



## Roundtable discussions

### Hidden Economic Burdens, 5 April 2016

The guest speakers were Ayabonga Cawe, co-founder and chairperson of Rethink Africa; Pippa Green, journalist and media consultant to the Research Project on Employment, Income Distribution and Inclusive Growth (REDI); and Andrew Kerr, senior researcher at DataFirst, UCT. The three panellists spoke to the issues of household debt (formal loans and informal loans), 'black tax', spatial inequality, and transport costs.

Mr Cawe talked on household debt and the informal and formal loan sectors, as well as the topic of 'black tax' – the expectation that employed family members will contribute to the maintenance of the extended family, and shoulder the cost of funerals and other rituals. He also noted that a lot of households in South Africa are in debt, and that what keeps us indebted are our asset deficits and conspicuous consumption. Ms Green addressed the issue of rural and urban spatial inequalities in South Africa. Critical problems in this regard are fragmented planning and the different land tenure policies across both rural and urban areas. Dr Kerr spoke on the issue of transport cost in South Africa. Post-apartheid cities still have very low densities, with poorer people often located far from employment and employment opportunities, thus having to spend an average of 17% of their monthly salaries on traveling to and from work.



Mr Ayabonga Cawe engaging guests' during discussion.

### Assisted Suicide and Euthanasia, 18 April 2016

It is expected that the issue of euthanasia and assisted suicide will come before the Constitutional Court fairly soon, and the Court is likely to refer the matter to Parliament for full consideration. Speakers at the discussion were (front, from left) Ms Lee Last, a board member of Dignity SA, an organisation that campaigns for the legalisation of assisted suicide; Dr Khaya Nzimande, medical superintendent of the Blessed Gerard Centre in Mandeni, KwaZulu-Natal; and Dr Jan Jans, associate professor of ethics at Tilburg University, the Netherlands. Fr Peter-John Pearson (standing), director of the CPO chaired the meeting, which was also addressed by Bishop Graham Rose, of Dundee Diocese.



Back Row, L-R: Ms Elaine Pypers (Research Assistant, CPO) and Adv Mike Pothier (Research Coordinator, CPO). Seated: Ms Pippa Green and Dr Andrew Kerr.



## Why do we need Provincial Government? 20 May 2016

South Africa's provinces came under the spotlight at a roundtable discussion hosted in collaboration with the Hanns Seidel Foundation (HSF). We know what national government is for, and what it does, and we understand that local – or municipal – government carries out various important tasks in our everyday lives. But what are the provinces for? What do provincial governments do?

Three speakers addressed the topic: Mr Themba Fosi, a deputy director-general in the Department of Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs; Mr Kevin Mileham MP, the DA shadow minister on provincial and local government; and Professor Erwin Schwella, of the School of Public Leadership at Stellenbosch University. Each of them approached the question from slightly different standpoints, but in the end they all agreed that provinces have a potentially important role to play, not only in the delivery of social goods such as education, health, and welfare, but also in making sure that regional interests are kept at the forefront of national policy and legislation.



Standing: Ms Lois Law (Researcher, CPLO) & Fr Matsepane Morare (Moderator and Researcher at the CPLO). Seated: Prof Dan Stein; Dr Nicola Plastow; Ms Chanelle Albertyn; and Ms Rene Minnies



Standing: Adv Mike Pothier (Research Coordinator, CPLO) and Ms Marlene Barnard (Cape Town Officer, HSF). Seated: Prof Erwin Shwella; Mr Kevin Mileham; and Mr Themba Fosi.

## Mental Health, 24 May 2016

South Africa's mental health care implementation landscape is poor. There is a serious shortfall in the roll-out of the necessary resources: budget; health care professionals; hospitals; outpatient clinics; and research to address mental health concerns. Furthermore, the severity and scale of mental illness in South Africa cannot be divorced from the dire socio-economic circumstances which confront far too many of our people. It is clear that addressing the well-being of South African society requires an integrated, holistic and intersectoral approach. The Roundtable was addressed by Prof Dan Stein, Head of the Dept. of Psychiatry & Mental Health at the University of Cape Town and Director of the Medical Research Council's Unit on Anxiety & Stress Disorders; Dr Nicola Plastow, a senior lecturer in Occupational Therapy in the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences at Stellenbosch University; as well as Mental Health Care Practitioners Ms Rene Minnies and Ms Chanelle Albertyn from the Cape Town Mental Health Society.



