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Hazel Weiser, Executive Director  
Society of American Law Teachers—SALT  
Public Advocacy Center, Room 223  
Touro Law Center  
225 Eastview Drive  
Central Islip, NY 11722  
631-650-2310  
[hweiser@saltlaw.org](mailto:hweiser@saltlaw.org)

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## **Chief Justice of South Africa Talks on Constitution and Socio-Economic Rights**

On Wednesday 11 June, to open a conference on 'Adjudicating Socio-Economic Rights' organized by the Foundation for Law, Justice and Society in Oxford, the Chief Justice of South Africa Pius Langa addressed the relationship between the entrenchment and enforceability of socio-economic rights in South Africa. He argued that the Constitution is best understood as a manifesto for positive transformation towards an equal society, and that in order to achieve this equality, "judges should approach human rights adjudication so as to uplift the underprivileged".

The lecture served to open a two-day workshop attended by an international panel of academics and legal professionals, who debated the role of courts in enforcing socio-economic rights. The Chief Justice addressed the South African experience and proposed a "radical commitment to the state provision of services to all and the levelling of the economic playing fields that were so drastically skewed by the Apartheid system.... Our chosen means to these ends are affirmative action measures and the entrenchment of socio-economic rights".

A video and audio podcast of the Chief Justice's lecture are available to download from the Foundation's recently relaunched website at: [www.fljs.org/podcasts](http://www.fljs.org/podcasts). The new website also features a discussion forum, including a post by the former Judge Advocate of the US Army David Graham, who responds to the US Supreme Court ruling on habeas corpus for Guantanamo detainees. His article, which is critical of the Chief Justice and Justice Scalia's dire warning for the consequences of the decision, can be viewed by signing in to our forum at: [www.fljs.org/Forums](http://www.fljs.org/Forums).

David Graham was a participant at the Foundation's most recent conference, held jointly with the Aspen Institute, entitled: 'In Times of Crisis, Can We Trust the Courts?', Aspen, 7-9 July. The conference was also attended by, among others, Justice Abella from the Supreme Court of Canada, former Clinton White House Counsel Abner Mikva, and Clerk Ervin, former Inspector General, Department for Homeland Security. The event was covered by Joshua Rozenberg in the Daily Telegraph: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/newstopics/lawreports/joshuarozenberg/2276688/Brief-encounters.html>.

A full report of the conference will be available from [www.fljs.org/publications](http://www.fljs.org/publications) shortly.

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