

Southern African Catholic Bishops' Conference PARLIAMENTARY LIAISON OFFICE *20 Years of Participating in Public Policy*

Newsletter: July - September 2017

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In 2008, CPLO began to offer an annual training and exposure course for other Catholic Church structures in Africa that wanted to form their own parliamentary liaison offices. Since then, numerous Bishops' Conferences have sent people to Cape Town for training. Those who have attended include Bishops, Secretaries-General, Justice & Peace Co-ordinators, and church workers in various capacities.

As a result of these courses, CPLOs have

been set up in a number of countries, such as Kenya, Uganda, Namibia, Lesotho, Malawi, the DRC, Liberia, and South Sudan. They join the South African office, and those in Zambia and Zimbabwe (which were started before 2008) in providing the Catholic Church with a powerful voice to influence public policy and legislation all over the continent. Plans are also in place for similar offices in other countries, for example Nigeria and Swaziland.

This year, instead of offering another training course, CPLO decided to hold a conference to assess how well the various offices have been working. Among the topics explored were the political contexts in the different countries; the degree of support offered by Church leadership; questions of resources, funding and personnel; the openness or otherwise of the various legislatures; and how to build a stronger network of African CPLOs.

(continued on page 2)



Choosing the National Police Commissioner and the Head of the Hawks: A Voice for the Public?

10 August 2017



Standing, L-R: Ms Kavisha Pillay, Mr David Lewis, and Fr Peter-John Pearson.
Seated, L-R: Mr Gareth Newham and Judge Kate O'Regan

Ms Kavisha Pillay (CW), introduced a public awareness campaign that will bring this issue to wider attention. A survey will be circulated, inviting members of the public to submit their ideas about what kind of person they would like to see as Commissioner. The campaign will also engage with the Portfolio Committee on Police and encourage the Committee to take a more active role in the process.

The last speaker was Judge Kate O'Regan, former Constitutional Court justice, who spoke from her experience of having headed a commission of enquiry into policing in the Western Cape. She noted that the police service has a very strong organisational culture and deep internal loyalties. Most police officers have had no other job in their lives, and the service is all that they know. An open and transparent appointment process might, therefore, not be very popular; however, the attitude of the police should not outweigh the importance of openness and transparency.

This Roundtable was co-hosted by CPLO and the Hanns Seidel Foundation, in collaboration with Corruption Watch (CW) and the Institute for Security Studies (ISS).

There were four speakers. Mr David Lewis, the Executive Director of Corruption Watch, introduced the topic, and explained that South Africa has been suffering from poor quality leadership at the head of the police force for many years. This has contributed to the weakness of the criminal justice system and consequently to the prevalence of serious crime. It was therefore a matter of urgency to ensure that the next Commissioner was the best possible person for the job; public and parliamentary input into the selection process – instead of just allowing the person to be chosen by the President – was of crucial importance.

Mr Gareth Newham (ISS) presented research that showed how SAPS has become less effective in fighting crime over the last five years, despite receiving a much greater budget allocation and an increase in resources. Mr Newham stressed that the question of leadership was extremely important in the police, as the attitude and behaviour of the people at the top set the example for the rest of the service. Mr Newham also noted that in both the National Development Plan and the White Paper on Police – two policy documents that had been approved by Cabinet – a more participatory process for selecting the police commissioner was set out. However, there was as yet no indication that the President intended to follow this process.

(African Catholic Parliamentary Liaison Conference: continued from page 1) ...

The work of CPLOs is rooted in Catholic Social Teaching, and there was thus a serious theological dimension to the conference. Presentations were given by CPLO Director, Fr Peter-John Pearson, and by Fr Larry Kaufmann CSsR, both focusing on the importance of making the Church's voice heard in the public square, and on how best this can be achieved.

But to be effective CPLOs must also co-operate with other denominations and faiths; giving effect to this, the conference also benefited from inputs by Dr Ben du Toit of the Dutch Reformed Church and Dr Rashied Omar of the Claremont Main Road Mosque.

A full report on the conference is being prepared and will be posted on the CPLO website in due course.



Standing: Ms Lois Law (Family and Vulnerable Sectors Researcher, CPLO) and Fr Matsepane Morare SJ (Moderator and Researcher, CPLO)
Seated, L-R: Ms Zainub Kader, Ms Bettie Niewoudt, and Mr Thulani Velebayi

What About the Boy Child?

