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Editorial Note

The year 2019 began with reflections on the 15th CODESRIA General Assembly held in Dakar in December 2018 and explored in Issues Nos 1&2, 2019 of the *Bulletin*. This double issue of the *Bulletin* picks up where those reflection in the latter issue ended. It follows up on some of the debates discussed at the plenary and parallel sessions of the Assembly, which explored

the gains and losses, opportunities, and challenges of globalisation for the continent under the theme “Africa and the Crisis of Globalisation”.

The Assembly allowed the African social science community to indicate where to expend more intellectual energies in the decade, if only to avoid the pitfalls of the past. Three developments are critical to this and will shape the community’s engagements.

First, is the apparent disengagement and/or disintegration of liberal institutions that supported progressive causes in the developing countries coupled with an equally virulent rise of nationalism in the West. The second is the exit of the UK from the European Union which advertently or inadvertently has meant some dent on the character of Western capitalism. The third is China’s aggressive entreaties to displace the West from developing countries under the guise of an ethical “Confucius Civilisation”. Combined, these three developments signal that going forward, Africa is going to encounter and engage with globalisation under slightly different terms and contexts than

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in the past, when “Western culture” and its different facets constituted the main theatre and content of globalization.

The articles in this double issue of the *Bulletin* attest to the eagerness of a new generation of African academics on the continent to question globalisation and its promises. The focus is on globalising initiatives from the West or the East without ignoring the critical question of what it means for Africa’s desire to develop, and what it will take to achieve the required momentum. Daniel Ngugi’s and Vusi Gumedede’s articles address these concerns. Gumedede’s piece engages broadly with how development has been conceptualised and what would constitute suitable indicators of development on the continent, while Ngugi, basing his arguments on a reinterpretation of data, draws us to the corrosive

impacts of international and regional trade pacts on nascent manufacturing industries at the national level. This is important in the context of the African continental free trade area (AfCFTA) that came into force in May 2019 and the subsequent attempts by external forces to either shape the direction of the continental trade area to their benefit or cast doubts on its sustainability.

These articles implicitly suggest that the work of the African social science community to give intellectual depth and policy direction in AfCFTA is necessary. Demba Moussa Démbélé, for instance, discusses the fight for monetary autonomy within the countries of the CFA Franc monetary zone and suggests lessons on how best to move forward in attempts to establish the sovereignty of AfCFTA.