A participant responds to the presentations made

## South Africa's International Obligations: The Domestication of the Paris Agreement, 27 May

The 22nd of April 2016 saw South Africa sign the Paris Agreement on Climate Change and thereafter undergo a process of domesticating the agreement into South African law. This process is called ratification, and an instrument of ratification will be deposited in the UN depository. This instrument will communicate South Africa's consent to be bound by the Paris Agreement, as well as the steps that South Africa has taken to domesticate the agreement. Project 90 by 2030, in collaboration with the CPLO, held a roundtable discussion on "South Africa's International Obligations: The Domestication of the Paris Agreement". The purpose of this roundtable was to unpack the ratification process of such multilateral environmental agreements and to provide insight into their implications for South Africa. Mr Happy Khambhule from Project 90 by 2030 gave an introduction to the Paris Agreement and the ratification process; Ms Olivia Rumble from ENSAfrica explored ways in which the domestication process may proceed in South Africa and whether the country should consider enacting legislation that is specific to climate change and Mr Goosain Isaacs, representing the Western Cape Government, informed us of the process of development, implementation and co-ordination of provincial climate change mitigation and adaptation policies, programmes and projects.



Standing: Fr Matsepane Morare (Moderator & Researcher, CPLO); Ms Palesa Ngwenya (Researcher, CPLO); Ms Tina Schubert (Policy and Research Manager, Project 90 by 2030). Seated: Mr Goosain Isaacs; Mr Olivia Rumble; Mr Happy Khambhule



Standing: Fr Matsepane Morare (Moderator & Researcher, CPLO). Seated: Mr Farrel Hunter; Ms Ruschda O'Shea; Ms Robyn Beere



CPLO Researcher, Ms Palesa Ngwenya, responds to the speakers' presentations'

### Mining Wars: The People Vs The Leaders, 8 June 2016

The discussion centred on the various conflicts around mines and communities, especially where there is contestation around whether mining should take place or not, and whether traditional and local leadership has collaborated with mining companies to the disadvantage of the communities around the mines and proposed mining areas. The main speaker on the day was Mzamo Dlamini from Xolobeni on the West Coast, a community that has had a running battle with a mining company, various leaders, and even with the government for over 15 years. Emeritus Professor Ben Cousins from PLAAS at UWC gave a good analysis of what he sees as a microcosm of a much bigger conflict about the nature of economic and political development in South Africa. Unfortunately he sees the conflicts continuing to rise as communities become more excluded in economic development systems.

### Keeping Learners in School: What are the Options? 31 May 2016

In collaboration with the Catholic Institute of Education and Inclusive Education South Africa. CPLO held a roundtable discussion to address the crises facing our education system, which fails to retain more than half of its learners at the end of their schooling. Close to 60% of youth that enter the schooling system drop out without any school leaving qualification and little prospect of finding meaningful employment. The main speakers were: the Director of Inclusive Education, Ms Robyn Beere; Principal of Tafelsig High, Ms Ruschda O'Shea; and Country Director of DVV (German Adult Education Association) International, Mr Farrell Hunter. They explored the complex issues that contribute to huge numbers of youth dropping out and offered, with the contributions from the participants, possible solutions to stem the drop-out rate.



L-R: Fr Matsepane Morare (Moderator and Researcher, CPLO); Prof Ben Cousins; and Mr Mzamo Dlamini

## Downgrades: A Necessary Evil? 22 June 2016

The guest speakers at the event included Prof Stan du Plessis (Dean of EMS Faculty and Professor- Economics Department, University of Stellenbosch), Dr Conrad Beyers (Researcher and Lecturer, University of Pretoria), and Dr Jeff Rudin (Research Associate, Alternative Information Development Centre).

The discussion centred on South Africa's recent rating agencies battle, where three of the world's top rating agencies – Moody's, Standard and Poor, and Fitch - decided against downgrading South Africa to junk status. South Africa's economy is currently rated just above junk status with a BBB from S&P and Fitch and a Baa from Moody's. Some of the issues discussed included how rating agencies come to their decision-making process; the impact they have on the economy during their decision-making process and how their final decisions affect the poor.



