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UCT hosts “South Africa at 30 years of democracy conference”: Exploring policy pathways for South Africa’s future

2-4 April 2025 | 09:00 SAST | Kramer Law Building, Middle Campus

The University of Cape Town’s (UCT) [Southern Africa Labour and Development Research Unit](#) (SALDRU) will host a conference to take stock of South Africa’s journey since the dawn of democracy in 1994.

The “South Africa at 30 years of democracy conference” will take place at the Kramer Law Building, UCT Middle Campus, from 2–4 April 2025 at 09:00. The conference will also point to new pathways to unlock South Africa’s potential in the medium-term.

Funded by Agence Française de Développement and the European Commission through the EU-AFD Research Facility on Inequalities, and Economic Research Southern Africa (ERSA), the conference is supported by The Presidency, the National Treasury, and the National Planning Commission.

The conference – which will be attended by policymakers, business practitioners, researchers, civil society and development partners – will provide a platform to critically engage on South Africa’s progress on key socio-economic and political domains over three decades of democracy. It provides an opportunity to engage with stakeholders about potential pathways for the country going forward.

The conference is divided into three areas of focus over the three days. The first day will explore South Africa’s performance in policy domains over the last 30 years, covering fiscal, industrial, trade, labour market, just transition, basic and higher education, immigration, monetary, competition, health, environment and social protection policies.

The second day will focus on facilitated policy dialogues to engage with the pathway forward for the next five years; and the third day will build on these discussions, looking at strategic issues for South Africa’s policy direction over the next 30 years.

Professor Reza Daniels from SALDRU said: “This will be an opportunity for SA’s social partners to robustly engage on pathways forward for South Africa.”

Audrey Rojkoff, AFD Regional Director for Southern Africa and Country Director for South Africa, said: "We've been working with South Africa for the last 30 years, learning from each other along the way, and we look forward to hearing from the research community how to further strengthen this partnership over the next decades."

The European Union deputy ambassador to Pretoria, Pencho Garrido Ruiz, said: "South Africa and EU are strategic partners; we engage in regular dialogue to reinforce our partnership on trade matters, just energy transition, peace and security issues, we share values and lessons learned."

Rudi Dicks, head of the project management office in The Presidency, said "As we mark 30 years of democracy, this conference offers an important opportunity to engage honestly and constructively with the lessons of the past and the demands of the future. The Presidency is proud to support this initiative, which brings together research, government and civil society to reflect on how far we've come and, critically, to chart a new course for inclusive and sustainable development. We hope the insights generated will not only inform the policy agenda for the next five years but also contribute to shaping the long-term vision for a just, prosperous and equitable South Africa."

SALDRU has a rich, 50-year history of conducting research that informs policy and development in South Africa. SALDRU's research assesses key areas of development, labour markets, inequality and poverty, which provides evidence that helps shape policies, building a strong track record of high-quality, interdisciplinary studies in economic development. SALDRU also partners with the African Leadership Initiative South Africa (ALI-SA).

- [View the full programme and speaker list.](#)
- [Register for the conference.](#)

Members of the media wishing to attend the event are requested to [RSVP](#).

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Issued by: UCT Communication and Marketing Department

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