

President’s Welcome Address at the ICSD Africa Branch’s Inaugural Colloquium—When Crises Collide: Social Development Responses to Intersecting Crises in Africa, Johannesburg, South Africa, 14–15 March 2023

Manohar Pawar

Good morning, social development scholars and distinguished participants!

Prof. Leila Patel, former founding director of the Centre for Social Development in Africa and South African Research Chair in Welfare and Social Development; Prof. Kammila Naidoo, Executive Dean of the Faculty of Humanities, University of Johannesburg; Prof. Abye Tasse, Chief of Mission, Expertise France, the Republic of the Congo; Prof. Tanusha Raniga, South African Research Chair in Welfare and Social Development; and Prof. Lauren Graham, Chair of the ICSD Africa branch and Director of the Centre for Social Development in Africa, University of Johannesburg, South Africa.

It is a real honor and privilege to be here in midst of you and extend my warm welcome to you as the president of the International Consortium for Social Development.

Before I speak about the International Consortium for Social Development, I would like to share with you why my presence today at this event is very special to me.

This inaugural Colloquium of the ICSD Africa is very special to me for two reasons. First, this inaugural ICSD Africa Branch colloquium is a historic event in the life of the International Consortium for Social Development. The ICSD has an European Branch and an ICSD Asia-Pacific Branch, which regularly hold biennial conferences to share and promote knowledge of social development in their respective regions. Both for ideological and practice reasons, ICSD was very keen to establish an Africa Branch to serve the same purpose.

In 2021, the 22nd ICSD biennial conference, “poverty, inequality and social development: innovations around the world,” was organized by the Centre for Social Development in Africa, the University of Johannesburg. During this conference, the establishment of ICSD Africa Branch was announced and office bearers of the branch were elected. These are Prof. Lauren Graham as Chair; Dr. Lorraine Botha, a Parliamentarian from South Africa; Dr. Edson Munsaka, Zimbabwe;



Prof. Lauren Graham, Chair ICSD, Africa and Prof. Manohar Pawar, President ICSD.

Dr. Mildred Mushunje, Zimbabwe; and Prof. Tanusha Raniga as office bearers of the branch.

I thank them for voluntarily assuming their roles in the branch and their leadership in helping to establish the ICSD Africa branch. I also sincerely thank them for inviting me to join this ICSD Africa branch inaugural colloquium.

As the president of the ICSD, I am very much committed to establishing and expanding ICSD Africa branch in this continent. That is why, welcoming you at this inaugural ICSD Africa branch colloquium and being part of it is very special to me. I hope you join hands in building this branch and take it to every corner of the continent. I sincerely invite you to do so.

The second reason, this inaugural ICSD Africa colloquium is very special to me because, it has brought me to this powerful, beautiful, and bountiful country, South Africa. I believe that there is something very special in this land, soil, water, and air. It is spiritual and it is empowering to me. I have been longing to touch this land for the last 50 years.

As a primary school student, I learned about Mahatma Gandhi's experiences on this land and how those experiences, more than a century ago, gave birth to a peaceful social action called "Sathyagraha" or "Truth-force." I dreamt of South Africa for this innovation.

South Africa pioneered this Sathyagraha/Truth-Force, which later spread to many countries beyond global south and helped them gain independence and fight against discrimination in many forms. And that struggle, fight continues.

Even today, this Sathyagraha/Truth-force is needed. It is one of the important strategies and elements of social development, and we need to carefully spread and apply it. It is a principle, a philosophy, a skillful strategy and method to organizing and mobilizing people and communities to initiate and achieve social change and development.

To bring change, to achieve development, to achieve prosperity, to achieve peace, and to achieve health, we do not need violence, we do not need conflicts and wars, we do not need arms manufacturing and supplying, we do not need unfair trade, we do not need debt bondage, we do not need global warming, and we do not need prosperity of a few countries at the expense of others.

To achieve universal well-being, to achieve well-being for the whole population, social development visionaries established the International Consortium for Social Development about 50 years ago. But that ambitious objective calls for continuously creating, understanding, and spreading knowledge of social development worldwide through the efforts of interdisciplinary scholars and practitioners beyond professional boundaries. And, that is the mission of the International Consortium for Social Development.

The knowledge it has created and disseminated through its 44 volumes of *Social Development Issues* journal is freely available and accessible from its website (<https://www.socialdevelopment.net/>). I welcome you to make use of this resource for your research, teaching, and training purposes.

Africa has been experiencing colliding crises for a long time. The recent corona virus crisis has not only exposed existing crises in Africa but also has shown whether and how the rest of the world stands with it. Despite the prevailing global political-economy context, people in Africa have withstood these crises and demonstrated great resilience. In a way, it appears to me that most of them have subjected their lives to Sathyagraha/Truth force—surrendering to hunger, malnutrition, diseases, droughts, disasters, wars and conflicts, for no fault of their own.

It does not need reckless digging of its lands, cutting of its trees, polluting of its water and air, supply of arms, selfish and haphazard aid. In my view, what it needs is dignity, respect, and nondiscrimination. Instead of preaching what Africa should do, the time has come for the world to learn from what Africa does and how she thrives, despite vulnerable conditions.

ICSD Africa branch is committed to facilitating this type of new direction in development affairs. I sincerely hope you join hands in building this branch toward that end.

I hope you will find this inaugural ICSD Africa colloquium personally and professionally rewarding and inspiring to meet again.

Once again, I would like to extend a warm welcome to you and look forward to interacting with you during these two days.

Manohar Pawar
President ICSD