



Roundtable Discussions



What has the NDP accomplished so far? 23 February

Mr Jeremy Cronin (above right), Deputy Secretary-General of the South African Communist Party, and Professor William Gumede (above left), of the University of the Witwatersrand spoke about the National Development Plan. Among the audience members at this focused discussion group was ACDP Member of Parliament Cheryllyn Dudley.

Foster Care, 6 March



The roundtable was addressed by Mr Elroy Paulus (National Advocacy Manager - Black Sash); Ms Thandiwe Zulu (Regional Manager, Gauteng - Black Sash); Dr Usang Maria Assim (Community Law Centre - UWC) and Ms Tozama Ngcongolo (Child Care and Protection Services - Western Cape Department of Social Development).



South Africa's energy crisis: How did we find ourselves in the dark? 27 February

Mr Sisa Njikelana, the Chairperson of the South African Independent Power Producers Association (above left) and Ms Neoka Naidoo (above right) from Project 90 by 2030 led a roundtable discussion on the country's energy crisis. Ms Naidoo looked at South Africa's energy history and Mr Njikelana made a presentation on measures being taken to alleviate the current energy crisis. The passionate discussion that followed is testament to how load-shedding is impacting ordinary citizens in a profound way. The event was well attended by people from a variety of sectors.

During March, the Catholic Parliamentary Liaison Office together with the Western Cape Department of Social Development, hosted a roundtable on Foster Care. Foster care is a way of providing a family life for children who cannot, for whatever reason, live with their parents. It has long been one of the strategies used as an alternative placement for children found to be in need of care by a Children's Court as "a result of being orphaned, abandoned, abused, neglected, or at risk". It is an alternative to institutional care. However, the HIV/AIDS pandemic and its devastating consequences have resulted in a huge increase in the number of vulnerable children in need of care.

During the course of various fora the issue of foster care was said to be beset with difficulties that were impacting negatively on Child Protection Services. For example, access to social grants was compromised due to delays in Children's Court hearings; and while the term "kinship foster care" is in the Children's Act it is not defined, which results in much confusion. The roundtable sought to address these issues.

Land Reform in South Africa: What is going on? 20 March



Speaking at the roundtable were: Mr Lengane Bogatsu, Chief Director: Land Restitution Support (North West); Professor Ruth Hall from the Programme for Land, and Judge Yasmin Shenaz Meer, acting Chief Justice of the Land Claims Court and Agrarian Studies (PLAAS) at the University of the Western Cape.

Prof Hall started the discussion by pointing out several significant developments in the question of land reform. One of the points she raised was that it seems that there is a fundamental shift in government's emphasis in the land reform programme, from restitution and redistribution for the landless and deprived, to focusing on fewer and larger commercial players in the land sector. Mr Bogatsu noted that the question of development had become a major part of land reform. Judge Meer, steering clear of policy issues, focused more on the nature of the Land Claims Court and some of its challenges and approaches to issues. She emphasised the idea that actors in the land space should not be afraid to approach the courts when they have problems with the issues they are dealing with.



Judge Meer poses with CPLO's Director, Fr Peter-John Pearson



'State Capture' of Independent Institutions? 27 March

This discussion was co-hosted with the Hanns Seidel Foundation (HSF). The speakers included the Executive Secretary of the Council for the Advancement of the South African Constitution (CASAC), Lawson Naidoo (below), and former National Co-ordinator of the Right to Know Campaign (R2K), Murray Hunter (above left). Lawson Naidoo spoke on South Africa's doctrine of separation of powers embedded within the Constitution, whereas Murray Hunter talked about a re-emergence of the 'securocrats', a trend that not only occurred within South Africa, but also within the global political sphere. The two cited different examples in their presentations, their main arguments boiling down to three seminal points: independence, transparency and accountability in South Africa's parastatals.





National Minimum Wage and job creation, 15 April

Professor Nicoli Nattrass from the University of Cape Town, Centre for Social Science Research, led the discussion on a national minimum wage along with labour columnist and author Mr Terry Bell, and the director of the Pietermaritzburg

Agency for Community Social Action, Mr Mervyn Abrahams. The speakers canvassed topics such as the effects of minimum wages on employment in South Africa and Brazil, the amount of money needed to provide the requirements for basic living, and the need for new models of economic development. The discussion following the inputs was robust and vigorous.



