



## 4<sup>TH</sup> INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON THE RIGHT TO DEVELOPMENT

Free State Centre for Human Rights, University of the Free State | 01- 02 November 2021

### CALL FOR ABSTRACT

#### **THEME: Right to Development and Illicit Financial Flows from Africa**

The economic performance of the African continent for the past few years features among the most competitive economies in the world. One would have expected this performance to bring about social-economic change, allowing people to achieve their human potential attached to the idea of development but this has not been the case. Development is a broad concept, for not only does it include sound economic performance and fair distribution of benefits, but it also requires the improvement of living conditions of individual citizens through the provision of quality, accessible and affordable healthcare services, housing, infrastructure and education—key areas for human capital development. The gap between recent economic achievements on the continent and its state of generalised underdevelopment coupled with rampant poverty, corruption, prolonged economic crisis and political instabilities signals an issue with resource allocations and inequities in distribution.

How to understand that despite such economic performance, Africa remains one of the poorest continents in the world, with one-third of its population undernourished and millions with no access to clean water, electricity, education, healthcare and infrastructure? The continent currently sits at the bottom of the most major development indices, with the 2016 Human Development Report placing the vast majority of African countries below 150. The 2017 Gender Equality Index, another important indicator for development, finds the highest ranked African country (Algeria) at 63<sup>rd</sup> and Botswana the next highest ranked at 108<sup>th</sup>. Various factors are at the origin of such a situation, including among others, weak governance and state structures, lack of transformative leadership and more importantly the proliferation of illicit financial flows (IFFs). Recent research shows that the latter constitutes a key disabler of development in general and the Right to Development in particular. In 2015, a report by the High Level Panel on Illicit Financial Flows from Africa headed by former South African president, Thabo Mbeki, showed that the continent loses an average of \$50 billion yearly through IFFs; a finding that was echoed 3 years later in a similar report by the Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development.

It is crucial to bear in mind that this figure increases at a rate of 20.2% per year, according to estimates by Global Financial Integrity (GFI). There is a relationship of cause and effect between IFFs and failed initiatives to realise the Right to Development in Africa, which ultimately affects the realisation of the United Nations Agenda 2030 on Sustainable Development and the Africa Union's Agenda 2063. These reaffirm the Rio Principles of Common, but differentiated responsibilities, the right to development and equity, mutual accountability and responsibility and policy space for nationally tailored policies and programmes on the continent.

In 2016, the continent received \$41 billion towards public development, while \$50 billion was being taken out through IFFs. The systematic theft of resources through IFFs by multinational corporations and criminal networks that could otherwise contribute to poverty alleviation is a hard blow to the idea of people-driven development in line with the Pan African Vision of an integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa proclaimed by Agenda 2063. Given its dire impacts on development initiatives, it is imperative to pay close attention to this scourge and its devastating consequences on development initiatives across the continent. How can one explain the continued proliferation of IFFs from Africa in an environment where a number of international instruments addressing this phenomenon is available?

Following this background, the **Free State Centre for Human Rights, University of the Free State** in collaboration with the **Centre for Human Rights, University of Pretoria** and the **National University of Lesotho** present the Fourth International Conference on the Right to Development on the thematic of 'Right to Development and Illicit Financial Flows from Africa'. The conference will bring together experts from various fields, including academics, emerging researchers, practitioners and policy designers to explore the issue of the right to development and illicit financial flows from a critical, interdisciplinary, and contextually engaged perspectives.

We welcome contributions that focus on the following sub-themes or any related themes:

- The impacts of illicit financial flows on the realisation of the right to development;
- Transnational crimes and the right to development in Africa;
- Multinational corporations, illicit financial flows and the right to development in Africa;
- Illicit financial flows, Agenda 2063 and the right to development in Africa;
- The UN Convention against corruption, illicit financial flows and the right to development in Africa;
- The AU Convention Against Corruption, illicit financial flows and the right to development in Africa.

The two-day virtual conference is scheduled to take place on **Monday 01 and Tuesday 02 November 2021**.

There will be opportunities for individual and /or group presentations, organised in various panels.

Contributions will be considered for an edited volume or special issue to be published in an accredited and peer reviewed scholarly journal in early 2022.

### **TIMELINE**

Individual presentations: Submit a short abstract of no more than 300 words and a short CV/bio (150 words) to Gerard Kamga at [kamdengkamga@ufs.ac.za](mailto:kamdengkamga@ufs.ac.za) before or on 10 September 2021

Notification of accepted abstracts and panels for the conference: 24 September 2021

Online Conference: 01-02 November 2021

Submission of full selected papers for double blind peer-review: 23 December 2021

### **IMPORTANT NOTICE**

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and current restrictions, the conference will unfold in a **virtual format**.



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