



# Southern African Catholic Bishops' Conference PARLIAMENTARY LIAISON OFFICE



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**Youth Unemployment:** Mr David Faulkner (National Treasury Chief Director: Macroeconomic Policy & Analysis), and Mr Rudi Dicks (Executive Director: National Labour and Economic Development Institute – NALEDI). Pictured above left, were the main speakers. It is estimated that approximately 42% of young people below the age of 30 are unemployed. Many of them face the prospect of never finding a job. A number of initiatives – such as a youth wage subsidy – have been announced by Government, but not implemented. Organisations represented at this discussion included: The Wholesale and Retail SETA, St Kizito Children’s Programme, the YMCA – Cape Town and the Rural Development Support Programme.



**The Chapter 9 Institutions:** The CPLO, in collaboration with the Hanns Seidel Foundation, hosted this roundtable discussion as a platform to discuss the effectiveness and efficiency of these institutions. Speakers included Advocate Mike Masuta (Chairperson of the Standing Committee on the Auditor-General), Dr Yvette Abrahams (Gender CC SA – Women for Climate Change) and Commissioner Janine Hicks (Commission for Gender Equality). Representatives from almost all of the CH9s (including the Deputy Auditor-General), four ex-Members of Parliament, three current Members of Parliament and various civil society organisations participated in the discussion. It is hoped that a roundtable discussion on the same topic, and in collaboration with PACSA (Pietermaritzburg Agency for Christian Social Awareness) will be hosted in Pietermaritzburg later this year.



**Analysing COP 17:** Presentations were heard from Sydney Lockett (Citizen’s Movement for Social Change and National Dialogue Initiative), Shaka Dzebu (SACBC Justice & Peace Department), Jessica Wilson (Environmental Monitoring Group) and Muna Lakhani (Cape Town Branch Co-ordinator, Earthlife Africa). Participating organisations at this discussion included the Climate Justice Network, Green Cape, Catholic Welfare and Development and the Anglican Church Public Policy Office.



**Electoral Reform in South Africa:** This roundtable discussion was co-hosted with the Hanns Seidel Foundation (HSF). The event provided an opportunity to opposition political parties, non-governmental organizations and citizens from different sectors that are interested in electoral matters to discuss whether South Africa's current proportional representation (PR) system, based on closed party lists, should be replaced by a mixed system. The speakers included Professor Jessica Piombo from the US Naval Postgraduate School, Professor Laurence Piper from the UWC Department of Political Studies and Dr Wilmot James, Democratic Alliance MP and former member of the Electoral Task Team.



**The Secrecy Bill: Exploring the underlying issues of free media in democracy-lessons from the European experience:** Professor Jan Jans from Tilburg University in the Netherlands, was the speaker at this event. Prof Jans' presentation focused on the importance of two democratic values: freedom of expression and access to information. He noted that citizens needed to be educated and well-informed about government activities and spoke about the important role the media plays in a democratic society. He made an interesting observation, saying that some newspapers are not working for the common good of the public but are more interested in making money. Various members of civil society organisations, including the Right to Know (R2K) Campaign, participated in the discussion.



**Recidivism:** This discussion was held in collaboration with NICRO (National Institute for Crime Prevention and the Rehabilitation of Offenders) and the Prison Care and Support Network (PCSN). NICRO is a non-governmental organization that has been in existence since 1910, and has played a key role in shaping criminal justice policy and practice in the country. The introduction of probation services, community service, diversion, non-custodial sentences, court witness/victim support, and restorative justice have been some of the key contributions of NICRO. The organization continues to be a passionate advocate on issues of offender reintegration and rehabilitation, particularly prison reform, creating alternatives to imprisonment, and the wider use of restorative justice processes. The PCSN operates under the auspices of the Catholic Church but provides services to any person who is incarcerated irrespective of religion or denomination. The vision of the Network is to create hope in the individual and to restore a sense of humanity in the communities from which offenders come, thus facilitating the reintegration of offenders into their families and communities. The aim of this discussion was to gain a deeper understanding of the nature of recidivism, and the multi-sectoral strategies to address it. Main inputs were given by Jerome Samuels from the Goodwood Correctional Centre, Arina Smit and Venessa Padayachee from NICRO, Olga Rautenbach from Beauty of Ashes, Fr Babychan Arackathara MSFS from PCSN and Alphonse Niyodusenga from the Institute for the Healing of Memories.



