



PARLIAMENT OF AUSTRALIA

MEDIA RELEASE

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Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade *Chair: Senator Michael Forshaw*

Australia's relations with Africa

The Joint Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Committee will hold a public hearing in Perth, this Thursday, as part of its inquiry into Australia's relationship with the countries of Africa.

Australia's relations with Africa are becoming more significant both in trade and investment as well as other areas such as development aid, agriculture, education, health and security. The Committee has already received over a hundred submissions and held eight days of public hearings in Canberra, Sydney and Melbourne.

Witnesses appearing before the Committee in Perth will cover a range of areas including education links, African studies, mining, overseas aid and governance and security and human rights.

Committee Chairman Senator Michael Forshaw said "The Committee has received a lot of evidence from academics proposing the creation of an African studies centre, or centre of excellence, in Australia. The Joint Committee will hear evidence on this topic from representatives of Murdoch University, Curtin University, and Edith Cowan University."

In recent times Australia has boosted the level of official development aid to African countries. As well, consultancies such as Leading Initiatives Worldwide have been involved in training government officials in African countries.

"Good governance by African governments is essential to achieving aid outcomes," Senator Forshaw said. "The Committee is receiving evidence on the best ways in which our aid programs can be delivered."

Representatives from the Ethiopian Democratic Forum will also address the Committee about Ethiopia's human rights record and related issues. The Australian Government has recently opened a diplomatic post in Addis Ababa where the African Union is based.

A delegation from the Committee will be visiting Africa in the near future to examine at first hand the many issues raised during the inquiry.

The Committee is scheduled to table its report by the end of June 2011.

The public hearing in **Committee Room, 1 Legislative Assembly Committees Office, Level 1, 11 Harvest Terrace, West Perth** and will be webcast live on:
<http://webcast.aph.gov.au/livebroadcasting/>

Program

9.00 am	Prof Craig McGarty & Prof Michael Broderick (Murdoch University)
9.40 am	Professor Cherry Gertzel AM (Curtin Uni)
10.20 am	Edith Cowan University
11.15 am	Assoc. Professor Martin Mhando & Prof. Samuel Makinda (Murdoch University)
11.55 am	Mr Peter Mbago Wakholi
1.35 pm	Professor John Howieson (Murdoch University)
2.15 pm	Leading Initiatives Worldwide P/L
3.10 pm	Ethiopian Democratic Forum

The program of public hearings will wrap up with a final public hearing in Canberra on 3 May 2011. Submissions to the inquiry and transcripts of the public hearings are available on the Committee's website.

For media inquiries, contact the Committee Chairman, Senator Forshaw on 0418 119 526.

For all other inquiries contact the Inquiry Secretary, John Carter, on 02 6277 4306 or visit the committee website at <http://www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/jfadt/africa%2009/index.htm>