



*Oxford, 15 June 2015*

**Top economist Stefan Dercon to become Professor of Economic Policy at Oxford**

World-renowned development economist Stefan Dercon has been appointed as the new Professor of Economic Policy at the Blavatnik School of Government (BSG) and the Department of Economics at the University of Oxford.

Currently Chief Economist for the UK Department for International Development (DFID), Dercon's groundbreaking research focuses on the application of microeconomics and statistics to the analysis of the central development challenges of growth and poverty reduction in poor societies, and the public policies required for change.

The newly created professorship is a joint appointment between the Blavatnik School of Government and the Department of Economics at the University of Oxford. In taking up the role, Dercon will also become Director of Oxford's world-leading Centre for the Study of African Economies (CSAE). The professorship has been made possible thanks to a generous donation from the Open Society Foundations, a charity established by investor and philanthropist George Soros, and matched funding from the Blavatnik Foundation.

Paul Collier, Professor of Economics and Public Policy at the Blavatnik School of Government and current co-director of CSAE, said: "The Chair in Economics and Public Policy distinguishes outstanding experience, and I am confident that Stefan's excellent work will inspire students and peers alike. He has the experience to drive the School's contributions to public policy in Africa, especially given his extensive work across the continent, from Ethiopia to Tanzania. Our thanks go out to the Open Society and Blavatnik Foundation for making this possible."

Martin Browning, Head of the Department of Economics, said: "Stefan Dercon is a scholar of international distinction with an exceptional track record of research and policy engagement on the economics of development. His experiences at the highest levels of the academic and policy worlds will significantly enhance his ability to achieve great outcomes for both the Blavatnik School of Government and the Department of Economics."

Previously, Dercon was Professor of Development Economics at the Department of International Development at Oxford, where he was Poverty Research Director for the Young Lives Project, a 20-year child cohort study focusing on child poverty in India, Peru, Ethiopia and Vietnam. He was Member of the Steering Committee and Lead Academic for Ethiopia in the International Growth Centre and Chair of the Management Committee for the DFID sponsored Research Consortium on Institutions and Growth. He has worked as an advisor for the World Bank, and several multilateral organisations and national governments. He is ranked amongst the top 2 percent of academic economists in the world, at number 5 for researchers on Africa and in the top 50 development economists worldwide.

Dercon's most recent research work mixes behavioural psychology and economic analysis to study the role of poor people's aspirations in development outcomes, as well as how to promote structural and institutional development in Africa. He is also continuing to work on the consequences of risk on poor societies, not least in

the context of climate change, and how insurance and related instruments could be used to protect governments and populations from hardship.

Speaking about his new role, Stefan Dercon said: "I am excited to be offered the opportunity to lead the renowned Centre for the Study of African Economies at the University of Oxford, with the aim to make this the best place in the world for to conduct economic research on Africa, and the place to go to for the best policy advice on the challenges faced by the continent. I am delighted that I can join one of the top economics departments in the world, as well as contribute to better government and public policy across the developing world via the huge promise that the Blavatnik School of Government holds."

Stefan Dercon will officially take up the Professorship of Economic Policy on 1 October 2015.

/Ends.

### **Notes to editors**

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### **About the Blavatnik School of Government**

Founded at the University of Oxford in 2010, the Blavatnik School of Government exists to inspire and support better government and public policy around the world. We teach current and future public leaders through innovative programmes, conduct deep research into pressing issues facing policy makers around the world, and convene leaders and experts to foster better public policy. With a strong global outlook, we combine insights from a range of academic disciplines and derive lessons from the public, private and third sectors. The School was made possible through a £75 million donation to the University of Oxford by American philanthropist Leonard Blavatnik. [www.bsg.ox.ac.uk](http://www.bsg.ox.ac.uk)

### **About the Centre for the Study of African Economies**

The Centre for the Study of African Economies (CSAE) is an economic research centre within the Department of Economics at Oxford University. CSAE carries out economic research with a particular focus on Africa. Its aim is to improve economic and social conditions in the poorest societies. CSAE researchers often use unique data which give them unrivalled insight into the underlying issues. The resulting policy recommendations address questions in the economic and political spheres as well as in civil society in developing countries.  
[www.csae.ox.ac.uk](http://www.csae.ox.ac.uk)