representatives of partnering departments and institutions.

Media Team and Partner(S): To be finalised.