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Speaker: **Dr. Horman Chitonge, University of Cape Town**

Topic: ***Transforming the Colonial Economy in Africa: A Vital but Incomplete Project***

Date: **Thursday, March 4th, 2021**

Time: **12:00 – 1:30 PM (EST)**

Place: **Zoom Webinar: [Register Here](#)**

**All Are Welcome!**

## ABOUT THE SPEAKER

Horman Chitonge is a professor and head of African Studies at the University of Cape Town (UCT). He is a research fellow at the Global Justice Programme, Yale University, a research associate at PRISM, School of Economics (UCT), and a visiting fellow at the African Studies Centre, Tokyo University of Foreign Studies. His research interests include agrarian political economy, hydro-politics, and alternative strategies for economic growth in Africa. His most recent books include: *Industrial Policy and the Transformation of the Colonial Economy in Africa: The Zambian Experience* (Routledge, 2021). *Industrialising Africa: Unlocking the Economic Potential of the Continent* (Peter Lang, 2019); *Social Welfare Policy in South Africa: From the Poor White Problem to a Digitised Social Contract* (Peter Lang, 2018).

## ABOUT THE TALK

Most African economies we have today were established during colonial rule for very specific reasons. Although there is debate about the motive behind the creation of the colonial economy in Africa, one thing that is clear is that economic activities conducted on the continent were not intended to benefit Africans primarily. The structure and logic of the colonial economy in Africa clearly show that the primary intention of economic activities conducted on the African continent during colonial rule was to benefit European Settlers and European owners of businesses in Africa. If the colonial economy in African was created not to primarily benefit Africans on the continent, post-colonial Africa should seek to reorganize the colonial economy so that economic activities taking place in Africa are oriented towards benefiting Africans. Yet, six decades after many African countries started to celebrate the end of colonial rule, most (if not all) economies on the continent have surprisingly continued to operate under the colonial economic structure and logic. The structure of production in most countries, for instance, has remained overwhelmingly oriented towards the production of raw materials and semi-processed commodities as was the case during colonial times. In this paper, I argue that the transformation of African economies is a central pillar of the project of decolonising the continent which started during the late 1950s. However, this project remains incomplete, if not, abandoned today, leading to a situation where the colonial economy is very much alive in all African countries 60 years after the end of colonial occupation. The purpose of this paper is to illustrate that the colonial economy has survived six decades of self-rule in Africa and that the failure to transform the colonial economy has blocked the other aspects of decolonisation in Africa. I argue in this paper that African governments can use industrial policy as an instrument for transforming the colonial economy.