



# Southern African Catholic Bishops' Conference PARLIAMENTARY LIAISON OFFICE



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## Does South Africa Have an Activist Parliament?



Mike Pothier, Research Co-ordinator at the Catholic Parliamentary Liaison Office introduces Ms Pregs Govender, deputy-chairperson of the South African Human Rights Commission, at a roundtable discussion hosted by the CPLO on 24 February. Ms Govender, who was the only ANC Member of Parliament to vote against the controversial arms deal, and who resigned from Parliament in 2002, spoke on the theme “Does South Africa have an activist Parliament?” Also in the picture is Mr Henri Nkuepo. Organisations represented at this event included the Community Law Centre, the Goedgedacht Forum, IDASA, the Democracy Development Programme, the ACDP and the ANC.

## DKA



Two representatives from DKA, a development agency based in Vienna, Austria met with the CPLO team during their SA projects visit. DKA has supported the work of the CPLO for many years now. During their visit, the team had an opportunity to be taken on a guided tour of Parliament. Pictured here from L-R: Palesa Siphuma (CPLO Researcher), Quraisha Nagdee (DKA projects consultant), Karen Morris (CPLO Programme Co-ordinator), Edith Schnitzer (DKA Africa Projects Department) and Rudy Remler-Schoberl (DKA Head of the Department for Education, PR and Advocacy).

## Mensen met een Missie Partners Consultation



This consultation was hosted by the Tshwane Leadership Foundation (TLF), at Adventure Addicts Lodge in Tshwane. Participating partners pictured here included PACSA, IDASA, Justice and Peace – Witbank, Diakonia Council of Churches, Alternatives to Violence, ESSET and The Grail Centre. This consultation focused on monitoring and evaluation, and the different models used by partners, as well as capacity building and resource sharing.

## Bishop Kevin Dowling



Bishop Kevin Dowling, Bishop of Rustenburg and CPLO liaison bishop, visited the CPLO staff during January. While in Cape Town he had an opportunity to meet informally with a few people the CPLO has networked with. Pictured here is Bishop Dowling and Sr Margaret Kelly OP, former head of the Bishops' Conference J&P Commission.

## Stichting Porticus



Christine Bodewes from Stichting Porticus, based in Amsterdam, visited the CPLO during her SA projects visit. At the same time, Sr Alison Munro of the SACBC Aids office was in Cape Town and is pictured here with Christine and Peter-John Pearson (CPLO Director).

## Choice of Termination of Pregnancy Act



Mass was held on 1 February 2011 to mark the 14th anniversary of the passing of the Choice of Termination of Pregnancy Act. Fr Peter-John Pearson said that all non-violent acts of opposition were encouraged as they remind the public of their moral conscience. The Mass, hosted by the CPLO, was attended by school children, Members of Parliament and Pro-Life groups.

### Roundtable Discussion: Did Your Vote Count?



A roundtable discussion co-hosted with Hanns Seidel Foundation and entitled 'Did your Vote Count?: an Analysis of the 2011 Municipal Elections' was addressed by Prof Laurence Piper, head of the political studies department at the University of the Western Cape (UWC), and Dr Cherrel Africa, lecturer in political studies at UWC (pictured above left). Analysts believe that the May 18th elections could have been the most significant local elections thus far and may be indicative of the future of our political landscape, especially regarding the virtual disappearance of smaller political parties.

### Roundtable Discussion on Local Government Elections



The CPLO collaborated with the Pietermaritzburg Agency for Christian Social Awareness (PACSA), and hosted a roundtable discussion in Pietermaritzburg entitled 'Local Government Elections: Prospects for the Future of Politics in SA'. Prof. Laurence Piper of UWC and Mr Andile Mngxitama, from the Foundation for Human Rights (FHR) addressed a group of about 40 guests. Some of the participating organisations included Cosatu, the IEC, the Democratic Alliance, the African National Congress, the Witness and the University of Kwazulu-Natal.

### South African Parliamentary Advocacy Training (SAPAT)



The CPLO hosted a two-day training workshop which attracted participants from the Tswane Leadership Foundation (TLF), the Justice & Peace Commission of Oudtshoorn Diocese, the Anglican Church Public Policy Office, Hope Africa, the Scalabrini Centre and PACSA. The training programme included workshops focusing on how Parliament works, how submissions are made, and other forms of advocacy.

