

WEBINAR:



South Africa's Law and Policy Responses to Vulnerable People during the COVID-19 Pandemic



CALL FOR PAPERS

Date:

Wednesday 10 November 2021

Time:

10:00 – 15:00 SA ST

Venue:

Zoom meeting

Host:

Project Leaders - Vulnerable Societies, Faculty of Law, NWU

Moderators:

Dr Anri Botes and Prof Oliver Fuo, Faculty of Law, NWU

It is more than one year since the coronavirus was declared a global pandemic by the World Health Organisation (WHO) Director, Dr Tedros Ghebreyesus. In his media briefing of 11 March 2020, Dr Tedros called on countries to take “urgent and aggressive action” to curb the alarming levels of infections and deaths. He advised that, for governments to change the course of the pandemic, they should “detect, test, treat, isolate, trace and mobilise their people in the response” and adopt a “whole-of-government, whole-of-society approach built around a comprehensive strategy to prevent infections, save lives and minimise the impact”. He urged all countries to “strike a fine balance between protecting health, minimising economic and social disruption, and respecting human rights”.

In response to the WHO's call, many countries across the world imposed different degrees of lockdown measures that severely disrupted socio-economic activities and livelihoods. These measures increased the vulnerability of millions of people across the globe. "At its basic level, vulnerability is defined as an exposure to a marked decrease in standard of living" (Joseph Stiglitz, Nobel Laureate in Economics, 2021). To cushion the economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on their citizens living in poverty or pushed into poverty due to widespread lockdown, many countries introduced different fiscal and welfare measures.

Like other countries, South Africa responded to the COVID-19 pandemic by initially imposing a strict lockdown and subsequently implementing different levels of restrictions. Also, in line with the dictates of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 and legislation, the government adopted and implemented fiscal and social relief measures that directly provided support to vulnerable people and some industries negatively affected by the lockdown measures. The implementation of the government's COVID 19 response measures precipitated litigation with often different outcomes.

Given the above, leaders of the Project on Vulnerable Societies at the Faculty of Law, NWU, invite legal academics and researchers to share their research work and thoughts on the extent to which the legal and policy responses adopted by the South African government, and jurisprudence have contributed towards addressing the vulnerability of millions of people in the country during the pandemic. Contributions may explore legal and policy responses to factors that affect vulnerability such as chronic poverty, religion, ethnicity, job security, unemployment, food insecurity, gender, culture, human rights abuses, marginalisation, education, health, social protection, and social responsibility.

Leaders of the Project on Vulnerable Societies, Faculty of Law, NWU, therefore, invite abstracts of good quality that address any aspect of the overarching workshop theme. Abstracts should cover an original idea that has not been submitted for publication. A special edition of papers presented during the workshop will be published in the Potchefstroom Electronic Law Journal. All papers will be subjected to double peer blind review.

Interested colleagues should submit an abstract of not more than 300 words to both Prof Oliver Fuo and Dr Anri Botes (oliver.fuo@nwu.ac.za and Anri.Botes@nwu.ac.za) before 01 September 2021. The abstract should contain a brief proposal, the title of the paper, the name(s) of the presenter(s), the affiliation(s), and email address(es).