



Southern African Catholic Bishops' Conference PARLIAMENTARY LIAISON OFFICE



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CPLO Roundtable Discussions



Grade R Education: Getting the Fundamentals Right, 7 February. Nic Spaull of Stellenbosch University and Linda Biersteker from the Early Learning Resource Unit spoke on the topic of how Grade R assists children in educational outcomes as well as social and emotional development. Attendees included representatives of NGOs, donor foundations, educators, school principals, and academics. The roundtable was well received, with delegates noting the general lack of attention to pre-school education, despite its importance in improving later outcomes in education and socialization. Above: Linda Biersteker of ELRU speaks on the importance of Grade R.



The State of the Family, 28 February. This roundtable was a collaboration with the Western Cape Department of Social Development and NICRO. It focused on the State of the Nation Address in this, the 20th Anniversary of the International Year of the Family. What priorities have been identified? To what extent do they reflect and promote the White Paper on the Family which is in the process of implementation? What is actually the “state of our nation” when it comes to families? Healthy families contribute to a healthy society. What interventions do we need to facilitate healing for families? The speakers were: Ms Lerato Moloi of the South African Institute of Race Relations (SAIRR); Dr Zolile Mlisana, of the Foundation for a Relational Nation (FORENSA) and Prof. Nicky Roman of the University of the Western Cape (UWC). The Moderator was Dr Benita Moolman of the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC).



The First Frack is the Deepest: A deeper look at hydraulic fracturing in SA, 10 March. Representatives from the Treasure the Karoo Action Group, Shell Oil and the Institute for Security Studies all spoke at the event. L-R: Jonathan Deal of Treasure the Karoo Action Group, Niall Kramer of Shell Oil, and Dr Julia Schünemann of the Institute for Security Studies listen while Fr Peter-John Pearson, director of the Catholic Parliamentary Liaison office, introduces them.



New Political Parties and Coalitions in the 2014 Elections, 4 April. The main speakers were from the ACDP, representing the Collective for Democracy (a new coalition of political parties of which the ACDP is a part), from AgangSA and the EFF, and a respondent, Dr Cherrel Africa, from UWC. The three speakers spoke on why there is a need for new political parties and coalitions in South Africa. The ACDP pointed out that there is a great need for plurality in South African politics and thus small parties need to stand together in order to ensure that their voices are not drowned out by bigger parties, but also noted that, when parties enter into coalitions it is important to remain true to their constituency. AgangSA argued that the ANC had failed to deliver as a government, thus, the need existed for a new party that would deliver through empowering people in education and training. The EFF believed that the status quo was unacceptable and it proposed radical changes in the economy through nationalization of the economy.