L-R: Prof Stan du Plessis; Dr Conrad Beyers; Dr Jeff Rudin and Fr Peter-John Pearson (Director, CPLO)



Fr Peter-John Pearson with Ms Simone Knapp and Dr Boniface Mabanza from Kirchliche Arbeitsstelle Südliches Afrika

## The New Public Protector, 28 June 2016

On 28th June CPLO in collaboration with the Hanns Seidel Foundation (HSF) hosted a roundtable discussion on "The New Public Protector". The guest panellists included Dr Makhosi Khoza - Chair of the Ad-Hoc Committee on the Appointment of the New Public Protector; Ms Kavisha Pillay - Project Manager of Corruption Watch's 'Bua Mzansi campaign'; and Mr Gary Pienaar - senior research manager in the Democracy, Governance and Service Delivery Programme (a project under the umbrella of the Human Science Research Council - HSRC).

This event sought to cover and meaningfully discuss the processes employed by the ad-hoc committee in selecting South Africa's new Public Protector, a post that plays an imperative role in strengthening our fledgling democracy. Issues pertaining particularly to public participation in the process were raised- what role the public should play, how it should engage Parliament, and how much influence its opinion actually carries were discussed. Dr Khoza emphasised the importance of the contributions submitted by civil society, and ensured that the committee was taking - and would continue to take - the former's points, research, surveys, and suggestions seriously. She also made clear that the interviews still to be conducted would be broadcast for the public to view. Gary Pienaar and Kavisha Pillay spoke largely to public perception of the Office of the Public Protector, and highlighted core values, skills and knowledge the individual, must embody. In all, the event was well attended by parliamentary researchers and content advisors, media, the diplomatic corps and civil society.



L-R: Dr Makhosi Khoza; Mr Gary Pienaar; Ms Kavisha Pillay; and Fr Peter-John Pearson

## Other Events & Visitors

### Fordham University, 1 April 2016

CPLO hosted a group of students from Fordham University, New York, who are currently based at the University of Pretoria. As part of their formation, they come to Cape Town to do volunteer work. We took the group of 27 to Parliament for a tour. It was an eye-opener for all. It was quite chilling to realise that the Old Assembly Chamber of Parliament, now used as a caucus room or committee room, was actually the site of some terrible events during the last century. These include events such as the passing of the 1913 Land Act, all apartheid laws, the murder of Verwoerd, and the Sobukwe clause banishing Robert Sobukwe to solitary years on Robben Island without setting foot in a court of law. Back at CPLO, we gave a presentation on our work and ideals. This visit formed part of CPLO's outreach, which includes raising political and civic consciousness among students and visitors to our country.



Students from the University of Fordham listen to a presentation by Fr Matsepane Morare SJ (CPL0 Researcher)

## Fr Peter-John at the United Nations, 5 April 2016



Fr Peter-John Pearson with Karen Bradley MP and Deputy Minister in the Home Office UK at the UN for the Vatican sponsored seminar on human trafficking. Both are members of the Santa Marta group facilitating contact between the Church and heads of police around the world around policy issues related to Human Trafficking.



Fr Peter-John seated in the United Nations.

## Public Lecture on Pope Francis' Decisions on the Family, 19 April 2016

Amoris Laetitia – the Joy of Love, Pope Francis' letter on love in the family, was the subject of a CPL0 lecture by Dr Jan Jans, held at St Michael's parish, Rondebosch. Dr Jans, a regular visitor from Belgium, noted that the animating theme of the letter, as it is for everything Pope Francis says, was God's merciful love. It was also possible to see a threefold emphasis on the practice of discernment, the principle of graduality, and the virtue of mercy. These should be present, and nurtured, in every Christian marriage and family. Dr Jans said that the letter dealt with a number of contested issues, including divorce and remarriage, irregular unions, and the position of non-heterosexual people, but without providing simple, rule-based answers to these questions. The Pope appeared to be encouraging local Bishops' Conferences, individual pastors, and Catholic families themselves, to take greater responsibility for working out solutions to difficult situations. The lecture was attended by over 100 people, and a lively question-and-answer session followed the talk.



