



UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA

Centre for Human Rights
Faculty of Law

PRESS STATEMENT

MINISTER-PRESIDENT OF FLANDERS VISITS CENTRE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS AND DELIVERS LECTURE ON THE LINK BETWEEN OFFICIAL DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE AND THE RIGHT TO DEVELOPMENT

22 August 2017

The Centre for Human Rights, Faculty of Law, University of Pretoria, is currently presenting its Advanced Human Rights Course on The Right to Development in Africa, from 21 to 25 August 2017. The course is aimed at responding to the eternal question: 'is development a human right'? What does it mean in the African context?

As part of the short course, the Centre hosted the Flemish Delegation to Southern Africa. The delegation was led by the Flemish Minister-President Hon Geert Bourgeois and Dr Geraldine Reymenants, General Representative of the Government of Flanders. Also present were representatives from the University of Pretoria: Prof Tiniyiko Maluleke (Special Advisor to the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Pretoria), Prof Andre Boraine (Dean, Faculty of Law, University of Pretoria) and Mr Norman Taku (Assistant Director, Centre for Human Rights).

The lecture started with welcoming remarks by Mr Norman Taku, who took the opportunity to highlight some of the milestone achievements of the Centre since its creation in 1986. He underscored how the generous funding of the Government of Flanders in supporting three Advanced Human Rights Courses of the Centre has enabled the training of judges, magistrates, police officers, staff of national human rights institutions, academics, researchers and students.

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Prof Boraine and Prof Maluleke welcomed the delegation on behalf of the Faculty of Law and University of Pretoria respectively. Both speakers reaffirmed their profound gratitude to the Government of Flanders, for its generous support to the Centre, while emphasising the key role of the right to development in addressing pressing political and socio-economic challenges on the continent.

Dr Reymenants explained the aim of the visit of the Delegation to Southern Africa as that of Development Cooperation. The visit was therefore an opportunity for the Flemish Government to visit projects, interact with stakeholders and assess the impact of their programs in Malawi, South Africa and Mozambique. As part of the success stories, Dr Reymenants officially presented a brochure to the Centre, highlighting four success stories of Flanders in Southern Africa (the Centre was included in the brochure as one of the success stories). She congratulated the Centre for its commitment to human rights work on the continent.

The key highlight of the morning was the [lecture delivered by the Flemish Minister-President Hon. Geert Bourgeois](#) on the link between foreign official development assistance and the right to development. Hon Bourgeois highlighted the historical connection between South Africa and Flanders in the areas of Development Cooperation and assistance. He noted in particular that Flanders was one of the first donors to sign the Declaration of Intent to cooperate with South Africa at the end of apartheid in 1994.

He stressed further the importance of a human rights approach to development assistance for the realisation of the right to development. He highlighted the synergies between human rights and development policies. He emphasised the interaction between the right to development and the Sustainable Development Goals. Accordingly, development is a collective responsibility of all countries. Throughout the lecture, Hon Bourgeois emphasised the commitment of the government of Flanders to a human rights based approach to development in its foreign policy approach.

Hon Bourgeois concluded his lecture by highlighting the following four important points:

1. The right to development is not legally binding but should be seen as an international political commitment. It is encouraging that the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals Agenda inherited three fundamental principles of the right to development.
2. Although aid will remain an important source of finance, which contributes to the right to development, the size of aid will decrease for developing countries in the next decades, especially for middle-income countries. South Africa should therefore ensure equal and fair distribution of resources.

3. The interdependent and indivisible nature of all human rights demands a clear commitment from developing and developed countries towards their realisation.
4. 30 years after the adoption of the Declaration on the Right to Development, it is unclear what the operational consequences of the right are. The international community therefore needs to adopt clear practical guidelines for the implementation of the right to development.

This short course brings together more than 25 participants from 15 countries across Africa and Europe, with backgrounds that include national human rights institutions, academia, NGO managers, government policy makers, civil society, independent community consultants, legal practitioners, state attorneys and diplomats. Several experts are scheduled to engage and educate participants on the importance of empowering local communities, development and aid, as well as the obligations of state and non-state-actors in development. The aim will be to provide insight as to what the Right to Development, as a fundamental element of human development in the African context entails.

The Centre for Human Rights would like to extend its gratitude to the Government of Flanders for its generous support for the following short courses:

- [Sexual Minority Rights](#)
(in collaboration with Katholieke Universiteit Leuven)
20 – 24 February 2017
- [The Right to Development in Africa](#)
(in collaboration with Universiteit Antwerpen)
21 – 25 August 2017
- [African Human Rights System in Comparative Perspectives](#)
(in collaboration with Universiteit Ghent)
23 – 27 October 2017

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