

Press Release:

Cape Town, 19 November 2014: Expert Meeting on African Economic Integration

Africa is now recognized as a continent of growth and opportunity, with the issue of continental integration once again in the spotlight. Significant questions have emerged around how the continent can take advantage of this period in its economic history to boost intra-regional trade; develop a concrete set of industrial policies; facilitate the internal movement of people; and strengthen a Pan-African approach to integration.

To discuss these issues, the Building Bridges programme at the University of Cape Town's Graduate School of Development Policy and Practice (GSDPP) will host an experts' workshop, 20-22 November 2014. The workshop brings together a group of 30 African and international experts, including distinguished London School of Economics Professor Thandika Mkandawire and former minister Trevor Manuel. The round-table meeting will deliberate on issues relating to the obstacles to integration; identification of new approaches and methods in advancing integration; and whether a new research agenda should be considered when examining the most appropriate policy processes for Africa's economic integration agenda.

The Building Bridges programme at UCT is led by Dr Marianne Camerer, an expert on African governance who co-founded the international NGO Global Integrity.

Hosted at the Townhouse Hotel in Cape Town, the two-day workshop will be preceded by a reception dinner on Thursday, 20 November 2014 where Prof. Thandika Mkandawire, who holds the Chair in African Development at the London School of Economics and is a visiting professor at UCT, will deliver the keynote address.

The workshop provides an unique opportunity for scholars, civil society practitioners, policy-makers, and the business community from all over Africa to share their research and insights and frankly ask: 'What is holding up the progress of African integration? Why is it proving so hard to drive forward the economic integration agenda that is obviously in the long-term general interest of all Africans?'

The workshop will be followed next year with events in Cape Town for African political leaders, youth leaders, journalists, parliamentarians, business people and NGO leaders, all focusing on the challenge of African economic integration.

Prof Alan Hirsch, director of the Graduate School of Development Policy and Practice says, "It's time we got to grips with the challenge of driving African integration forwards. The first generation of modern African leaders in the 1950s and 60s knew how valuable integration would be, and yet they and their successors made so little real progress."

For more information on the workshop and the programme please contact:

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