L-R: Fr Peter-John and Dr Jan Jans



The audience listens to the presentation

## Lunch with Mr Moses Mbatha MP (Economic Freedom Fighters), 4th May 2016

CPLO in collaboration with the Hanns Seidel Foundation (HSF) hosted a lunch meeting with a representative of South Africa's third biggest political party, the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF), Mr Moses Mbatha. Mr Mbatha is a member of Parliament Portfolio Committee on Higher Education and Training.

Mr Mbatha spoke mostly about pertinent issues regarding tertiary education. He recalled the challenges he faced as a black youth from an underprivileged family in need of university education; and expounded on a phenomenon known as 'black tax' - a system in which black graduates are expected to contribute financially towards the upkeep of their immediate, and sometimes extended, families. Mr Mbatha emphasised that such a system, of which he had experience, was unfair towards South Africa's black youth insofar as it inhibited them from entering the middle class, or significantly raising their standard of living. The EFF believed in the ideal of free tertiary education for all, and he was pushing this in his Parliamentary portfolio committee and on the ground when engaging with activists, students and universities. Many of the questions that followed had to do with the affordability of such an ideal, to which Mr Mbatha responded by suggesting a re-direction of funds from other departments to that of higher education and training.



Mr Moses Mbatha addresses guests

## Lunch with Mr John Steenhuisen MP (Democratic Alliance), 6th May 2016

In collaboration with the Hanns Seidel Foundation (HSF) CPLO hosted a lunch meeting with the chief whip of the Democratic Alliance, Mr John Steenhuisen.

Mr Steenhuisen began by validating the importance of organisations like the CPLO, and noting the significant role a strong and vibrant civil society plays in keeping South Africa's government and politicians accountable and responsive. He then went on to discuss the current situation faced by Parliament in light of the recent 'Nkandla' judgment passed down by the Constitutional Court on 21st March. He stated that, although much of the media focus had been on President Jacob Zuma, the main subject of the judgment was Parliament; there were far more negative references to the failings of the institution, particularly its inability to hold the executive accountable – which is one of the principal functions of Parliament as framed by the country's Constitution. Mr Steenhuisen thought that the ruling was a clarion call for a deep structural reform of how Parliament operates and how it holds members of the executive, and the President, responsible. For two decades there had been a "pulling of Parliament's teeth". What the framers of the Constitution intended for Parliament to be doing, and the mechanisms for Parliament to do its job, had been consistently undermined. This had set in during the "imperial style of governing" during the Mbeki presidency, when Parliament's checks and balances became practically onerous. The concerted drive to weaken Parliament's role of holding the executive accountable continued until the present.



Mr John Steenhuisen and Fr Peter-John Pearson



L-R: Mr Shuaib Appleby (Muslim Judicial Council), Fr Peter-John Pearson (Director, CPLO) & Mr Moses Mbatha.

## The Gathering 2016, 10 June 2016



Fr Peter-John with General Bantu Holomisa MP, leader of the United Democratic Movement.



Fr Peter-John Pearson (Director, CPLO) and Fr Russel Pollitt (Director, Jesuit Institute) with Finance Minister Pravin Gordhan at The Gathering hosted by the Daily Maverick.

## Meeting with the Minister of Education, 23 June 2016

A delegation consisting of the Secretary General of The Southern African Catholic Bishops' Conference, Bishop Sandri the President of the Catholic Board of Education (CBE) and members of the CBE, Catholic Institute for Education (CIE) and the Catholic Parliamentary Liaison Office (CPLO) met with the Minister of Basic Education Ms Angie Motshekga in Pretoria. It was a very productive meeting. Amongst the topics discussed were issues around upholding the Catholic ethos in public schools on private property, the ordinary selection of teachers and principals, the teaching of religion in schools and a number of items relating to rentals and rates for schools. A number of bilateral committees were set up to take the matters discussed further.

