

## MISTRA & UJ Conference

### *Democracy in South Africa: The Next Twenty-Five Years*

#### Call for Abstracts

**Deadline: 10 April 2019**

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#### 1. Background and Context

The year 2019 marks twenty-five years since South Africa's transition from apartheid to democracy. A lot has been achieved to transform and develop the country informed by the injunctions of the 1996 Constitution. However, much work lies ahead in realising a better life for all South Africans as the triple challenge of poverty, unemployment and inequality persists. This milestone of twenty-five years of democracy requires deep societal reflection on the successes and challenges encountered in the nation's evolving democratization process. Citizens need a platform to engage and share varied experiences in a post-apartheid democracy. The Department of Monitoring and Evaluation is providing such a platform. So are other public and private initiatives that recognise a quarter of a century as a significant milestone in the history of a nation that was forged on the promise of non-racialism, non-sexism, national unity, democracy and prosperity for all. Several media houses are also creating dialogues to mark this milestone.

The **twenty-five years of democracy conference** is scheduled to take place in the first week of July 2019 (exact date to be confirmed) and will be hosted by the Mapungubwe Institute for Strategic Reflection (MISTRA) and the University of Johannesburg (UJ). This conference aims to facilitate a reflective national discourse through rigorous research and robust social dialogue. It will address three key questions:

- a) What lessons for governance, socio-economic transformation and nation-building can we identify in reviewing our recent past?
- b) What are the critical challenges necessary for South Africa to address in order to realize the democratic promise?
- c) What will be the key drivers of success and change in the next 25 years of our democracy?

This call invites authors to shape and make contributions in discussions by submitting abstracts, which will be converted into peer-reviewed, research-based, conference papers. These inputs must be anchored on the following key central themes:

- a) **Governance and leadership;**
- b) **Socio-economic transformation; and**
- c) **Citizenship and identity**

Accepted, peer-reviewed, papers will be published as Conference Proceedings. In addition, a synthetic narrative (**The Macro Social Report**) - drawing from the conference papers, the 25 Year Review Report, from the Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation (DPME) and other relevant studies - will be published as the major output of this project.

Papers written for the conference should provide a solid empirical base for informed discussions amongst diverse stakeholders at the conference and in other public platforms that we will organize to broaden the discourse about the past, the present and the future.

## 2. Selection and Criteria

The selection committee will prioritise abstracts which meet the following criteria. First, address the pertinent conference themes and sub-themes. Second, make use of multi- and trans-disciplinary methodological approaches, which draw on South Africa's diverse intellectual tradition. Third, adhere to the basic norms and standards of research-based writing.

Fourth, place emphasis on both scholarly documented literature and citizens' lived experiences. Fifth, focus on systemic macro-trends which will have a significant impact on the nation's long-term (future) democratisation trajectory. Lastly, prioritise and embed cross-cutting issues such as gender, youth, race and international trends in the analytical framework. The submission deadline is the **10<sup>th</sup> of April 2019**.

## 3. Theme Description

### 3.1. Governance and Leadership

This theme centres governance and leadership across various sectors as an important enabler of our democracy. It explores both state and non-state actors' leadership role in sustaining South Africa's governance system.

### ***Sub-themes***

- The changing nature of politics and multiparty democracy
- The capable state and social conditions in South Africa
- The role of non-state actors in building social compacts to deliver on the democratic promise

## **3.2. Socio-economic Transformation**

Post-apartheid policy-makers have attempted to address socio-economic intersectional inequality based on race, class and gender using various macro-economic and social policy measures. This thematic area explores the successes and shortcomings of these interventions.

### ***Sub-themes***

- Social policy and access to quality public goods
- Social mobility and the structural evolution of the political economy
- Innovation and alternative economic paradigms

## **3.3. Citizenship and Identity**

This theme interrogates citizen agency and the ways in which it is exercised in everyday life. It also links citizenship to debates about post-apartheid identity formation, with an emphasis on both structural power relations and historical subjectivity.

### ***Sub-themes***

- Active citizenship, organisation of social life and new activisms
- Social cohesion and diversity (race, nationality, gender and disability)
- Migration, justice and the reconstruction of communities

## **4. Submission of Abstracts**

Abstracts are invited from established and young researchers on any of the thematic or related areas listed above. Successful abstracts will be measured against the following criterion:

- Clear title of the proposed research paper

- Abstracts should be between 300-500 words
- Abstracts should have a clear statement of the problem statement, hypothesis and methodology (we are looking for papers that draw on empirical evidence in order to determine the value/new perspective being pursued by the submission/paper)
- Outline/structure of the proposed paper

At the conference where papers will be presented, plenary sessions will be prioritized for emerging scholars and those established scholars who co-author papers with their students/mentees/emerging researchers.

Please submit your abstracts to [conference@25yearsdemocracy.co.za](mailto:conference@25yearsdemocracy.co.za) by 10 April 2019.

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