

## INVITATION

13<sup>th</sup> Public Dialogue on Trade

### Genuine opportunity or hidden danger?

The Interim Economic Partnership Agreement with the European Union

13 FEBRUARY 2008

8h00 -11H00 (Registration: 7h30)

Nampower Convention Centre, Windhoek

#### Introduction and Background

When the Namibian Government finally agreed by Mid-December to put its signature under an “Interim Economic Partnership Agreement” (IEPA) with the European Union (EU) this was greeted with a sigh of relief by Namibian farmers, meat and grape exporters. The Government of Namibia signed on condition that contentious issues raised in the first round will be addressed in the next stage of negotiations. As the existing preferential trade arrangement expired by December 31, 2007 due to non-conformity with international (WTO) trade rules, the absence of a new trade arrangement would have triggered an immediate loss of the European market and a crisis in the Namibian beef industry.

Under the new professional interim agreement, which came into force by January 1, 2008, Namibian exports to the EU cannot only continue, but even benefit from improved, i.e. duty- and quota-free market access.

For the sake of not interrupting exports to the EU, the Namibian Government initialed the interim agreement (which so far only covers trade in goods), despite serious reservations about a number of its clauses which it deems not in line with Namibia’s long-term development interests

This Public Dialogue meeting will be a unique opportunity to all interested parties to be informed on the current state of affairs and to interact with the panel of highly qualified experts and stakeholders to clarify issues that are of a vital interest to Namibia and its developmental objectives.

#### The Panelists:

**H. E. Dr. Elisabeth Pape**, Ambassador of the European Union to Namibia.

**Dr. Malan Lindeque**, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Trade and Industry, and chief negotiator for Namibia in the SADC-EPA trade negotiations

**Prof. Gerhard Erasmus**, Senior Associate, TRALAC, Stellenbosch and well-known trade lawyer.

**Ms. Paulina Elago**, Deputy Director Trade Facilitation and Capacity Building at the Southern African Global Competitiveness Hub, Gaborone, Botswana and former Director of International Trade, MTI, Namibia

**Mr. Paul Kalenga**, Senior Trade Policy Adviser to the TIFI Directorate at SADC Secretariat, Gaborone, Botswana.

Kindly confirm your participation with *Ms. Rachel Shiweda* before 11 February 2008 via E-mail [fes@fesnam.org.na](mailto:fes@fesnam.org.na) or by telephone 061-237 438 / 223 767