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NORTH-WEST UNIVERSITY
YUNIBESITHI YA BOKONE-BOPHIRIMA
NOORDWES-UNIVERSITEIT

NORTH-WEST UNIVERSITY AWARDS HONORARY DOCTORATE TO WORLD-RENOWNED ECONOMIST

Prof Ludo Cuyvers, an acclaimed international trade economist and leading authority on the role of export promotion in building a competitive and sustainable export sector, was awarded an honorary doctorate in international trade from the North-West University (NWU) on 26 May 2017. “Zig Zigglar once said that success is the doing, not the getting; in the trying, not the triumph. Success is a personal standard, reaching for the highest that is in us, becoming all that we can be. And this is the epitome of what I have seen of Prof Cuyvers,” said Prof Frikkie van Niekerk, Deputy Vice-Chancellor at the NWU.

Prof Cuyvers’ association with the NWU, and the TRADE research entity, started in early 2000 in a ground-breaking project to adapt an export market selection tool, the Decision Support Model (DSM), which was first implemented in Cuyvers’ home country, Belgium, to South Africa’s specific circumstances. It is a practical and scientifically based tool used by national and provincial governments and private institutions (both in South Africa and other parts of the world) to pinpoint realistic export opportunities from the virtual mountains of information available on different product categories and markets.

This model ensures continued responsiveness to changing global and regional trade dynamics and is now marketed under the trade mark TRADE-DSM™ and is the flagship in the TRADE research entity’s suite of research offerings. It has been the subject of innumerable research outputs (peer-reviewed articles, conference papers, master’s and PhD dissertations, and a book).

“The strength of the TRADE-DSM™,” said Prof Cuyvers, “lies in its ability to bring order and efficiency to the task of identifying high-potential product-market combinations (or export opportunities). The precision with which potential product-market combinations are screened against specific criteria and the most promising ones revealed means that the market selection phase in a country’s, a province’s or an industry sector’s export development drive is less risky, time-consuming and costly than it would be if a less systematic approach were used.”

Prof Cuyvers is currently the director of the Centre for ASEAN (Association of South-East Asian Nations) Studies and emeritus professor at the University of Antwerp in Belgium. Since 2007 he has been an extraordinary professor at the NWU where he works closely with the international trade team in the TRADE research entity. Prof Cuyvers is also chairman of the European Institute for Asian Studies and a member of the Council of Fellows, East Asian Economic Association.



Over the years, Prof Cuyvers has been a guest lecturer and mentor at the NWU, and has acted as an examiner of master's and PhD dissertations and theses – all of which are a reflection of his long-held enthusiasm for stimulating people's interest in international trade and economic development, and building academic capacity.



Above left: Prof Fika Janse van Rensburg congratulates Prof Ludo Cuyvers on his honorary doctorate.

Above right: Prof Ludo Cuyvers together with his wife Marie-José.

Below: Profs Fika Janse van Rensburg, Susan Visser, Wilma Viviers, Jan van Romburgh and Ludo Cuyvers together with Ms Marie-José Cuyvers, Ms Katrien Cuyvers and Prof Rantsoa Letšosa.

