

## WTI Brown Bag Series

Marius Pieterse, Professor of Law, University of the Witwatersrand

### URBAN ASSERTIVENESS, LEGAL FRAMEWORKS, INFORMAL NETWORKS, AND INTERCITY TRADE AMONG CITIES OF SADC

**Monday, 4 December 2017, 12.30 – 13.30**

Anna Nussbaum Auditorium, World Trade Institute, University of Bern  
Hallerstrasse 6, 3012 Bern, Switzerland

#### Abstract

As the world urbanises and while cities play increasingly bold roles on national and international stages, laws tend to remain fixated on powers, functions and obligations of nation states. There is an ever-growing need for legal scholars to also contemplate the role of cities as legal/constitutional/international actors, especially in the socio-economic realm. This paper forms part of an overarching project which considers the extent to which cities in the SADC region are asserting themselves vis-à-vis national and regional governments. In particular, this paper attempts to grapple with the manner in which the law perceives, and deals with, economic interactions between cities, as manifested also through formal and informal intercity trade. While the research is still in extremely early stages, questions being investigated include: To what extent does national, regional and international trade laws recognise and reflect the reality of cities being the main economic entities in nation states? To what extent does trade law, as well as constitutional and local government law, support or enable cities' economic capacities in this respect? Are there tensions between different levels of government when it comes to trade and are legal frameworks governing intergovernmental relations equipped to deal with these? What are the realities of intercity trade in SADC? How, if at all, do legal frameworks deal with the vast informal trade networks in

the region? Overall, is the law equipping cities to deal with tremendous shifts in economic power and responsibility towards the urban?

#### Biography of the Speaker

Marius Pieterse is a professor in the School of Law at the University of the Witwatersrand in Johannesburg, South Africa, where he teaches constitutional law and human rights law. He is interested in how cities are governed and govern themselves, both within and outside of the law, and on how urban governance relates to constitutional law more broadly, as well as to the assertion, contestation and performance of different human rights. His research on urban governance and rights builds on years of work on the judicial vindication of justiciable socio-economic rights in South Africa, which included work on different aspects of the right to health, the right to equality, powers of courts in constitutional matters and the societal and bureaucratic impact of rights-based litigation. Marius' recently published book *Rights-based Litigation, Urban Governance and Social Justice in South Africa: The Right to Joburg* (Routledge; 2017) considers the impact of rights-based litigation on various aspects of urban governance and everyday urban struggles in Johannesburg and other South African cities.

**Participation is free of charge, no registration is needed.  
We warmly welcome you to join our seminar at the World Trade Institute!**

WTI Brown Bag Seminars are 30-minute presentations, given by external or in-house researchers. The presentations are followed by a 30-minute Q&A session. The Brown Bag concept comes from the US; it means that people bring their own lunch and eat it during the presentation.