22 August 2017

We held a Roundtable Discussion asking the question 'What About the Boy Child'? While in the past Roundtable Discussions on 'Gender Based Violence', 'Positive Discipline' and the 'Vulnerability of the Girl Child' have been held, there has been a tendency to overlook the boy child. Real transformation of gender relations requires an equal focus on the boy child. The Roundtable was addressed by Mr Thulani Velebayi of Sonke Gender Justice; Ms Zainab Kader from James House; and Ms Bettie Niewoudt from the Stellenbosch Child Welfare Society. Themes from the Roundtable Discussion suggest that boys lack solid role-models and fall victim to all kinds of social pathologies – including participation in gangs, drug and alcohol abuse, violence, crime and abusive domestic relationships. It was made clear that urgent interventions are needed. As Prof Paul Wandere has said, "If you save the boy child, you save a generation."

Municipal Coalition Governance: A model for 2019?

28 August 2017

The 2019 national elections may produce no outright winners, forcing parties to form a coalition government. The intention of this Roundtable Discussion was to look at the coalition municipal governments and assess how these are working, and if they can be used as a gauge for 2019. Dr Ivor Sarakinsky, Director of the Wits School of Governance, and Mr Keith Gottschalk, former head of the Political Studies Department at UWC, were the main speakers. >>> [Next Page](#)

A Just Energy Transition is South Africa: Sources, Ownership and Related Matters

24 August 2017

In collaboration with Project 90 by 2030 we hosted a Roundtable Discussion where Brenda Martin, CEO at SAWEA (South African Wind Energy Association); Lebogang Mulaisi, Policy Coordinator at COSATU & Richard Halsey, Researcher at Project 90 by 2030, dialogued on 'A Just Energy Transition in South Africa: Sources, Ownership and Related Matters'.

Several questions were explored in consideration of ownership in this context: How should the status quo and distribution of ownership be changed?

How can various stakeholders work together on the topic of ownership? How do we prevent differing views on ownership becoming an obstacle to progressive change? What are the potential ownership models of the future? How do we ensure that energy production creates adequate job opportunities?

The Roundtable provided numerous insights into the complexities of ownership and the concerns of citizens and various energy role players. Several related issues emerged that need to be explored further, through research and similar events.



L-R: Ms Tina Schubert (Policy and Research, Project 90 By 2030), Ms Lebogang Mulaisi, Ms Palesa Ngwenya (Environment and Energy Researcher, CPLO), Mr Richard Halsey, Ms Tasneem Essop (National Planning Commission of South Africa and Moderator), and Mr Iago Davids (Policy and Research, Project 90 By 2030)



Dr Ivor Sarakinsky and Mr Keith Gottschalk

(Municipal Coalition Governance ...from page 3)

The Roundtable was repeated in Johannesburg in September, in collaboration with the Archdiocese of Johannesburg's Justice and Peace Commission. Both Dr Sarakinsky and Mr Gottschalk acknowledged that coalition governments are a feature of European politics, and have been to a lesser extent part of South African politics. However, the point was made that coalition governance is difficult to manage, and often fraught with many challenges. Dr Sarakinsky argued that coalition politics in South Africa is often not based on principle but rather on the adage "the enemy of my enemy is my friend".

He further argued that coalition governments, such as the ones in South Africa, were not an expression on the will of the people, but rather an 'after the fact' arrangement between parties to attain power. This often lead to misalignment of what the people (electorate) wanted and what the coalition government was delivering.

Mr Gottschalk had similar arguments. He cited the examples of Israel and India, where the coalition governments were a disaster. In Israel, the PR electoral system means the ruling party enjoys the support of between only one-quarter to one-fifth of the voters. It depends for power on small extremist parties, whose demands to join the coalition government include support for colonization of the West Bank. In India, while the previous Prime Minister, Manmohan Singh, had impeccable moral integrity, he was unable to take action against outrageously corrupt coalition partners. The result was not happy. The Indian National Congress was voted out of power, and now has the smallest number of parliamentary constituencies ever in 70 years of independence. While both speakers agreed that coalition governments are difficult to manage, it is not impossible for them to work to some extent. In order for them to work, Dr Sarakinsky argued, the parties wanting to form a coalition would need buy-in from the electorate to 'legitimise' the coalition. One of the ways to do this would be to go back to the voters by holding a referendum on whether they can form a coalition.

