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## PUBLIC INVITATION

9th Public Dialogue on Trade:

*Is the EU Undermining or Strengthening Regional Integration in Southern Africa?*

15 November 2006, 08h15 - 10h45 (Registration: 07h45)

Nampower Convention Centre

### **Background:**

Regional integration is seen as prerequisite for rapid economic development, as well as a building bloc for greater African unity. The Southern African Customs Union (SACU) through its 2002 Agreement is leading the way for closer co-operation in Southern Africa. The broader Southern African Development Community (SADC) is on the way to a Free Trade Area by 2008 and a Customs Union by 2010. The extraordinary summit of SADC Heads of States on 23 October has just solemnly reiterated the commitment of Member States to meet these important targets.

At the same time, SADC-Member States are re-negotiating their relations with their most important trading partner, the European Union, with the exception of South Africa that already has a separate agreement with the EU (TDCA). Negotiations of “Economic Partnership Agreements” (EPAs) are taking place in two separate regional configurations which do not match existing trade blocs in Southern Africa. Ironically, however, one key objective of these EPAs is supposed to be the promotion of regional integration. Questions like the following are arising:

- Is the way EPAs are currently negotiated really conducive to regional integration?
- Could the TDCA, the agreement already in existence between South Africa and the EU, be an appropriate vehicle to address the trade ambitions of the larger SADC-EPA?
- To what extent would the full integration of South Africa into the negotiation process, advantage or disadvantage the BLNS member states of SACU, including Namibia?

### **The Presenter:**

*Dr. Peter Draper*, is the Head of Research, “Development through Trade” programme of the South African Institute of International Affairs. (SAIIA) Dr. Draper is also associated to ECIPE, an international think tank on trade in Brussels.

### **The Respondent:**

A representative from the European Commission, to give a balanced overview over the topic.

### **The outcome:**

- ◆ A better understanding of the current challenges of regional integration, especially for the smaller Southern African countries.
- ◆ A better understanding of challenges and opportunities of a new trade deal with the EU, as well as of the crucial link between EPAs and deeper economic integration in Southern Africa.

Kindly confirm your participation with *Ms. Kauna Jonas* before **13<sup>th</sup> November** via E-mail [fes@fesnam.org.na](mailto:fes@fesnam.org.na) , by Tel. **061-237 438** or **223 767** or by fax (see attached confirm.form)

Please return to: Fax.No: 237 441

CONFIRMATION FORM

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Name:.....

Institution.....

I will attend the meeting

I will not attend the meeting

Signature.....

Date:.....