The School for International Studies presents a free public lecture:

**INTERROGATING DEVELOPMENT: REFLECTING ON INDIA'S EXPERIENCE WITH GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT**

Professor **Padmini Swaminathan** is an internationally recognized scholar of development and feminist economics and Director of the Madras Institute of Development Studies in Chennai, India. She also holds the Reserve Bank of India Chair in Regional Economics at Madras, and is currently a Shastri Indo-Canadian Institute Visiting Scholar.

**Date:** Monday, November 15, 2010  
**Time:** 12.00-13.30  
**Location:** SFU Harbour Centre, 515 W. Hastings St., Room 7000

***No reservation necessary, but seating is limited***

The burden of this presentation is that, a **critical overview** of the Indian economy is not just long overdue, but expressly needed to make sense of a whole range of issues confronting the country. That changes in the economy have impacted differentially on different sections of the population is well known and fairly well documented particularly in micro-level studies. Also well known is the range of interventions that, from time to time, the government of the day has sought to make, ostensibly to address particular concerns. However, at the end of slightly over six decades of ‘planned’ economic development we are left with more questions than answers, more contradictions at the ground level, less light being provided by our data systems on major indicators such as employment, productive investment, poverty levels, etc. While causality is difficult to establish, it is, nevertheless, not off the mark to suggest that the growing violence of every form in the economy has a lot to do, among other factors, with increasing inequality levels, the consequent inequity perceived, and the exclusion of sections of the population from such development as has taken place. More serious, the disengagement of economists [feminists or otherwise], with issues of economic planning, consequent to the devaluation of planning and planned economic development, has meant, that we no longer critically engage with questions such as, the vision and outcome of development and/or the goals of planning. Such discussions used to be the norm until at least the first three Five-Year Plans in this country.

This presentation will attempt to bring together findings of several studies that, in the opinion of the author, have an important bearing on the kinds of issues with which several groups across the country are grappling:

- economic growth accompanied by, or rather, resulting in the growing informalization of the economy;
• industrial growth and expansion contributing to land degradation and deterioration in productivity of agriculture thereby adversely impinging on the livelihoods of one but the major section of the population;
• implications of feminization of the labor force in several sectors/sub-sectors of the economy, particularly agriculture;
• slowing down of growth in investments in particular kinds of infrastructure even as the different states of the Union vie with each other to promote other kinds of infrastructure such as medical tourism, for instance.

The lived experiences of ‘development’ as captured in various studies, reports of government commissions, etc, enable interrogation of this development at several levels: one, they provide a very nuanced understanding of how one may read and understand ‘access’ to development; two, they bring into sharp relief the **simultaneity of oppression** that some sections of the population/some locations in the country face which thereby disallows these sections/locations from benefiting at all and/or very little to be of any real value; three, several interventions made by local governments, NGOs have demonstrated how some programmes of development can be successfully delivered but these have remained few, far between with no attempt to mainstream them [as distinct from attempts by funding agencies to upscale them]; four, and more important, the Central Planning Commission of the country finds itself trapped into announcing programmes periodically to address particular aspects of maldevelopment and/or ill fare at the cost of a holistic conception of development leading to all round welfare. The 11th Plan document of the country amply illustrates the poverty of scholarship, comprehension and ability to bring back the original role that the Planning Commission was envisaged to play in the development of the country.

Several aspects of the above will be illustrated with findings from field-based studies conducted by the author over the last two decades.