

## INVITATION

You are hereby cordially invited to participate in the presentation and discussion of preliminary research results by

Mr. Friedrich O. Paulsen

Visiting Student of University of Twente (NL)

**“Namibia’s Land Reform Process: Which Way Forward?”**

**Date: Wednesday, 28 June 2006**

**Time: 12 H00 to 13 H30 (Snacks will be served)**

**Venue: FES Board Room**

Early May, the Ministry of Information announced Cabinet’s decision to adopt the recommendations of the Permanent Technical Team (PTT) as its new policy framework on land reform. Although not yet known by the wider public, the work of the PTT is believed to be endorsed by experts and the major stakeholders. The implementation of a transparent and coherent policy framework would go a long way in reinforcing the message that the Namibian Government is resolved to address the land issue in a determined and sustained manner, but will do so strictly within the confines of the law, in concert with all stakeholders, based on technical feasibility and economic rationality. Shortly thereafter, the Deputy Minister for Lands while visiting Zimbabwe to ‘learn from their land reform experience’ was quoted for saying that Namibia could learn a lot from Zimbabwe, in particular on how to speed up the process of land redistribution. Statements like this continue to raise questions as to whether within government and the political class there is sufficient conviction and political will to stick to a coherent policy framework, or whether in future we will rather be in for arbitrary decisions and ad hoc measures guided by political expediency.

There is ongoing consensus that land redistribution is necessary for reasons of historical injustices, redistributive justice, matters of race relations and political stability and the racial composition of ownership in the commercial farming areas has to change over time. How fast, how far and in which ways this has to happen, how this process has to be supported by public policies are the issues at stake. To what extent government and the political class will be prepared to learn from experience and past policy mistakes is another one. The National Resettlement Policy (NPP) has been described by almost everybody as an outright failure. The idea of reducing rural poverty through settling the poor and landless in large numbers on commercial farms has not passed the reality check. There are also massive problems with the repayment of loans granted under the Affirmative Action Scheme (AALS).

The way in which the land issue will be handled in future, which economic, social, political and ecological arguments and concerns and whose interests will prevail, which compromises and deals will be struck, is largely a political question. It will depend upon the interests of political actors, the image they want to portray to different constituencies, public perceptions about the role of land as a source of income and wealth, developments in neighboring countries, national and international power relations, among other things.

The Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES) has asked Mr Friedrich Paulsen, a Graduate Student in Political Science at the University of Twente in the Netherlands to look into the future of Namibia’s land reform from a political scientists perspective. Based on expert interviews, he has come up with *four alternative scenarios* in which way Namibia’s land reform policy might develop over the next five to ten years. Mr Paulsen will share the preliminary findings of his qualitative research with participants and ask for comments and discussion. **This is an informal discussion and participation is on invitation only.**

**Please confirm your attendance with Kauna at 237 438 or [fes@fesnam.org.na](mailto:fes@fesnam.org.na)**

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