The University of Stellenbosch will be hosting the bi-annual conference of the South African Association of Political Studies (SAAPS) in Stellenbosch from **1-4 September 2010**.

The theme for the conference is **Democracy in the First Decade of the 21st Century**.

It has been 10 years since the turn of the previous century and at this conference we want to take stock of the well-being of democracy in the 21st century. In this period democracies all over the world have been influenced by neo-liberal economic policy changes and an escalation of the war on terror after the incidents of 9/11 in the United States of America. Some democracies have lost ground, others have consolidated and others have reconfigured into regional supra-national bodies.

There has been a clarion call for the 21st century to be 'Africa's century'. Ten years later it is now appropriate to reflect on achievements and failures, as well as on the continent’s quest to secure greater political and economic stability and security.

In his first major visit to sub-Saharan Africa, while addressing the Ghanaian Parliament, President Barack Obama was quoted as saying that *'The 21st century will be shaped by what happens not just in Rome or Moscow or Washington, but by what happens in Accra, as well.'*

At the end of the first decade of the 21st century it is therefore timeous to assess which major debates, issues and challenges will dominate the disciplines of Political Science, International Relations, Public Policy, Gender Politics and African Politics during the next pivotal decade of the 21st century. Papers with a focus on Africa are strongly encouraged.
Abstracts are awaited in the following subfields:

- **Comparative politics:**
  Democracy and redistribution; conflict and peace processes; institutional innovation; electoral systems; elections; party systems; the liberal democratic peace; area studies; state building.

- **Political Behavior/ Survey research:**
  Survey research in Africa; public opinion polls; political culture; legitimacy; rule of law; perceptions of corruption and patronage; elite attitudes; perceptions of gender equality; human rights and economic policy.

- **International Relations/ Foreign Policy:**
  Migration; refugees; diaspora and democratisation in Africa; state failure; political instability and democracy in Africa; democratic domestic political structures and foreign policy in Africa; the transnational dimension of democracy in Africa; the political economy of democratisation in Africa; development and democracy in Africa; Sino-African relations and democracy in Africa; poverty; inequality and democracy in Africa; identity; conflict and democracy in Africa; intercontinental organisations and democracy in Africa; religion and democracy in Africa; constructing an African idea of democracy: transnational dimensions; the democratisation of global institutions.

- **Policy Studies:**
  Public policy-making; public policy implementation; public policy evaluation; policy change; public policy theory; public interpretations of democracy and the perspectives on the role of public policy processes; the nature of policy implementation and perceptions of democracy; the role of learning in public policy processes and the contribution of the “interpretive turn” to understanding public policy processes and other related themes; e-governance and the impact of ICT/social networking sites on governance and the democratic process.

- **Gender Politics:**
  Gender equality; women’s representation; gender based violence; National Gender Machineries; citizenship; gender, security and peace; women and militarisation; women and human rights; feminist ethics of care; issues of multi-culturalism.

- **African Politics:**
  The liberal democratic peace in Africa; electoral contestation in African democracies; The AU and the defence of democracy in the 21st century; the role of democracy in Africa’s post-conflict reconstruction efforts; democratic consolidation in Africa; political parties in Africa; appraisals of the Utility of Africa’s Election Observer Missions; expanding indicators of quality assessment in African elections; citizenship in Africa’s democratization processes; the political opposition in Africa; the dominant party system in Southern Africa; assessing the causes of failed states in Africa; the politics of lucrative international incentives for democratization in Africa.

The deadline for abstracts is 30 March 2010.

Please send abstracts of approximately 100 words, contact details and institutional affiliation to: saaps2010@gmail.com. Proposals for panels are also welcome.

For further information, please contact Prof Amanda Gouws at ag1@sun.ac.za