Prison and the family, 13 May

The Western Cape Department of Social Development; the National Institute for Crime Prevention and Re-integration of Offenders (NICRO) and the Prison Care and Support Network (PCSN) hosted this roundtable discussion on Prison and the Family which sought to place the spotlight on the families of the incarcerated. The roundtable discussion was addressed by (L-R) Louise Honeyman of Forgiven Ministries; Nina Richards of PCSN and Venessa Padayachee of NICRO (far right); as well as the mother of a son who is presently in prison (centre). Participants included organizations working with offenders and their families; Correctional Service officials; health and social work practitioners; parliamentary researchers; academics; and people who had spent time in prison. The challenges of restoring families and the many difficulties in providing services were discussed. Other issues raised included the high number of prisoners on remand; repeat offenders; the long distances family members have to travel to visit family members in prison; prison overcrowding and the prevalence of TB among the incarcerated. Many of those present were involved in innovative programmes to address these issues and reduce the stigma of prison and cultivate family resilience. The White Paper on Correctional Services asserts “the achievement of rehabilitation is premised on the building of healthy familial relations”.

Annual National Assessments (ANAs) – What are they good for? 4 May



Ms Carla Pereira, Chief Operations Officer at JET Education Services and Dr Nic Spaul, researcher at the University of Stellenbosch, Dept of Economics were the main speakers.

This event was a collaboration with the Catholic Institute of Education (CIE) represented by Mr Mduzuzi Qwabe (Researcher) (above right). Both Dr Spaul and Ms Pereira admitted that the ANAs have their weaknesses, but they can be valuable as a diagnostic tool. The ANAs ensure that there is an increased attention on primary schooling; align marking practices to a standardised level, and provide some indication of what learning (and how much) is taking place. However, Dr Spaul reiterated that the ANAs are not comparable across grades or across cycles (year-on-year). Attention should be given to improving the ANAs by making them more independent from the Department of Basic Education, as with the matric exams which are administered by Umalusi.

Implications of a South African nuclear build, 22 May



The speakers at the occasion were (L-R) Mr Saliem Fakir from the WWF; Mr Shane Pereira from Lesedi Nuclear Services; Ms Liz McDaid from the Southern African Faith Communities’ Environment Institute (SAFCEI) and Mr Andrew Kenny, an independent energy consultant.

The demand for energy continually increases with South Africa's developing population and economy, leading the CPLO to organise a roundtable discussion on the Implications of a South African Nuclear Build. Mr Pereira examined the construction implications of such an infrastructural endeavour; Ms McDaid focussed on the socio-economic implications, exploring the legacy of nuclear energy in South Africa as well as in other countries worldwide. Mr Kenny looked at the positive implications that would accompany having nuclear as our main source of energy; and Mr Fakir spoke about other energy options we could have instead of going the nuclear route. An explosive topic that gave participants much food for thought.



CPLO Researcher, Mayibuye Magwaza, poses a question to the panel



Saliem Fakir (Worldwide Fund for Nature)

The State of the Judiciary, 9 June



The speakers were Carmel Rickard (left), veteran legal writer and journalist and Chris Oxtoby (centre) of UCT's Democratic Governance and Rights Unit. The Deputy Minister of Justice and Constitutional Development, John Jeffery (right), attended the discussion and spoke briefly.

The discussion, a collaboration with the HSF, covered a wide range of issues, including the independence of the judiciary, the role of the Judicial Service Commission, administrative flaws within the judicial system, transformation of the bench, and the importance of the magistracy. The roundtable was well attended, with representatives from academia, Parliament, the diplomatic corps, and numerous civil society organisations in the audience.



Subsidiarity and local government, 3 June

Framed around the sub-theme of "Can they do it? Subsidiarity and local government capacity", the three speakers addressed questions of the devolution of power to the local level, the current institutional arrangements for local government, and the differences in effectiveness of major metropolitans and rural municipalities.

Fr Anthony Egan of the Jesuit Institute (left) gave a theoretical overview of subsidiarity and its history, Mr Phindile Ntliziwana of the University of the Western Cape (centre) presented on the status of municipalities and the oversight legislation that they are subjected to, and Mr Nishendra Moodley, Director of the Palmer Development Group (right), shared his experiences as a consultant to various municipalities.



The CPLO team poses with Deputy Minister Jeffery

Have Trade Unions become irrelevant? 25 June



L-R: Michael Bagraim and Terry Bell

When the invitations first came out, there was some disquiet in various trade union circles first because they felt that the trade unions themselves should have a voice on the panel, and also because they probably feared that this would be a session of union bashing without them having the opportunity to express their views.

However, the roundtable itself produced a slightly different outcome where the most dominant voices were those of the various trade unions who were present in the audience and who, to almost the last person, admitted that trade unions needed to rethink the way they operate, and especially how to respond to the changing world of work prompted by mechanisation and technology. There was also an admission that trust and confidence in trade unions was low and was falling, demanding some proper reflection and response.

