



UNISA COLLEGE OF LAW

12TH ANNUAL LAW CONFERENCE

CALL FOR PAPERS

19-21 APRIL 2027

Unisa Main Campus, Senate Hall,
Winnie Madikizela Building

***Reimagining Law for Sustainable Development:
Innovation, Inclusivity, and Justice in a Changing World***

Background and Rationale

The College of Law, University of South Africa (Unisa), proudly invites academics, researchers, legal practitioners, policymakers, judicial officers, postgraduate students, and other stakeholders to submit abstracts for presentation at the 12th Annual Law Conference, to be held from 19 to 21 April 2027. The conference provides an inter-disciplinary and multi-disciplinary platform for critical engagement, intellectual exchange, and collaborative exploration of contemporary legal challenges and opportunities in an increasingly interconnected and rapidly changing world.

The legal landscape is experiencing a profound transformation driven by technological innovation, globalisation, climate change, migration, evolving governance systems, and shifting socio-economic realities. These developments have created new opportunities for sustainable development while simultaneously generating complex legal, ethical, and regulatory challenges. Across Africa and globally, legal systems are being called upon to respond more effectively to issues of inequality, social justice, human rights protection, environmental sustainability, digital governance, economic inclusion, and democratic accountability.

In Africa, the pursuit of sustainable development is closely linked to the capacity of legal institutions to promote justice, protect vulnerable communities, strengthen governance, combat corruption, facilitate economic growth, and support peaceful societies. At the same time, there is growing recognition of the importance of indigenous knowledge systems, customary law, Ubuntu, and other African-centred approaches in shaping responsive and inclusive legal frameworks that address local realities while engaging with global developments.

The conference theme, 'Reimagining Law for Sustainable Development: Innovation, Inclusivity, and Justice in a Changing World', reflects the urgent need to rethink the role of law in addressing contemporary and emerging challenges. It encourages critical reflection on how legal systems can adapt to technological advancement, artificial intelligence, environmental pressures, transnational crime, changing patterns of work and commerce, and evolving demands for social and economic justice. The theme further highlights the importance of developing legal responses that are innovative, inclusive, accountable, and aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The conference seeks to foster scholarly dialogue and practical solutions that strengthen the relationship between law, justice, governance, and sustainable development. Contributors are invited to explore theoretical, doctrinal, empirical, comparative, and interdisciplinary perspectives across a broad range of legal fields and thematic areas. Through robust engagement and knowledge sharing, the conference aims to contribute to the development of legal scholarship, policy reform, and evidence-based practices that advance justice and sustainable development in Africa and beyond. Researchers and practitioners are encouraged to submit original abstracts that engage with the conference theme and the sub-themes outlined below.

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

Access to Justice and Legal Education

- Indigenous knowledge systems, and customary law
- Ubuntu and African justice systems
- Decolonising legal education and criminal justice education
- Rural-urban divide and justice divide
- Alternative dispute resolution and informal justice systems
- Private law and emerging legal challenges
- Private-law responses to social, economic, and technological change

Constitutionalism, Human Rights, Democracy, and the Rule of Law

- Collective property rights and family house disputes
- Access to land and housing in rural and urban areas
- Citizenship, migration, and refugees
- Water, mining, natural resources, and community rights
- Global challenges and African responses
- Gender justice, equality, and transformative legal systems
- Advancing children's rights, protection, and justice in a changing society
- Disability rights and inclusion
- Democratic policing and public accountability
- The role of independent oversight bodies in promoting justice

Law and Justice in the Age of Technology

- Children, social media and the law: Protection, responsibility and digital rights
- Emerging technologies, digital economy, commercial law
- Cyber law, cybersecurity law and policy, cyber-crime, AI, digital governance
- AI and the future of legal and criminal justice professions
- Gender bias and AI
- Digital whistleblowing
- AI sovereignty
- AI and automated decisions, and automation safeguards
- Labour, technology and the future of work
- E-Commerce and digital Platforms
- Data protection and data breach in the age of technology
- E-waste management
- AI in policing and criminal investigations
- Technology-driven justice systems and access to justice

