



PARLIAMENT OF AUSTRALIA

**MEDIA RELEASE**

Issued: 16 April 2010

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

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# ***Australia's relations with Africa***

Parliament's Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Committee will commence two days of public hearings in Canberra as part of its inquiry into Australia's relationship with the countries of Africa.

Committee Chairman Senator Michael Forshaw said: "Australia is broadening and deepening its engagement with Africa in recognition of Africa's increasing global importance both economically and politically."

"Africa is a diverse continent of 53 countries spanning vastly different environments, sharing different experiences of Africa's colonial past, and with differing levels of resources and economic development. Accordingly, Australia must engage with Africa in a manner which recognizes this diversity."

On Tuesday 20 April, the Joint Committee will hear from the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, AusAID and Austrade, plus the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government. The South African High Commissioner and Nigerian High Commissioner will also offer the committee an African perspective on the relationship.

On Wednesday 21 April the Committee will hear from a range of other Commonwealth departments or agencies, including the Departments of Immigration and Citizenship; Resources, Energy and Tourism; and Defence.

Information from the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade indicates Australia's engagement with Africa will focus on:

- enhanced political and diplomatic engagement;
- supporting Africa's efforts to promote economic growth through investment and trade;
- supporting African countries in their efforts to make progress towards the Millennium Development Goals; and
- addressing peace and security challenges in Africa.

"These two days of public hearings in Canberra will enable the Committee to discuss these issues in detail with Commonwealth departments and other witnesses," Senator Forshaw said.

There will be a third day of public hearings in Canberra on Tuesday 27 April, when the Committee will receive evidence from representatives of the non-government sector. The Committee will meet with academics with a research interest in Africa and NGOs providing aid to Africa. Later, the Committee will receive evidence in Sydney and Melbourne from past Australian ambassadors to African countries, and several mining and mining service companies.

The public hearing in **Committee Room 2R1** Parliament House in Canberra will be webcast live on: <http://webcast.aph.gov.au/livebroadcasting/>

## Program

### Canberra—Tuesday, 20 April 2010

9.30 am	Dept of Foreign Affairs and Trade, AusAID, Austrade
11.45 am	University of Sydney, Africa Australia Network
1.30 pm	South Africa High Commission
2.15 pm	Nigeria High Commission
3.15 pm	Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research
4.00 pm	Commonwealth Round Table in Australia
4.40 pm	Dept of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government

### Canberra—Wednesday, 21 April 2010

9.00 am	Dept of Innovation, Industry, Science and Research
9.40 am	Dept of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry
10.35 am	Dept of Immigration and Citizenship
11.20 am	Dept of Resources, Energy and Tourism
1.30 pm	Dept of Defence
2.10 pm	Australian Federal Police
3.05 pm	Dept of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations

The program will continue with public hearings in Canberra on Tuesday 27 April, in Sydney on Wednesday 28 April, and in Melbourne on Wednesday 5 May and Thursday 6 May. 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 (02) 9545 3112 or 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/jfact/africa%2009/index.htm>