

# DEEPENING ENGAGEMENT ON SOUTH AFRICA'S TRADE POLICY

## A Media Forum on Trade Policy 14 March 2012 Melrose Place, Rosebank, Johannesburg

### BACKGROUND

Ideological posturing has made the debate around trade reform contentious in South Africa. The antagonism around the debate has prevented an open, evidence-based dialogue. However, trade policy reform forms part of the structural economic reform agenda in South Africa, as it has potential to offer significant positive impacts on economic performance and poverty.

Trade and economic decisions affect not only businesses and governments, but ordinary citizens too. This being the case, it is important for any society to know more about its trade and economic policies and be able to participate fully in shaping such policies.

Despite their indisputable importance in the overall development matrix, trade policy issues are currently not receiving sufficient informed coverage in the local media. Similarly, debates involving key stakeholders could be much better informed. Part of the reason they are not is that most journalists and other key players are not sufficiently well-versed with these issues themselves making it difficult to increase general public awareness about them.

The project under which the training course resides, ultimately hopes to empower stakeholders (media, business, consumers, political parties and people within the governing alliance) to engage in and influence the debate on trade policy. Active and informed engagement by the media would promote quality debate around key milestones on the global and domestic economic agenda e.g. G20 meetings, EU-SA meetings, announcements of changes to trade policy, etc.

Against this backdrop, SAIIA is offering a trade policy course covering key trade issues targeted at regional business journalists. We have invited a number of experts to share their insights on new and developing economic trends and debates. The information garnered from this media workshop is guaranteed to further journalistic understanding of trade reform as well as lead to better, more informed stories on trade and the economy generally. This course is designed to enhance the ability of journalists to evaluate policy issues relating to international trade. Specific learning outcomes include:

- Deeper understanding of global trade issues including the trajectory of global economic governance;
- The role of trade policy within broader economic policy formulation; and
- Approaches to regional economic integration with specific application to the Southern African and African contexts.

*All sessions will be conducted under the **Chatham House Rule**\*. Furthermore, in order to maximise discussions, admission is conditional on participants attending the entire day.*

## PROGRAMME

**08h30 – 09h00**      **Registration**

**09h00 – 09h15**      **Welcome by Catherine Grant-Makokera, Head of the  
Economic Diplomacy Programme, SAIIA**

### **Introduction:**

**09h15 – 10h00 Key concepts in trade and economic policy**

*Presented by Peter Draper, Senior Research Fellow, SAIIA*

This session will give a general introduction to the basic concepts of trade policy. It will address, among others, such issues as trade liberalisation versus protectionism, import substitution policies, export promotion policies, industrialisation etc and how these translate both in theory and practice.

### **Session 1:**

**10h00 – 11h15**      **Trade liberalisation in relation to economic and industrial policies:  
Practical Insights**

*Presented by Peter Draper, Senior Research Fellow, SAIIA*

This session will provide a general overview, drawing from practical country case studies, of trade liberalisation and its linkages with economy growth and industrial development. What happens when trade liberalisation does not deliver on the promised benefits – is it a case of failure of trade liberalisation or otherwise? Is there a case for trade liberalisation and how should countries liberalise?

**11h15 – 11h30**

**Tea/Coffee Break**

### **Session 2**

**11h30 – 13h00**      **Panel Discussion - South Africa's trade policy dynamics**

This session will interrogate South Africa's current policy dynamics. From 'trade policy in a flux' to a 'bold economic vision', what exactly is the direction of trade policy in South Africa and what drives it? Is there a place for trade policy even in the current discourse? Among the various stakeholders involved in trade policy making in South Africa, who is in the driving seat and who should be driving? This session will analyse the current realities and politics of trade policy in South Africa.

*Moderator:                    **Peter Draper:** Senior Research Fellow, SAIIA*

*Panellists:                    **Gus Mandigora:** Executive Director of Trade Policy, Business Unity  
South Africa*

***Brendan Vickers:** Chief Director of Research and Policy: International  
Trade and Economic Development, Department of Trade and Industry*

***Jonas Mosia:** Director Industrial Policy, COSATU*

***Matthew Stern:** Director at Development Network Africa*

## 13h00 – 13h45 Lunch

### Session 3

13h45 – 15h15

#### Panel Discussion – The multilateral trading system, Doha and the political economy of global economic governance

Many have echoed the story of a multilateral trading system in crisis. Is it really? This session will investigate the problems and challenges that the multilateral trading system currently finds itself faced with. From the Doha round to regional integration to legitimacy concerns, in the context of a world in transformation, where does the multilateral trading system and the WTO find itself? What are the implications for the regional integration processes in Southern Africa?

*Moderator:* **Mills Soko:** Senior Lecturer, Graduate School of Business, University of Cape Town

*Panellists:* **Riaan Geldenhuys:** International Trade Practitioner and Director of Trade Law Chambers

**Thabo Chauke:** Department of Trade and Industry

## 15h15 – 15h30 Tea/Coffee Break

### Resources for Media

15h30-16h00

Presentation by Gina van Schalkwyk, USAID Trade Hub

### Session 4:

16h00 – 17h00

#### Trade Policy Reporting Experience in South Africa

Drawing on the experience of veterans in the business, this session will focus on the South African experience of reporting on trade and economic policy issues. It is an opportunity to share lessons and ideas – from journalists to other journalists.

*Moderator:* **Catherine Grant-Makokera:** Head of the Economic Diplomacy Programme, SAIIA

*Discussants:* **Jana Marais:** Commodities Reporter at Bloomberg

**Tshidi Bishop:** Former SABC Business Reporter

**Mandy Roussow:** City Press Foreign Relations Reporter

### \*What is the Chatham House Rule?

“When a meeting, or part thereof, is held under the Chatham House Rule, participants are free to use the information received, but neither the identity nor the affiliation of the speaker(s), nor that of any other participant, may be revealed.”