## World Refugee Day, 20 June 2016

On World Refugee Day, the Minister of Home Affairs Mr Malusi Gigaba and the Deputy Minister Fatima Chohan of the same department met with a wide range of civil society groups working around issues of refugees, migrants and displaced persons. They spoke of some of the difficulties they encounter in their work, some of the contradictions in policies and inconsistent practices in various Home Affairs Offices. The Minister in his address pointed to SA's record of progressive policies with regard to issues of human mobility. He recorded his admiration for the resilience and spirit of enterprise amongst refugees and migrants. He spoke of the need to develop social cohesion and the government's desire to continue a policy of social inclusion rather than encampment. Earlier in the day the Minister and Deputy Minister had visited the Bonne Esperance Centre run by the Scalabrini Sisters. The ministers heard the testimonies of various people staying at the Centre and visited with the children who are cared for at the centre.



Standing, L-R: Mr Mduzuzi Qwabe (Policy Analyst/Researcher, CIE); Sr Hermenegild Makoro (Secretary General, SACBC); and Fr Peter-John Pearson (Director, CPLO). Seated, L-R: Ms Janice Seland (Director, CIE); Sr Kathy Gayor (Chairperson, CBE); Ms Angie Motshekga; and Bishop Giuseppe Sandri.



Fr Peter-John Pearson and Mr Malusi Gigaba

## Public Seminar: Is the Rainbow Nation at a Turning Point? 29 June 2016

On 29 June 2016, the Catholic Parliamentary Liaison Office (CPLO) and the Institute of Security Studies (ISS) co-hosted a public seminar entitled "Is the Rainbow Nation at a turning point?" Dr Jakkie Cilliers from the ISS sparked a very vibrant and thought-provoking discussion. Dr Cilliers presented the findings of a series of studies conducted by the ISS. In essence, South Africa finds itself at a very precarious political, economic and social crossroads. The studies project three possible scenarios of a future South Africa.

South Africa would need to address the spectre of long-term low growth trajectory, which is unsustainable in the medium-to long-term, were it to prevent the possible scenario that Dr Cilliers terms 'A Nation Divided.' This scenario is characterised by an increasingly violent political, social and economic landscape, as government ineffectiveness is increasingly compromised by rising corruption and the middle-income trap. Dr Cilliers stresses that the ANC's traditionalist politics is inimical to both economic growth and progress towards an inclusive economy. That said, Dr Cilliers emphasizes that South Africa has significant and untapped growth potential. It is only by way of building a more inclusive and knowledge-based economy that South Africa can create jobs, reduce the extreme inequality and the grinding poverty in the medium to long term. It is through these channels that South Africa can achieve the 'Mandela Magic' outcome, another projected scenario.



Fr Peter-John Pearson and Ms Fatima Chohan

A third scenario that Mr Cilliers paints is the 'Bafana Bafana' scenario, a perpetuation of the status quo and the most likely scenario. In the final analysis, South Africa's current predicament and future are intimately linked to the internal politics of the African National Congress (ANC), which is increasingly mired with factional violence, and is both a symptom and a cause of a discourse of social discord, poverty, unemployment and crime.



Dr Jakkie Cilliers at the public seminar



Italian Consul General, Mr Alfonso Tagliaferri, responds to Dr Cilliers presentation

## Distributed Publications

### Briefing Papers:

- 404 Climate Change and South Africa's Natural Resources
- 405 Hidden Economic Burdens
- 406 Why Do We Need Provinces?
- 407 Mental Well-Being
- 408 South Africa's International Climate Obligations: The Domestication of the Paris Agreement

### Submissions Made:

Draft Critical Infrastructure Protection Bill

### Education Digest:

Education Digest 29	04/11/2016
Education Digest 30	13/05/2016

### Family Digests:

Mental Health and the Family	06/04/2016
The Neglect of Children	14/06/2016

### Environment Digest:

Climate Change	01/04/2016
----------------	------------

### Refugees Digest:

Refugees Digest 4	26/04/2016
Refugees Digest 5	09/05/2016
Refugees Digest 6	20/06/2016

### Health Digest:

Health Digest 1	12/05/2016
-----------------	------------

All publications are available on  
CPLO's website

## CONTACT US

P O Box 2910 CAPE TOWN 8000

Phone: +27 (21) 461 1417

Fax: +27 (21) 461 6961

E-mail: [info@cplo.org.za](mailto:info@cplo.org.za)

Website: [www.cplo.org.za](http://www.cplo.org.za)

Follow us on Twitter: @CPLO\_SA