



# STELLENBOSCH 2012

XVI<sup>TH</sup> WORLD ECONOMIC HISTORY CONGRESS

JULY 2012 | STELLENBOSCH | SOUTH AFRICA

[www.wehc2012.org](http://www.wehc2012.org)



## Your Congress Hosts

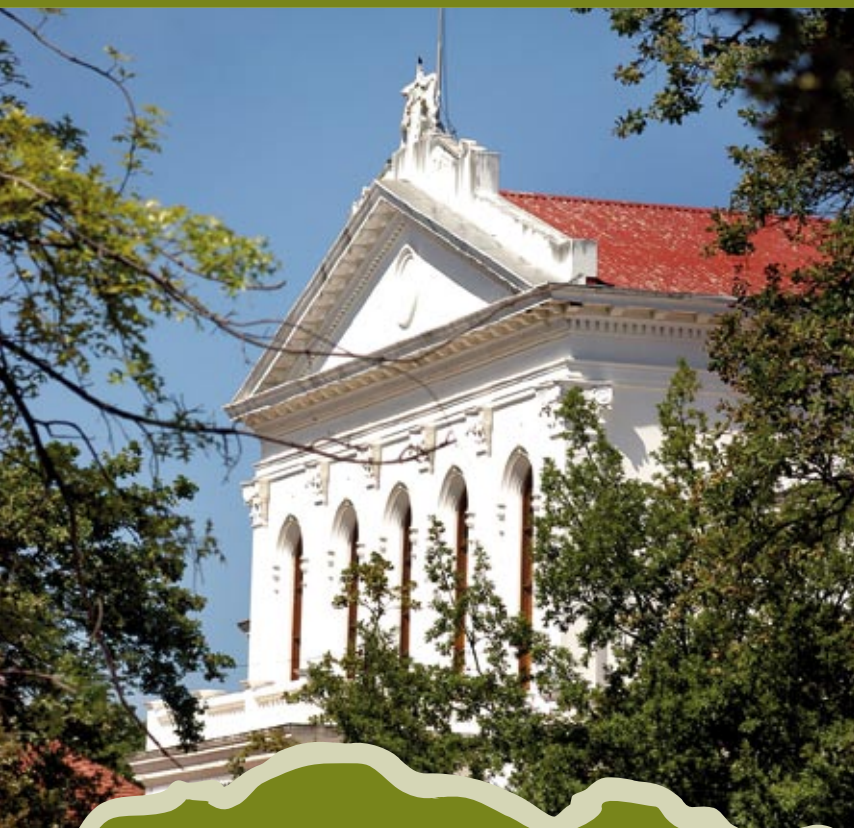
### SOUTH AFRICA

2012 will be the first time that the World Economic History Congress will be held in Africa: the cradle of humankind.

The reasons for Africa's relatively slow economic progress are fertile ground for economic historians to explore: does the cause lie in African institutions, arising from its colonial and pre-colonial history, or in later political developments? What can Africa learn from the experiences of other countries and continents? These are some of the fundamental issues that economic historians investigate, and applying the knowledge and understanding gained from economic history studies to Africa, the poorest continent, has great economic, social and political significance.

While much of the agenda of the Congress will address other issues and countries, holding the World Economic History Congress in Africa is symbolically important. It will show clearly that the International Economic History Association believes that economic history holds lessons for Africa and that Africa is an important area for research in economic history. Holding the Congress in Stellenbosch would encourage involvement by the African academic community, thus increasing participation by underrepresented countries. It would also give greater impetus to recent attempts to instigate more research on economic history in the African context, linked particularly to the institutional and quantitative perspectives that have been gaining popularity in the international literature.

In Stellenbosch in 2012, scholars from the developing world and their colleagues from the developed world will present new historical hypotheses, new data and new analytical techniques, and broaden their understanding of the historical trajectory of their societies. In Africa, such historical understanding is having an increasingly large impact on policy making and on private initiative, and the 2012 conference will strengthen that trend. Most importantly, holding the World Economic History Congress in Africa will generate renewed interest in the study of economic history in Africa and will provide a fresh perspective on the relevance of economic history in the developing world.



the roots of development



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**THE ECONOMIC HISTORY SOCIETY  
OF SOUTHERN AFRICA (EHSSA)  
AND STELLENBOSCH UNIVERSITY  
DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMICS**



*the roots of  
development*

The Economic History Society of Southern Africa (EHSSA) was established in 1980. It is the forum for economic historians as well as economists engaged in scientific historical research in economic and business history in South Africa. EHSSA has a growing membership, including academics – economic historians and economists – journalists, central bankers and corporate economists.

EHSSA publishes a peer-reviewed accredited academic journal, The South African Journal of Economic History (SAJEH), biannually and contributions from all over the world have been published in this journal.

EHSSA is proud of the international recognition of its activities received through its admission as a member of the International Economic History Association (IEHA) in 2006, with full representation on the Executive Committee since then. EHSSA uses this international network to promote the study of economic history and international interest in the study of South African and African economic history.

Considering that Economics has only existed as a general academic discipline at Western universities for some 120 years, the Department of Economics at Stellenbosch University has a long and proud history. In fact, the Department is one of the oldest Departments of Economics in Africa.

The first chair in Economics was held by Johannes Grosskopf (1885-1948). His appointment in 1926 followed some controversy: Grosskopf protested against South Africa's entry into the First World War on the side of the Allied Powers and joined the rebellion against it. Act 11 of 1915 prohibited any participant in the rebellion from occupying any teaching position in the Union of South Africa: thus the Minister of Education refused permission for the appointment of Grosskopf to Stellenbosch University. The South African Parliament then promulgated an Act of Indemnity which facilitated the appointment of Grosskopf as Professor and Chair.

Professor Grosskopf established a tradition of economic policy involvement by the Department of Economics, which has been passed on to successive professors, lecturers and students. The involvement of the Department of Economics in public policy debates on socio-economic and political issues of the day became the hallmark of the Department and still characterises the academic and professional activities of staff and students. The Department fosters broad-minded theoretical enquiry as well as policy-oriented and politically informed social involvement.