



## Sino-African Legal Forum on Constitutions and National Development

7-8 September 2024

The mood of exuberant optimism in Africa that the so-called wind of change in the 1990s and the new era of constitutions that it appeared to have ushered in, will provide much needed political stability, economic growth and development is fast fading. After a few years of what looked like progress, there is now an eerie feeling of a return to the dark pre-1990 era. The recent spate of military coups is clearly a sign that changes to constitutionalism, have not provided a solid foundation for political stability nor facilitated the economic growth that was supposed to improve the lives of the ordinary Africans. Whilst a few elites have grown richer, most Africans have remained poor, and the quality of social services such as schools, hospitals and other basic infrastructure have instead of improving deteriorated. A combination of poor governance, corruption and a weak legal framework have contributed to this situation.

Nevertheless, constitution remains the bedrock on which many countries, such as China have achieved rapid economic growth and development and within a generation, raised the living standards of their people. Constitution means nothing if it cannot enable the ordinary citizen to have food on the table. There can be no political stability unless the basic principles of constitution adopted are able to foster an institutional environment for national economic and social development. From this perspective, Africa has a lot to learn from the distinctive approach that China has adopted. In the rapidly advancing global world, Africa cannot afford to sleepwalk into an uncertain future when there are good lessons that can be learned.

The hope and expectation of this Sino-African legal forum, which focuses on constitutions and development is to enable an open dialogue between Chinese and African scholars interested in constitutional study. It will provide the opportunity to share experiences on critical areas and to see what important lessons can be learnt for the future.

### I. Themes

The themes of this Forum include the following topics:

1. Constitution, customary law, and national development in Africa: Reconciling tradition with modernity.
2. Constitution and international development goals.
3. Constitutional safeguards for economic freedom and social justice.
4. Constitution, decentralization, and national development.

### II. Timeline

The deadline for the submission of abstracts is 30 April 2024.

The abstracts should be no less than 300 words.

Abstracts should be submitted to [yinyandan@ecupl.edu.cn](mailto:yinyandan@ecupl.edu.cn) and copy [Charles.fombad@up.ac.za](mailto:Charles.fombad@up.ac.za)

The result of review will be released by 15 May 2024.

Once his/her paper is accepted to the Conference, each author shall submit a short biography and a personal photo no later than 1 June 2024. The Bio shall be no more than 150 words.

The deadline for the submission of full papers (min. 4000 words) is 31 July 2024.

The Conference will be held on 7-8 September 2024.

### **III. Language and Venue**

Language: Chinese and English (Simultaneous interpretation will be provided.)

Venue: East China University of Political Science and Law (1575 Wanhangu Road, Shanghai, 200042, P.R. China).

### **IV. Finances**

The hosts will cover the speakers' and other invited guests' expenses for accommodation and meals during the conferences. There is no registration fee for this conference.

### **V. Publication**

Selected papers will be published in Law Science (English) and published as a symposium.

### **VI. Contact**

Should you have any inquiry, please contact: [yinyandan@ecupl.edu.cn](mailto:yinyandan@ecupl.edu.cn) or [Charles.fombad@up.ac.za](mailto:Charles.fombad@up.ac.za)

#### **Hosts**

Institute for Foreign-Related Rule of Law, East China University of Political Science and Law

Institute for International and Comparative Law in Africa, Faculty of Law, University of Pretoria

National Institute for Foreign Legal History of China

3 November 2023