



Call for Papers

Conference: Religion and Inequality in Southern Africa

University of Botswana, 11 – 12 November 2024

Pre-Conference Event of the Third UN Conference on Landlocked Developing Countries, Gaborone, Botswana (10 – 13 November 2024)

The Department of Theology and Religious Studies at the University of Botswana in collaboration with the United Nations in Botswana and the International Network on Religious Communities and Sustainable Development (IN//RCSD) is hosting a conference on **Religion and Inequality in Southern Africa** from 11 to 12 November 2024.

Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs), particularly in the Southern African region are marked by **steep inequalities**. Inequality traverses various sectors of society and manifests as gender inequality, economic inequality, inequality in political representation, educational inequality etc. While these inequalities are to some extent conditional on social structures, policies and historic path dependencies, their perpetuation, reduction or amplification also depends on **socio-cultural values**. How does society view the relationship of different genders? To what extent are divides between rich and poor seen considered problematic? What priority society attribute to including the voice of marginalized communities? At the core of these inequalities lie fundamentally normative questions.

In the Global South **religion and culture** continue to impact substantially on people's lives, attitudes and behaviour and to strongly **shape individual and social values**. Against this background, the conference will critically engage with the relationship of religion and culture and the nexus of inequalities prevalent in LLDCs and the Southern African region.

The primary focal points thereby are **gender inequality** and **economic inequality**. It strives to make contributions to the United Nations' 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development particularly in the areas of SDG 1 (No Poverty), SDG 5 (Gender Equality), SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities) and SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals).

The conference will draw on a series of different formats to bring together **academics** from various disciplines, **religious leaders**, **civil society** representatives, development practitioners and **policymakers** to foster a constructive dialogue on how religion and culture can contribute to the reduction of inequalities in landlocked developing countries and the Southern African region in particular.

The overarching **core questions** of the conference are:

IN // RCSD

International Network on Religious Communities
and Sustainable Development



- How do religious and cultural values and religious actors contribute to the **perpetuation, amplification or reduction of inequalities**?
- What kind of religious and cultural social ethics can foster a **more just and equitable society**?
- How can the religious and cultural resources and the transformative potential of religious actors be harnessed in **addressing and reducing inequalities**?

Contributions should relate to the conference theme with a perspective from any of the following **themes**:

1. **Gender equality**: The nexus of religion, culture and the equality of genders
2. **Economic ethics**: Religious and cultural and economic inequality
3. **Botho**: The ambiguous role of Botho in promoting equality
4. **Religious social practice**: The contribution of religious communities to social services, education, health
5. **Marginalisation**: Harnessing religious and cultural values for the inclusion or marginalized communities
6. **Political participation**: Religious communities as advocates of a more just and equitable society

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We kindly invite the submission of abstracts for conference presentations. Contributions should relate to one of the themes outlined above. Presentations can be full papers or work in progress.

Kindly submit your abstract of about 250 words or full paper to **Ms Esther Mazengera (202005967@ub.ac.bw)** by **31 October 2024**. Please include a title as well as the names, affiliations and contact details of all authors. Abstracts will be assessed on a rolling basis. We look forward to your contributions.

Papers presented at the conference can subsequently be submitted for publication in *Religion & Development* (<https://brill.com/rnd>; www.religion-and-development.org). Conference papers accepted by the journal qualify for waiver of the open access publication fees.

Please do not hesitate to contact the conveners or the conference assistant in case of any questions:

Conference assistant: Ms Esther Mazengera (202005967@ub.ac.bw)

Conveners: Dr Rosinah Gabaitse (gabaitser@ub.ac.bw)
Dr Philipp Öhlmann (ohlmannp@ub.ac.bw)