



Emerging Researchers and Postgraduates Symposium Call for Papers

Intellectual Property in Africa: Catalysing Development, Innovation, and Sustainability in the 21st Century

Introduction

Africa's intellectual property regimes continue to evolve and considering the ever changing legal, economic, and social environment, and with the inception of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), Africa stands at a pivotal moment of transformation. In the global context, recent treaties signed at the World Intellectual Property Organization – such as the Treaty on Intellectual Property, Genetic Resources and Associated Traditional Knowledge, and the Riyadh Design Law Treaty – represent significant milestones. These developments hold the potential to advance the continent's developmental goals. Leveraging Africa's immense innovation capacity, rich biodiversity, traditional knowledge, genetic resources, and burgeoning creative industries, Africa can ensure that IP contributes to sustainable growth and respect for cultural heritage.

This year, the South African Intellectual Property Law Journal marks its 10th anniversary and to celebrate this significant milestone, the South African Research Chair: Intellectual Property, Innovation and Development will host the **IP Law Emerging Researchers and Postgraduates Symposium** and publish a special edition of the journal with contributions from emerging researchers. The Symposium will take place from 7 to 11 July 2025 at the University of Cape Town in South Africa. The Symposium will be composed of discussions and writing sessions to give scholars the opportunity to explore the evolving IP landscape in Africa.

Symposium Theme

This milestone event seeks to reflect on the progress made, challenges faced, and future opportunities in IP law across Africa. The Chair invites emerging and early career researchers and postgraduates to submit papers that align with the overarching vision of the African Union's Agenda 2063, taking into consideration Africa's economic, social, and technological advancement, and the opportunities/challenges presented by the AfCFTA. The following key topics will be considered:

- 1. Recent Developments in IP Law:**
Exploring legislative and regulatory advancements and emerging trends within African nations, including their implications for innovation, business competitiveness and regional integration.
- 2. African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA):**
Analysing the implications of the AfCFTA IP Protocol on regional cooperation, harmonisation of regional policies, protection of indigenous innovations, and economic integration.



3. **Global Treaties and WIPO Agreements:**
Assessing the potential impact of recently signed global treaties and agreements on African IP systems and their role in global competitiveness.
4. **IP and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs):**
Examining the intersection of IP policies with the UN SDGs, focusing on how to tailor IP protection to promote sustainability, food security, poverty reduction, and innovation-driven solutions.
5. **Climate Change, Innovation, and IP:**
Evaluating the role of IP in technological adaptation and fostering climate-resilient innovations across the continent.
6. **Traditional Knowledge and Genetic Resources:**
Assessing the significance of safeguarding and preserving Africa's biodiversity and indigenous knowledge and exploring sustainable options for ensuring their contribution to the continent's development.
7. **Frontier Technologies and IP:**
Investigating how emerging technologies, such as artificial intelligence are reshaping innovation and creativity on the continent, business models and a rethink of the IP frameworks in Africa.
8. **Global Public Health and IP:**
Reflecting on lessons from the COVID-19 pandemic, particularly the need for equitable access to vaccines and fostering local production capabilities through adaptive IP strategies.

Submission procedure and instructions

We invite early career African scholars and postgraduate students to share abstracts by 10 March 2025 via the dedicated email address. Abstracts may not exceed 350 words. The results will be announced in the first week of May 2025. The event is an in-person event and the Chair will contribute to the costs (travel and accommodation) of 8 postgraduate students whose abstracts have been accepted. Those who would wish to be considered for sponsorship must indicate at the submission of the abstract. Selected abstracts will be considered for publication in a special edition of the South African Intellectual Property Law Journal to be published in the final quarter of 2025.

Target Audience

The Symposium is intended for emerging researchers, early career scholars and postgraduate students specialising in intellectual property in Africa. The objective is to promote groundbreaking work by African postgraduate scholars and researchers, elevate African perspectives in global IP discourse, foster dialogue that shapes IP policies supporting Africa's developmental aspirations and align scholarly contributions with the goals of a prosperous, integrated, and sustainable Africa.



Enquiries

Please submit enquiries to sarchi-ip@uct.ac.za.

TIMELINES

- Call for papers announced – Tuesday 11 February 2025
- Deadline for submission of abstracts – Tuesday 11 March 2025
- Results announced – First week of May 2025
- Symposium dates – Monday 7 July – Friday 11 July 2025
- Final deadline for Authors draft papers – Monday 21 July 2025
 - *Authors receive 3 weeks to finalise their drafts
- Reviewing papers – Monday 28 July – Friday 5 September 2025
 - *Authors receive 2 weeks to address reviewers' comments
- Deadline of final submissions – Monday 22 September 2025
- Publication of Special Edition – Late October 2025

For more information about the South African Intellectual Property Law Journal visit <https://www.jutajournals.co.za/journals-catalogue/south-african-intellectual-property-law-journal/>