Distributed Publications

Briefing Papers:

- 436 The 2017 Trafficking Persons Report
- 437 Migrants and Housing
- 438 Choosing Our New Police Leadership
- 439 Women and Land: Working It, But Never Owning It
- 440 Political Party Funding
- 441 Governing Through Coalitions

Responses:

- LHR vs Home Affairs

Submissions:

- Review of the Public funding of Represented Political Parties Act 103 of 1997
- Final Report on the Commercialisation of Religion and Abuse of People's Belief Systems

Digests:

Refugees Digests

- Refugees Migrants & Asylum Seekers
- Refugees, Migrants and Displaced Persons

Family Digest

- Family Digest 15-Foetal Alcohol Syndrome
- Health Digest 2- Medicinal Use of Cannabis



Other Events and Visitors

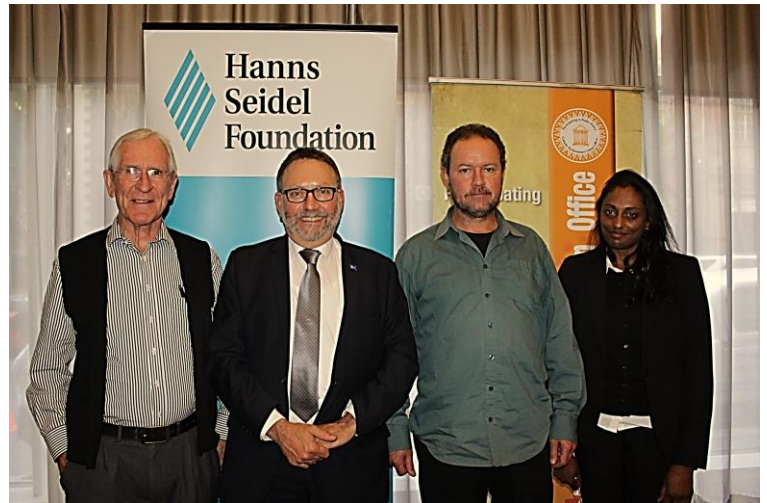
Lunch with James Selfe (Democratic Alliance)

4 July 2017

The first 'MP lunch' of 2017 was held on July 4th. The MP guest was James Selfe, chairperson of the Democratic Alliance's Federal Executive Committee, and the party's shadow minister of Correctional Services. Mr Selfe is one of the DA's, and the country's, most senior MPs, having served in the National Assembly since 1999, and before that in the Senate (now the National Council of Provinces) between 1994 and 1999.

Mr Selfe covered three topics: First, the DA's governing agreements and coalitions in the metropolitan municipalities of Johannesburg, Tshwane and Nelson Mandela Bay; second, the party's use of the courts and litigation in order to force accountability and to oppose government decisions it disagrees with; third, questions of policy regarding prisons and the punishment of crimes. The governing agreements and coalitions are progressing well. It is sometimes difficult to reach consensus with the EFF, since the two parties have very different ideologies, but so far they have co-operated sincerely. They have also found more common ground between them, especially in improving service delivery and stamping out corruption.

On litigation, Mr Selfe explained that it is an expensive and risky strategy, but the DA uses it when it feels there is no other way of changing a bad decision by government. It is sometimes necessary to go to court to protect proper procedures, but also to set precedents.



L-R: CPLO Liaison Bishop, Kevin Dowling C.S.s.R, Mr James Selfe, Adv Mike Pothier (Research Coordinator, CPLO), and Ms Venessa Padayachee (National Advocacy and Lobbying Manager, NICRO)

This is the case particularly in the matter of appointing ANC cadres to important positions that should be independent.

Regarding Correctional Services, Mr Selfe noted various areas where improvement was needed: reducing overcrowding; making it easier for people accused of minor crimes to get bail; making more use of non-custodial sentences. A number of guests at the lunch were from NGOs working in the area of crime and prisons, and they were able to put a number of questions and suggestions to Mr Selfe.

Among the guests were six CPLO colleagues from other African countries, all of whom are involved in similar work with their legislatures. The meeting provided them with a good example of how CPLO South Africa interacts with local MPs.



Visit by Dr Volker Kasch

6 July 2017

Dr Volker Kasch visited the CPLO during a private visit to South Africa. He was formerly Misereor's country representative in Zimbabwe, and advocacy officer for Misereor at the Reichstag in Berlin.

