



UNISA COLLEGE OF LAW

ANNUAL LAW CONFERENCE AND STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT 2026

CALL FOR PAPERS

21 -23 April 2026

Unisa Main Campus, Senate Hall,
Winnie Madikizela Building

*Reimagining Justice, Ethics and Governance in Africa in a Digitally
Borderless World: Perspectives for a Transformative Future*

Background and Rationale

The rapid evolution of digital technologies, artificial intelligence (AI), and global interconnectedness is reshaping legal systems, governance structures, and justice delivery across the world. In Africa, this transformation presents both opportunities and challenges—particularly in contexts characterised by inequality, historical injustices, and diverse legal traditions.

This Conference seeks to explore how African legal and criminal justice systems can respond to these changes while remaining rooted in ethical governance, equality, and transformative justice. It also aims to align with UNISA's Catalytic Niche Areas, including technology and digitalisation, womanist, feminist and bosadi theorisations, health, energy, aviation, marine and space studies, to foster interdisciplinary dialogue and innovation. The conference will engage with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly Goal 4 (Quality Education), Goal 5 (Gender Equality), and Goal 16 (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions), to promote inclusive and equitable legal systems. Furthermore, the Conference will consider opportunities and transformative directions that include decolonial and Afrocentric frameworks, harmonized national, regional, and continental legal and governance systems, capacity building and infrastructure development, just and fair digital transformation, ethical governance, agile and rights-preserving regulatory regimes, and cross-border cooperations/collaborations.

Objectives

- To critically examine the role of law and criminal justice in a digitally borderless world.
- To explore African-centred approaches to justice, ethics, and governance in the context of global technological shifts.
- To foster interdisciplinary engagement across UNISA's catalytic niche areas.
- To promote inclusive, ethical, and transformative legal frameworks for the future.
- To align legal and justice discourse with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
- To encourage collaboration with international and African regional legal and human rights institutions.

Sub-Themes

Digitalisation, AI, and the Rule of Law in Africa

- Legal frameworks for emerging technologies (AI, blockchain, digital identity)
- Cybercrime, digital evidence, and cross-border enforcement
- Data protection and digital rights in African contexts

Ethics, Equality, and Governance in a Borderless World

- African philosophies of justice and governance
- Ethical dilemmas in transnational legal systems
- Governance innovations for inclusive development

Womanist, Feminist and Bosadi Theorisations in Law and Justice

- Gender justice and transformative legal frameworks
- Intersectionality in African legal traditions
- SDG 5 and legal responses to gender-based violence

Law in the Age of Surveillance and Predictive Technologies

- Policing, security, privacy, and human rights in digital societies
- Algorithmic bias and justice reform
- Regional collaboration/cooperation on crime prevention and justice (e.g., AU, INTERPOL)

Law and Emerging Technologies: Space, Energy, and Biotech

- Legal implications of space exploration and the Square Kilometre Array
- Energy justice and environmental law in Africa
- Biotechnological innovations and health law (SDG 3)

Legal Education, Student Engagement, and Co-Curricular Innovation

- Legal pedagogy in the digital age
- Student-led justice initiatives and activism
- SDG 4 and inclusive legal education

Regional and International Collaboration/Cooperation for Justice and Development

- Partnerships with ACHPR, AfCHPR, UNODC, and AU legal bodies
- Harmonisation of legal systems across African regions
- Legal frameworks supporting SDG 16 (Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions)

Global Trends and African Responses

- Comparative legal systems and global governance
- Africa's role in shaping international law and justice norms
- Legal responses to migration, climate change, and pandemics

Target Audience

- Legal scholars and researchers
- Law and Criminal justice professionals
- Policymakers and government officials
- Civil society organisations
- Technology and ethics experts
- Students and emerging researchers
- Unisa Alumni

Expected Impact of the Conference

This Conference is expected to generate meaningful academic, policy, and societal contributions by:

- Advancing African-centered legal scholarship that responds to the challenges and opportunities of a digitally borderless world, while remaining rooted in ethical governance and transformative justice.
- Fostering interdisciplinary collaboration across UNISA's Catalytic Niche Areas, including technology and digitalisation, womanist, feminist and Bosadi theorisations; health, energy, aviation, marine and space studies, thereby enriching legal and criminal justice discourse with innovative perspectives.
- Strengthening regional and international partnerships with bodies such as the African Union, ACHPR, AfCHPR, UNODC, and INTERPOL, to promote harmonised legal frameworks and sustainable justice initiatives.
- Contributing to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 4 (Quality Education), SDG 5 (Gender Equality), and SDG 16 (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions), through inclusive and transformative legal research and practice.
- Empowering students and early-career scholars by providing a platform for engagement, co-curricular innovation, and leadership in shaping the future of law and criminal justice in Africa.
- Transformation of Unisa alumni into active partners on the University and the College of Law.

- Informing policy and legal reform by generating actionable insights and recommendations that address digitalisation, ethics, governance, and justice in African contexts.

Presenters	R3000
Early bird registration	R3000
Standard registration	R5000
Students	R1000

ABSTRACTS SUBMISSION

You are invited to submit abstracts for presentation at the Unisa College of Law Conference.

Format for Abstract

Abstracts should be in MS Word and not exceed 300 words, Times New Roman font 12, 1.5 line spacing, and provide 5 keywords.

Abstracts must be submitted to:

Dr Petrus Machethe:	Emachep@unisa.ac.za
Prof Mahlogonolo Thobane:	kwadims@unisa.ac.za
Dr Davy Rammila:	rammid@unisa.ac.za

Important Dates:

Abstract submission deadline: **10 April 2026**

Registration and payment: **17 April 2026**

Full papers submission: **21 May 2026**

Conference Dates: **21-23 April 2026**

Enquiries:

All conference enquiries must be sent to:

Mr Boaz Masuku:	mankgmb@unisa.ac.za
Ms Seipati Ditshwene:	ditshsm@unisa.ac.za

REGISTRATION LINK

<https://forms.office.com/r/GJAFATvU6Q>