**Growing up in the new SA:** “The situation of most African children remains critical due to the unique factors of their socio-economic, cultural, traditional and developmental circumstances, natural disasters, armed conflicts, exploitation and hunger, and on account of the child’s physical and mental immaturity he/she needs special safeguards and care...” – African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child. Dr Rachel Bray, pictured above right, a Child Rights Consultant, presented some of her research findings to a group of about 30 people. Dr Bray’s research focused on the living conditions of young people in three areas viz. Fish Hoek, Masiphumelele and Ocean View. Guests from the Rural Development Support Programme, the Scalabrini Centre, Edmund Rice Camps, the Bonteheuvel Advice Centre and the Centre for Pastoral Development participated in the discussion.



**The Future of Smaller Political Parties:** “It would appear that most of the smaller parties are on a downward trend. The 2011 local government election was one of the worst for the small opposition parties as they lost support across the board. Many analysts have asked if this is the end of small parties. Others argue that, while they have taken a beating, they still play an important role as they provide legitimate political representation for some minorities who would otherwise not participate.” This text was taken from CPLO’s Briefing Paper 264: The May 18<sup>th</sup> Municipal Elections, written by Dadisai Taderera and Mike Pothier. This event, a collaboration with the Hanns Seidel Foundation, focused on the role and value of small political parties in our democracy. Presentations were heard from Dr Cherril Africa of UWC’s Political Studies Department, Mr Bantu Holomisa of the United Democratic Movement (pictured above left), Mr Grant Haskin of the African Christian Democratic Party and Dr Mario Oriani-Ambrosini of the Inkatha Freedom Party. Inputs were also given by Dr Corne Mulder of Freedom Front Plus (pictured above far right) and parliamentary researchers. Organisations represented included Catholic Relief Services, the Open Society Foundation, the Jesuit Institute, the Institute for Justice and Reconciliation, the Parliamentary Institute of South Africa and the Konrad Adenauer Foundation.



During Prof Jans’ visit, the CPLO hosted a public lecture titled ‘Vatican II – What lessons for Going Forward’ at St Michael’s parish hall in Rondebosch. The lecture attracted about 200 interested guests.



The CPLO hosted its South African Parliamentary Advocacy Training (SAPAT) programme at the Cape Town Hollow Hotel in January. The purpose of this training programme was to share CPLO's experience of parliamentary advocacy with staff members from non-governmental organizations, mutually supported by donors from the Netherlands and Austria. Some of the topics covered during this two-day training course included: Church in the Public Square – a theological basis for parliamentary advocacy; Civil Society and Participatory Democracy; The Legislative Process – following a law from discussion document to Act of Parliament; Preparing and delivering a submission to Parliament; and Influencing public policy. An official tour of Parliament formed part of the programme.



An Iraqi delegation of Members of Parliament (pictured above with Fr Peter-John Pearson, Bishop Kevin Dowling and Archbishop Stephen Brislin) visited South Africa to gain insight into our experience of reconciliation, after the abolition of Apartheid. One of the MPs said that, as an emerging democracy, Iraq faced many challenges, but that the security situation in the country had improved significantly since 2005. They currently have a well-functioning Parliament, with a good presence of women and Christians. The MPs have been visiting numerous countries to learn from their experiences with reconciliation too. They acknowledged, however, that each country's context and challenges were unique, and hence each needed its own model of reconciliation. They also facilitated the engagement of various sectors in Iraq in this process, particularly seeking the assistance of religious leaders. The delegation noted that Iraq was still frequently misrepresented in the media, but that significant strides were being taken to show its respect for democracy and the inclusion of all citizens.

## Publications Distributed

### Briefing Papers

- 279: 2011 in review
- 280: Matric 2011
- 281: The vulnerability of children
- 282: Growing up in the new SA
- 283: The budget 2012: Options for the poor?
- 284: Economic migration in SA
- 285: Electoral reform in SA
- 286: Analysing COPI7
- 287: Chapter 9 Institutions in SA
- 288: Psychiatric care in SA
- 289: Youth unemployment: Finding solutions
- 290: SA's impending nuclear plans
- 291: State of the rural nation
- 292: Opposition parties – sustaining multiparty democracies

### Responsees

1. Telling statistics
2. The state of the nation address
3. The budget

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