Mr Bagraim said that trade unions were not taking workers seriously and were not doing their work properly. He nevertheless agreed with all the speakers that trade unions were indispensable to a balanced economic environment.

The HSRC study presented by Steven Gordon gave proof of the dwindling trust and confidence levels people were having in trade unions. It was a useful study to have because it gave a clearer picture of what was going on with trade unions' relationship with workers.

Terry Bell gave a worrying prognosis for the future of employment as the world changes and technology replaces workers; it seems as if nothing is being done about this trend.

The roundtable gave voice to workers, and challenged them to challenge themselves and their trade unions' relationship with the future and with politics.



Steven Gordon (Human Sciences Research Council)

Other



The Choice on Termination of Pregnancy Act Commemoration Mass, 2 February

On 1 February 1997 the Choice on Termination of Pregnancy Act was passed by Parliament. Fr Peter-John Pearson (CPLD's Director) and Fr Charles Prince (Youth Chaplain) officiated at a Holy Mass, organised by CPLD, to mark the anniversary and to pray for a change of heart on the part of all who disregard the rights of unborn children.



Meetings with Members of Parliament: Francois Beukman (ANC), 16 March

In collaboration with the HSF, CPLD hosted the first lunch with MPs for 2015. This lunch, held at the Townhouse Hotel, was attended by a cross-section of people, ranging from academics to on the ground activists, to a diplomat; each in their own way having leverage in different public spaces. The speaker, the chairperson of the Portfolio Committee on Police and ANC MP, Mr Francois Beukman (above), was very affable, honest and extremely helpful with regard to difficulties raised with him. This was a good example of public/politician dialogue, networking and an important aspect of public participation.

Mr Beukman's presentation was closely linked with the realities that communities were facing and the way in which he chose to respond to guests was an indication of the direction in which policing is intending to move by being more in touch with the people. He raised several tasks that the committee has undertaken to achieve in 2015 that will have a large impact on the way in which the police service will function going forward. He noted that the role of the police is a topical issue this year and therefore he values engagement with a variety of organizations.

The discussions between Mr Beukman and guests allowed for interaction in dealing with issues that are often private and of a personal nature, where guests gave first-hand accounts of experiences. Mr Beukman stated that he understood the value of staying close to the issues at the ground level in order to understand what happens in society. While the summit on firearms is coming up, so is the white paper on the police, the Firearms Amendment Bill in April, and the white paper on safety and security, as well as the SAPS Amendment Act. All these policy documents will have a massive impact on policing in the next twenty years, which means that taking note of what is happening in communities now is of the utmost importance going forward.



Meetings with Members of Parliament: Annette Lovemore (DA), 24 April

Annette Lovemore (pictured right), the Shadow Minister in the Basic Education Portfolio at Parliament was the speaker at a recent MP Lunch held at the Townhouse Hotel. This event, co-hosted with the HSF, was attended by principals, teachers, students, members of the faith community and the German consul-general. Ms Lovemore spoke to the core issues that she felt most needed to be dealt with in South Africa. She discussed the responsibility that comes with being in the position of MP and that, when sworn in, an MP commits to honouring the mandate set out for them in the Constitution.

During the discussion, participants raised several issues related to teaching being an essential service; how the Departments of Basic Education and Higher Education integrate and communicate with one another in order to work effectively; and the issue of whether the government will re-introduce teaching colleges. Ms Lovemore dealt with important issues faced by the school system and, in particular, students. What was needed was for the youth to be the core focus of any policy or legislation in education. For Ms Lovemore, the task of the leading opposition party was to make certain these challenges were dealt with by government accordingly.



Public seminar: Top five countries competing for power in Africa, 27 May

In collaboration with the HSF and the Institute for Security Studies (ISS), hosted a seminar on new research conducted by the ISS, which explores Africa in the global power context and the future capabilities of the continent's Big Five: Algeria, Egypt,

Ethiopia, Nigeria and South Africa. Dr Julia Schünemann, Senior Researcher and Project Leader, ISS (right), served as the speaker and Dr Mills Soko (left), Associate Professor, Graduate School of Business, University of Cape Town was the respondent. The aim of the seminar was to discuss the historical distribution of power in Africa and how it is likely to change over the next 25 years. Dr Schünemann presented on African power in the Global Context; Africa's status in the world; measurement of power; the capabilities of the Big 5; as well as the ability of countries to project their respective potential. The research shows that in an increasingly multipolar world, parts of Africa will become more prosperous; however African power on the global front will remain peripheral. The drivers of national power used in the publication are demographics; economics; military; technology; and diplomatic footprint. The study holds that Nigeria currently wields the greatest 'power potential', closely followed by Ethiopia. Dr Mills Soko offered a constructive critique stating the definition of power is too state-centric, focussing on economy size instead of economic quality and limiting our scope by neglecting the important role that soft power plays in African politics. He also took issue with the omission of Angola from the list of top power states, as it should have replaced Ethiopia. He mentioned that the rising influence of multi-nationals in Africa can be attributed to a lack of proper governance in some countries. The full results of the research are published in the latest paper in the African Futures series, which was launched at the seminar.



