



Local Government in South Africa and Beyond

colloquium

■ LOCAL GOVERNANCE AS A SITE OF POLITICAL
CONTESTATION, ASPIRATION AND INNOVATION
■ TACKLING THE INNER WORKING
OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT

14–15 October 2026 | Johannesburg



Venue: STH Kerzner Building, 57 Bunting Road, University of Johannesburg, Auckland Park

PROGRAMME

14 October 2026 SYMPOSIUM

9.00 —16:00 POSTGRADUATE STUDENTS' WORKSHOP

5.30 for 6pm—7pm **KEYNOTE ADDRESS** followed by drinks and snacks

Local Democracy and Decentralization in the Context of Competing Authorities

By **Ellen Lust**, Governance and Local Development Institute, University of Gothenburg

15 October 2026 COLLOQUIUM

8.45—9.45 OPENING LECTURE

Fangzhu Zhang, Bartlett School of Planning, University College London

Rethinking China's Model of Urban Governance

9.45—11.30 **PANEL 1: *Local Government as a Site of Innovation***

This session explores local government as a site of political innovation. It will cover what models of service delivery, participation or problem-solving are emerging at the local level? Are municipalities experimenting new modes of engagements and who drives such initiatives? What are the conditions that allow or hinder innovation?

Anna Selmeczi: African Centre for Cities, University of Cape Town

Rekgotsofetse Chikane: Wits School of Governance

Rashid Seedat: Gauteng City Region Observatory

Jabu Hlatshwayo: Public Affairs Research Institute

Chair: **Geci Karuri Sebina**: Southern Centre for Inequality Studies, University of the Witwatersrand



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11.45—13.30 PANEL 2: *Local Government as a Site of Political Contestation*

This session unpacks the ways in which we can think of local government as a democratic entity. What do residents expect from it? How has it changed? Where does the battle for a developmental local government take place? What institutions negotiate and collaborate with local government?

Sarah Meny-Gibert: Public Affairs Research Institute

Joel Pearson: The Society, Work and Politics Institute, University of the Witwatersrand

Thina Nzo: Twende Mbele

Federica Duca: Public Affairs Research Institute

Chair: Sithembile Mbete: Public Affairs Research Institute

13.30—14.30 LUNCH

14.30—15.45 PANEL 3: *The Inner Workings of Local Government*

How does local government work and how could it work better? This session sets out to distil the systems and the inner dynamics of local government as linked to delivery of basic services, to their fiscal health, decentralisation, etc.

Gaynor Paradza: Public Affairs Research Institute

Phil Harrison: University of the Witwatersrand

Jugal Muhabir: Public Affairs Research Institute

Khwezi Mabasa: University of the Witwatersrand

Chair: Nosipho Hlatshwayo: South African Cities Network

CLOSE