

SARPN Seminar Invitation

SARPN will be hosting a seminar on
THE EROSION OF AFRICAN DEPENDENCY

Dr. Constance J. Freeman

**Regional Director for East and Southern Africa of the International Development Research Centre
(IDRC)**

will present a paper on the state of African dependency in development.

Chair:

Ms. Elizabeth Sidiropoulos, Director of the South African Institute of International Affairs

SARPN invites you to attend the seminar which will be held at:

The Ambassador Room, Burgers Park Hotel
Cnr Van der Walt & Mienaar Street
Tshwane, Gauteng

Date: Tuesday 24th January 2006

Time: 14:30 - 16:30

Please RSVP to this email or (012) 342 9499 before the 20th January to ensure your seat at the seminar.

Below please find a summary of Dr. Freeman's paper and bio

THE EROSION OF AFRICAN DEPENDENCY

Dr. Constance J. Freeman

Regional Director for East and Southern Africa of the International Development Research Centre (IDRC)

A major barrier to development in Africa has been the two-sided psychological and operational state of "dependency." Evolving from the historical realities of slavery, colonialism and the rise and fall of socialism, the African tendency to look to the international community to solve Africa's problems undermined local initiative. Weighed by guilt and national interest, the West/North frequently assumed responsibility to identify solutions for Africa, based on the implicit assumption that Africans were not capable of taking care of themselves. The ensuing relationship of African dependency fundamentally undermined attempts to transform Africa; no one anywhere has produced sustainable development unless the people concerned take responsibility.

This dependency syndrome is beginning to erode. While African intellectuals and leaders have often and loudly rejected western models, until recently they have neglected to take responsibility for developing and implementing alternatives that place Africans in the centre of leadership and African resources as the first resort. Three case studies demonstrate the beginnings of this change: the evolution of NEPAD, the Kenyan electoral overthrow of 24 years of autocracy, and the new assertive role of Africans in trade negotiations as demonstrated at Cancun.

The erosion of dependency, rather than its immediate elimination or transformation is posited. If this trend continues, Western/Northern partners will need to develop new attitudes toward African counterparts and explore alternative mechanisms for pursuing their own goals and interests.

Bio: Dr. Constance J. Freeman is Regional Director for East and Southern Africa of the International Development Research Centre (IDRC), in Nairobi, Kenya. She has Ph.D. and MA degrees in Development Economics from the School of International Studies at Denver and a BA from the American University in Washington D.C. She has spent thirty years working on Africa and traveled widely in Africa and Asia.

From 1999-2001, Freeman was Professor of Economics/Senior Advisor, African Center for Strategic Studies (ACSS), Washington D.C. Previously she served as Director of African Studies at the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), in Washington D.C. where she was consulted widely as an African expert by the press, government and corporations.

During her 14 years as a U.S. diplomat, Dr. Freeman was the Director of the Economic Policy Staff for the African Bureau where she helped craft U.S. economic policy for sub-Saharan Africa; she worked as Economic Counsellor at the American Embassy in Nairobi where she developed U.S. economic policy towards Kenya and she served at the U.S. Embassy in New Delhi.

Dr. Freeman worked in Cameroon and Brazzaville as Peace Corps Country Director and earlier in her career on the Professional Staff of the Foreign Assistance Sub-Committee of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. There she played a major role in shaping foreign assistance, development bank and Peace Corps legislation.

As an academic, Dr. Freeman taught at the University of Zambia in the early seventies and has lectured for over 20 years throughout the U.S. and Africa on African issues. She authored numerous reports and evaluations for the U.S. government during her 20-year diversified career and published a number of articles after she retired from government. Her most recent, published in December 2000 by ISS in Pretoria, is entitled "The Three Economies of Africa."