## Roundtable Discussion on Refugees: What is the Church's Response?



The country has experienced tensions and outbreaks of xenophobia between locals and refugees who usually live in the poorer communities and are seen as competing for scarce resources. The Catholic Church, internationally and locally, strongly supports the rights of migrants and refugees. Fr Rampe Hlobo of the Jesuit Refugees Services (JRS) – pictured above, far right – addressed a group of about 25 guests and shared some of JRS's efforts to address the problems facing various communities. Representatives included Filanwaa Somali Women's Union, the City of Cape Town, Lawrence House, the Anglican Church, Catholic Welfare and Development, Parliament and PASSOP.

## Public Lecture: The Ethics of Corruption



During his annual visit to Cape Town, Prof. Jan Jans (pictured above left) from Tilburg University in the Netherlands delivered a lecture to about twenty people, entitled 'The Ethics of Corruption'. Prof. Jans highlighted some of the social effects and also looked at ways in which to combat this problem. This lecture was held at the Pinelands parish hall.

## Roundtable Discussion on Sex and Marriage – Can They Live Happily Ever After?



Prof. Jan Jans also addressed a roundtable discussion entitled 'Sex and Marriage – Can they Live Happily Ever After?', which focused on the impacts of the Civil Union Act. This discussion attracted a small, focused group of priests, ministers and religious.

## African Training and Exposure Programme



At the end of June the CPLO hosted its fourth training programme, which focused on various aspects of parliamentary liaison work. This year participants from Kenya, Malawi, Zambia and Uganda attended, as did the Denis Hurley Peace Institute of the SACBC. Workshop titles included: participating in democracy, making submissions, writing publications, finance and administration, resources and hosting various events including roundtable discussions. As part of this week-long programme, participants are taken on a guided tour of Parliament and a visit to Robben Island.



## Roundtable Discussion on Substance Abuse Among Rural Youth



This discussion, co-hosted with Youth Unlimited (YU), was addressed by Ms Elna Lindoor of the Women on Farms Project, who was accompanied by two young people who grew up on farms. They noted that the abuse of drugs and other substances continued to be a serious problem contributing to crime, poverty and other challenges facing our communities. Pictured here are representatives from Youth Unlimited, the Montagu Advice Office and the Atlantis Youth Development Forum. Other organizations represented at this discussion were the City of Cape Town Social Development, the Scalabrini Centre, the Sultan Bahu Centre, the Centre for Pastoral Development, NICRO and the Rural Development Support Programme (RDSP).



## New Researcher



Palesa Siphuma was born in Jabavu, Soweto into a loving Christian home. She is the eldest of three girls and has an intense love for books and music. In her high school year she moved to Welkom in the Free State where she attended St Dominic's College. Her desire to be a part of changing peoples' lives led her to Grahamstown where she read towards a BA in Politics/ International Studies and Law at Rhodes University. After completing her studies she was blessed with the opportunity to be part of the ABSA Graduate Development Programme of 2009, and subsequently worked at the ABSA headquarters in Johannesburg as a Legal Researcher for two years. She has recently relocated to Cape Town and will be researching and addressing all things environmental at the CPLO.

## Radio Veritas Interviews

Date	Issue / Topic
6 Feb	Various pieces of legislation before Parliament
20 Feb	Service delivery protests
4 Mar	Submission to Dept of Labour on proposed amendments to labour legislation
20 Mar	Submission on Basic Education Laws Amendment Bill
3 Apr	Millennium Development Goals
17 Apr	Various pieces of legislation before Parliament
15 May	Climate change and environmental issues
22 May	Run up to the municipal elections
29 May	Substance abuse among rural youth
12 June	Reviews new government education policy
26 June	African training programme & ANCYL elective conference

## Publications Distributed

### Briefing Papers

252	The Separation of Powers (2010 publication)
253	The Devil is in the Detail
254	Corruption in Distribution of Social Grants
255	Immigration Act Amendments – Yet Again!
256	Unpacking the 2011/2012 Budget
257	The Impact of the Civil Union Act
258	Biofuels, Food Prices and the Poor
259	Towards a Scholar Transport Policy
260	Two Political Problems
261	Substance Abuse Among Rural Youth
262	Closing the Skills Gap: the Supply and Demand Complex
263	IRP 2: Keeping the Lights On

### Response

1. Confusing their Hats
2. The State of the Nation Address
3. The Budget
4. Cowed into Silence
5. The 2011 Municipal Elections

### Submissions

The Basic Education Laws Amendment Bill  
The Draft Labour Law Amendment Bill

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