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ENSURING RIGHTS MAKE REAL CHANGE



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ESR Review

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Apart from the immediate threat of homelessness, gentrification initiated by the private sector will lead to rising property values in the area, with increasing rentals forcing out low-income households. If there is no intervention, Woodstock and Salt River will become areas where the affluent live, similar to Sea Point and Green Point, and low-income households will be forced to the periphery of the city.

Martha Sithole Hungwe

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From the editor:

Every year, 20 February is marked and celebrated as the World Social Justice Day. Social justice, equality and equity as fundamental values of all societies, were reaffirmed by the 2017 World Social Justice Day.

The 2017 theme was 'Preventing conflict and sustaining peace through decent work.' While there is no consensus on the definition of social justice, it has been understood broadly as 'the explicit recognition of structural inequalities in the world (along class, race, gender, institutional and other lines) and therefore the need for proactive, structural programs to counteract these inequalities.'

António Guterres, the new United Nations Secretary-General, and significantly, on his first day in office, pledged to make 2017 a year for peace. While the United Nations' central mission is to maintain international peace and security, this was an acknowledgement by the UN, that social justice is an underlying principle for peaceful and prosperous coexistence within and among nations. Social justice advocates increasingly incorporate the ideas of sustainability into their agendas, while proponents of sustainability frequently emphasize the importance of adding social justice to their efforts.

In South Africa, the Constitution incorporates principles and values of social justice and calls upon South Africans to 'recognise the injustices of the past, ... heal the divisions of the past and establish a society based on democratic values, social justice and fundamental human rights...' This means that the purpose of democratic transformation in South Africa is to ultimately create a society based on social justice. Social justice can only be realised when we remove barriers that people face such as gender, age, race, ethnicity, religion, culture or disability. In other words, social justice can only truly exist when the quality of life of all individuals has improved to a point whereby the potential of each person is unlocked. We are therefore challenged to embrace the values of social justice in order to advance human rights and sustainability.

This is the first issue of the ESR Review in 2017. It includes two articles that discuss socio-economic rights. The first feature, by Martha Sithole Hungwe, highlights the factors behind urban land justice and inequality in Cape Town. With the use of maps, the article illustrates that more than 20 years since the beginning of democracy in South Africa, it remains one of the world's most unequal

and segregated cities. This article reflects on the Reclaim the City Campaign, which advocates for state-subsidised, affordable housing development in the inner city, and demands that homes of the poor and their rights to remain near the city are protected.

The second feature article, by Nakulima Saphina, focuses on privatisation in education and discrimination, in particular its effect on the right to education in Uganda. Saphina argues that the right to education is a fundamental human right, and a powerful tool through which economically and socially marginalised adults and children can lift themselves out of poverty and participate fully as citizens. This article urges that the growth of unregulated and unmonitored privatisation in education is significantly affecting the human right to education in various ways, in addition to exacerbating socio-economic segregation of and discrimination against vulnerable groups.

This issue also contains updates from the African human rights system and the United Nations human rights system.

We acknowledge and thank all the guest contributors to this issue. We trust that readers will find it stimulating and useful in the advancement of socio-economic rights and ultimately attainment of social justice.

Gladys Mirugi-Mukundi, Co-Editor