



## Editorial

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# Working Towards the CODESRIA of the Future: Transcendence in a Time of Crises

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**T**his issue of *CODESRIA Bulletin* has been released at a very critical moment for our continent and for the world. The outbreak of the Ebola Virus Disease in West Africa, which has claimed thousands of lives, is bringing to the fore old questions about global inequalities and unequal access to healthcare and many other indices of social well-being. Unfortunately, it is also increasingly posing new questions or re-phrasing old questions concerning the meanings of pan-Africanism, pan-African solidarity and regional cooperation in the face of severe threats.

The Ebola outbreaks in West Africa and the Democratic Republic of Congo came against a background of violent conflicts in South Sudan, CAR, the north of Nigeria and recent troubles in Mali amongst other places. Further afield, recent hostile exchanges between Hamas and the Israeli Defence Forces that exacted a very heavy toll on the civilian population of the Gaza Strip implicated Egypt, which played a leading role in the negotiation of a cease fire.

Indeed, the continent is undergoing significant transformations spanning the political, economic, social and cultural realms. Countries as well as their regional and continental groupings are being called upon to refashion themselves in drastically changing environments.

CODESRIA is called upon to face the same challenge some 40 years after its establishment. The need for the Council to reposition itself within the new and changing political, economic, social and cultural environment in which the Council and the higher education institutions that it works with operate, motivated the Council to institute an Internal Review Committee after its 2011 General Assembly in Rabat, Morocco.

It is to enable the committee to complete its work and make concrete proposals on possible charter amendments that the Executive Committee during its June 2014 meeting, reached decision to postpone the business sessions of Council's General Assembly to June 2015. The draft report of the Internal Review Committee will be discussed during the scientific conference of the General Assembly, along with the early draft of another committee set up by the Executive Committee to review the intellectual agenda of the Council. The final reports of both review committees, as well as any possible proposals for charter

amendments will be presented to the business session of the General Assembly in June 2015 where new members of the Executive Committee (EC) will also be elected.

This decision was aided by the existence of earlier instances in which the General Assembly of the Council was postponed on account of important processes and events in the life of CODESRIA. It is the hope of the Council that these reviews will result in substantial recommendations and changes that will place CODESRIA on a sound footing to continue its role as the leading pan-African social science research organisation.

In addition to allowing members of the social science community in Africa and the Diaspora to broach critical issues pertinent to the continent's development, June 2015 will also permit the proper celebration of the lives and work of two leading African scholars who recently passed on – Professor Ali A. Mazrui and Professor Jacob Ade Ajayi. While we could describe them as Kenyan and Nigerian, respectively, it is more proper to describe them simply as ground-breaking African intellectuals who led the way in the challenging but important task of re-imagining the African past and fashioning an African future after decades of colonial intellectual and physical degradation. This issue of *CODESRIA Bulletin* includes tributes to them by leading African scholars. To their families, friends and former colleagues, CODESRIA, on behalf of the African and Diaspora social science research community, wishes to extend its sincere condolences. May their souls rest in eternal peace!

As we celebrate these icons of African scholarship, it is our conviction, at CODESRIA, that the best tribute we could ever pay to them, as champions of academic freedom and independence of thought, is to continue to foster the development of social science research on the continent. As part of efforts in this direction, CODESRIA will be co-organising a summit in Dakar, March 2015, to forge the future of African Higher Education. Information on that summit is provided in this bulletin.

The bulletin also contains a briefing on the World Social Science Forum to be held in Durban, South Africa, September 2015. The Forum will be jointly hosted by CODESRIA and the Human Sciences Research Council of South Africa under the theme "Transforming Global Relations for a Just World."

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