Meetings with Members of Parliament: Geordin Hill-Lewis (DA), 29 May

The HSF and CPLO hosted Geordin Hill-Lewis, the DA's Shadow Minister for Trade and Industry, who stepped in when the chief whip of the DA, John Steenhuisen, could not get a flight back to Cape Town in time for the meeting. While Mr Hill-Lewis is the DA's youngest MP, his ability to speak to matters related to his portfolio and to the DA's strategies going forward speaks to the wealth of experience he has been able to accumulate in a short space of time.

In attendance were the Japanese, German and French consuls general, along with representatives from KPMG, the Goedgedacht Forum and the South African Institute of International Affairs. Mr Hill-Lewis began his discussion by acknowledging the work of the CPLO in its efforts to influence policy in Parliament. The discussion allowed for an array of questions to be asked with reference to Mr Hill-Lewis' portfolio specifically, but also to highlight important issues for the DA more generally. Many guests were interested in understanding the future strategy of the DA, especially under the newly elected leader, Mmusi Maimane. The interactions with guests showed that the interest in the leading opposition party is to understand its plans and strategies, especially with the upcoming municipal elections in mind.



Electoral Integrity in Africa, 22 June

On 22 June, the Electoral Integrity Project (EIP), in partnership with the HSF and CPLO, launched a report titled Electoral Integrity in Africa.

The report is the first by the EIP to present findings of the study of electoral integrity in a specific region, in this case, Africa, a continent of great diversity whose elections are under-studied in comparison with Europe or America.

"The purpose of the report is twofold," explains Dr Ferran Martínez i Coma, Research Associate at the Electoral Integrity Project and co-author of the report.

"First, it aims to present the African results of the perceptions of electoral integrity expert surveys, and second, to analyse important elements at play in shaping the integrity of African elections. Much attention has been placed on polling day and the immediate administration of elections, but many other elements of the electoral cycle are key to the integrity of the elections."

The report notes an increasing trend in democracies and even non-democracies holding elections. But what determines whether elections have integrity, when and why do they fail and what adjustments are necessary to ensure their success? The report provides new, comprehensive analyses of recent elections in African countries. It covers 49 different indicators of electoral integrity in national executive and legislative elections of 28 countries from July 2012 to December 2014.

Speaking at the launch, Judge Johann Kriegler (above), former South African Constitutional Court Judge, highlighted the importance of such research and emphasized the importance of the rule of law in society as an influence on electoral integrity.

Visitors



Dr Jan Jans, 9 and 10 March

Dr Jan Jans of the Tilburg School of Humanities, on his annual trip to the CPLO offices, presented a public lecture on *Between Two Synods on the Family: What Are the Expectations?*, and a roundtable discussion on Millennium Development Goals and Catholic Social Thought.



Mensen met een Missie, 23 March

A group of seven delegates representing Mensen met een Missie (MM) in the Netherlands. This visit formed part of their new fundraising campaign with the objective of 'traveling with a mission'. This motivated group of travellers visited and met with MM's partner organizations, and through their own networks, social media and media platforms, shared their travel experiences. Key to this process was showing the impact of MM's work, through different marketing strategies.



Fordham University, 1 April

A group of ten American and four South African students, who are part of the Fordham University UBUNTU programme at the University of Pretoria, accompanied by Prof Booi Themeli from Fordham University, USA.

DIRCO Meeting, 23 April



L-R: Fr Peter-John Pearson, Mr Seraki Matsebe (Parliamentary Liaison Officer, DIRCO), Ambassador George Johannes

Mr Seraki Matsebe, the liaison between DIRCO and the Portfolio Committee on Foreign Affairs together with Ambassador George Johannes visited the Office on 23rd April. Mr Matsebe spoke and condemned the recent xenophobic attacks, our relations with other states in Africa and the objectives of Ubuntu foreign policy with its emphasis on continental solidarity, support for economies on the continent and an emphasis on human rights.

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Family Digests

The Vulnerability of the Girl-Child	26.03.2015
Women and their Families on Farms	28.04.2015
Xenophobia and Family	22.05.2015

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