Criminal Justice Reform, Organised Crime and Transnational Criminal Networks

- Victim rights and victim support mechanisms
- Advancing & protecting children's rights in a digital world
- The economics of crime and justice
- Decolonising African justice systems
- Organised crime networks in Africa and beyond
- Restorative justice and indigenous African approaches to conflict resolution
- Migration, border security, crime, and transnational justice

Corporate Governance, Ethics, and Anti-corruption

- Governance, corruption, and accountability in public and private sectors
- Lifestyle audits

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- Regulatory frameworks
 - Ethical leadership and organisational culture
 - Ethical reporting
 - Professional ethics
 - Anti-corruption legal frameworks
 - Procurement, state-owned enterprises and corruption
 - Whistleblower protection and forensic evidence gathering
 - Anti-corruption policing and investigative frameworks

International and Regional Systems

- International partnerships/collaborations for justice and sustainable development
- Comparative legal systems and global trends
- Regional integration and trade
- African Union and SADC approaches to transnational crime

Global Challenges and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

- Climate change, litigation, environmental law and justice
- Biodiversity, conservation and natural resource governance
- Business trade and investment and sustainable economies
- Inclusive financing, financial inclusion, and financial technology
- Regulatory technology and the financial sector regulation

Oceans, Marine Resources and Blue Economy

- Marine environmental protection
- Sustainable fisheries
- Ocean governance
- Maritime security, marine pollution, blue economy development
- Climate change and the law of the sea
- Law in the age of technology
- Rights of climate migrants and the legal frameworks.
- Digital twins of the ocean
- Blue finance and Blue Bonds

Aviation Law

- Aviation law and the single African air transport framework
- Aviation safety & security and policing challenges
- Rural aviation and economic inclusion
- Sustainable aviation and aviation economy

Medicine and the Law

- The NHI Act and the future of the South African healthcare system
- Reproductive rights and access to health insurance
- Euthanasia in contemporary society: legal, ethical, religious and cultural aspects
- Telemedicine legislation and regulation across state or national borders
- Ethical, legal, and regulatory issues of AI in healthcare

Legal Aspects of Selected Catalytic Niche Areas

- Biotech, energy, and space law
- Energy law and the just energy transition
- Feminist, Womanist and Bosadi theorisation
- Student support and co-curricular activities

The following aspects should be considered with respect to the abstracts:

- **Maximum 400 words, Arial font point 12,**
- **Also include five keywords**
- **Abstracts should be sent to: Ms Angeline Makamu (Email: makama@unisa.ac.za), Prof P Mudau (Email: mudaufp@unisa.ac.za) and springlaw@unisa.ac.za**
- **Enquiries: Ms Angeline Makamu (Email: makama@unisa.ac.za)**

Registration conference presentation

The language for abstracts and papers submitted is English. Once an abstract is accepted, the author must send a full paper. Please note that your conference registration will only be finalised after payment of registration fees is received and verified.

Registration Fees: The scientific committee is allowed to change the amounts

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Presenters	R3000
Early bird registration	R4000
Standard registration	R6000
Students	R1000

Important Dates:

Abstract submission deadline	30 November 2026
Abstract outcome notification:	Notification will be given approximately ten (10) days after submission.
Full paper submission deadline:	05 March 2027
Early Bird registration closing date	30 November 2026
Conference registration and payment closing date	15 March 2027
Conference dates:	19 –21 April 2027

Publication

Selected high-quality papers will be published, subject to the journals' editorial and peer-review requirements, in Unisa law journals, including the Comparative and International Law Journal of Southern Africa (CILSA), the Southern African Public Law (SAPL), the Journal of Law, Society and Development (JLSD), and the Southern African Journal of Security (SAJS).

REGISTRATION LINK

<https://forms.office.com/r/GJAfATvU6Q>

