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Nelson Mandela lecture series continues in Brantford with talk exploring China's deepening presence in Africa

BRANTFORD – The **Tshepo Institute for the Study of Contemporary Africa** (TISCA), a research centre at Wilfrid Laurier University, continues its [Nelson Mandela Lecture Series](#) with a talk by **Gordon Houlden** on Thursday, **Oct. 25** from **4:30 to 6:30 p.m.** This lecture is free and takes place in Room SCJ 127 at the SC Johnson Building (38 Market St., Brantford) and all are welcome.

Titled "China's Africa Gambit: A Model for Africans or a New Colonialism?" the lecture will address China's role in the international system, its longstanding relations with African states, and perspectives on its deepening presence in Africa in the 21st century.

Houlden is a professor at the University of Alberta, and director of the university's China Institute. He served in the Canadian foreign service from 1976 until joining the University of Alberta in 2008. Twenty-two years of his career with the Government of Canada were focused on Chinese affairs. He was also the director of the Eastern and Southern African Divisions of what was previously the Department of Foreign Affairs. Houlden last served as Director General of the East Asian Bureau in the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade before leaving the foreign service. He has also served on the Board of Governors of the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) and on Alberta's Asia Advisory Council.

"China features prominently in global affairs in the current times," said Akbar Saeed, an associate professor in Laurier's Business Technology Management program and director of the Tshepo Institute for the Study of Contemporary Africa. "The Tshepo Institute is very pleased to have Professor Houlden deliver the Nelson Mandela Lecture and to share his insight, experience and expertise on China. I am very proud that the Institute can provide a venue for students, faculty and the community to address significant international issues that relate to Africa in ways that continue to honour the struggles and vision of Nelson Mandela."

At the event the Tshepo Institute will also present the annual Nelson Mandela Academic Excellence Award for Social Justice and the Harriet Tubman Academic Excellence Award for Human Rights and Leadership to honour exemplary essays written by Laurier students on topics that address contemporary development, human rights and social justice issues in Africa or the Global South. Previous award winners have written on topics as varied as the Rohingya genocide to gender and global health emergencies related to the Zika virus.

The Tshepo Institute promotes global awareness and excellence in knowledge development on African issues with the aim of inspiring positive transformation. It focuses on contemporary development and social justice issues in Africa from an interdisciplinary perspective. It serves as a hub for knowledge mobilization and student/faculty enrichment that can inform transformative policies and emphasize causes for hope.