L-R: Adv Mike Pothier (Research Coordinator, CPLO), Ms Karen Morris (Programme Coordinator, CPLO), Fr Peter-John Pearson (Director, CPLO) and Dr Volker Kasch

Lunch with Bridget Masango (Democratic Alliance)

20 July 2017

In association with the Hanns Seidel Foundation (HSF), we hosted Ms Bridget Masango, DA MP, at a lunch at the Townhouse Hotel. Most of those who attended were in some way connected with the area of social development. Ms Masango focused her attention on three issues. Firstly, the chronic shortage of social workers and the failure to assist in finding employment for those who are qualified. This affects people in dire need of the support of social workers and thus deprives the most needy individuals and communities of necessary support and specific types of assistance. The second issue she addressed in detail was the whole saga around the South Africa Social Security Agency (SASSA). Ms Masango described in detail the Minister's failure to answer parliamentary questions, to apply herself to the workings of SASSA, and to take responsibility for a huge amount of unauthorised spending. She described the Minister as acting with impunity. She also raised the issue of NGO subsidies not being paid due to budget restrictions.

She highlighted that many NGOs were not registered due to non-compliance, but noted that NGOs performed many critical services that the Social Development Department really should be providing.



L-R: Mr Albert Fritz, Ms Bridget Masango, Fr Peter-John Pearson

Provincial MEC Albert Fritz also attended and spoke of good ideas being hamstrung by legislation and unnecessary budgetary demands. He mentioned good pilot projects that the Province has introduced, and the need to allow people to discover their agency, suggesting that the grant system disempowered people.

A good discussion followed and the practitioners around the table proposed many positive and practical ideas. At least two bilateral engagements were set up as a result of this meeting, one between the Black Sash and Mr Fritz, and one between NICRO and Ms Masango. This is indeed part of what we hope to achieve by providing the space for these engagements, to stimulate further sharing and interaction.



Various participants, which included people working in communities where FAS is highly prevalent, joined the discussion

Foetal Alcohol Syndrome

11 August 2017

CPLO hosted a small seminar focusing on Foetal Alcohol Syndrome, known as FAS. FAS is an increasingly common cause of behavioural and learning challenges in children. FAS is 100% preventable; and it is 100% irreversible. According to the University of Stellenbosch Nutrition Centre, FAS is a birth defect caused by heavy alcohol consumption (usually in a binge pattern) during pregnancy. It is characterised by growth retardation, facial and neural abnormalities as well as malformations of other organ systems. It is the manifestation of deep and tragic socio-economic factors. It has resulted in an intergenerational culture of alcohol abuse where the consumption of alcohol is seen as a primary recreational activity. The prevalence rate of FAS in South Africa is several times higher than elsewhere in the world. It is estimated that between 70 and 80 per 1000 babies born in the Western Cape have the syndrome. Foetal alcohol syndrome disorder occurs across all socio-economic groups and affects all races and ethnicities. The seminar explored interventions to assist children with this condition and help them achieve their full potential.



Training Course on Migration for Pastoral Care Agents

14 August 2017

We co-hosted a training session for groups working in advocacy for refugees, migrants and displaced persons with the Scalabrini Institute for Human Mobility in Africa (SIHMA) and the Archdiocese of Johannesburg Immigrants and Refugees Desk. About 40 people attended from across the country. Topics included the Biblical and theological bases for advocacy in this area, various protocols and

conventions, South Africa's policies and new legislation, models for pastoral and psychological support, as well as best practices in advocacy and more pastoral responses to the basic issues in this area. As part of the seminar there was also a Roundtable Discussion on Statelessness and various issues especially pertaining to refugee children.



Pastoral care agents from across South Africa attended the training and partook in various presentations given by SIHMA, CPLO and the Immigrants and Refugees Desk



Fr Peter-John discusses the work of CPLO with a group of doctors, nurses and other healthcare professionals of the HOPE Cape Town project

HOPE Cape Town's Community Health Workers visit the CPLO

16 August 2017

The CPLO hosted 30 members of the HOPE organisation before their visit to Parliament. The organisation is engaged in home care and various support systems for people infected and affected by HIV/Aids. The group visited Parliament as part of their ongoing skilling program and in order to better equip themselves for the kind of advocacy they carry out, especially with local authorities. Fr Peter-John shared some of the values that guide our work and some of the practical skills we use in advocacy. It was a very interactive session.



Environmental Heritage Workshop

30 September 2017

The idea was to celebrate the 2nd anniversary of Laudato Si with the youth of Soweto, Orlando West. It turns out this was a good idea as the morning session served as a comprehensive introduction to the document for most of the attendees. CPLO's environment and energy researcher, Palesa, had the task of facilitating the exploration of our heritage as Africans & our longstanding relationship with nature; evidenced through our names and the reverence of nature. The aim was to encourage the young participants to think of their favourite talents and how they could individually & collectively use them in the care of creation. Showing them that mountainous as environmental concerns may seem, the solutions are within us.



Ms Palesa Ngwenya (second left) with the group of youth who participated in the workshop

