

Announcements

Postponement of the Scientific Conference of CODESRIA's 14th General Assembly

It is no longer news that the eruption of the Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) in some West African countries has provoked a major health crisis in the region.

Although international response to the crisis is evolving and tangible progress has been made to curtail the disease in some of the affected countries, it still cannot be said that EVD has been brought under control and that the crisis will soon be over.

The World Health Organization has advised, rightly, against drastic travel restrictions imposed by some governments on people from the most severely affected countries. However, we have been receiving reports from people who have had difficulties travelling back to their own countries after visiting or transiting through the airports of countries where there are confirmed cases of EVD. Many of our colleagues and friends have also made us understand that they feel uncomfortable about the idea of participating in large international gatherings while EVD continues to be a phenomenon that has not been brought under control in the most affected countries.

In light of this situation, and after consulting extensively and debating the issue at length, the Executive Committee of

Ebrima Sall
Executive Secretary
CODESRIA

CODESRIA has decided to postpone the scientific conference of the 14th General Assembly of CODESRIA that was scheduled for December 2014, to June 2015. The decision to postpone the conference was motivated by a desire to minimise the risks associated

with the holding of large international gatherings in the region at a time when the spread of the highly contagious EVD has not been checked or arrested.

The Scientific Conference and the business session of the 14th General Assembly of CODESRIA will now both be held in Dakar, 8-13 June 2015. Authors whose abstracts were shortlisted will soon be informed about the results of the final selection process.

We would like to take this opportunity to remind all individual and institutional members of CODESRIA that only members who are up-to-date with the payment of their membership fees are eligible to participate in the election of members of the Executive Committee, and in the decision making processes of the business session of the General Assembly. We would therefore like to urge all members to pay their membership fees.

We look forward to seeing you in Dakar in June 2015.

Summit to Forge the Future of African Higher Education

The African Higher Education Summit will be held in Dakar, 10-12 March 2015, under the theme "Revitalising Higher Education for Africa's Future". The Summit, which will be limited to about 500 participants, will provide an energising space for African political and university leaders, experts and organisations – and friends of the continent – to revitalise interest in the sector and talk about the future. "This is a call to action. The summit will mark the beginning of a new agenda for higher education in Africa," says Dr Tendai Murisa, director of the summit's lead organiser, TrustAfrica.

"At TrustAfrica we do not claim expertise on higher education. We claim expertise in bringing Africans and friends of Africa to a space where they can talk," Murisa says. In this case, it will be a gathering of all higher education actors.

"We see dots that are not connected. There are many disparate activities taking place. That's why we came up with the idea of

Patience Ukama
TrustAfrica

a continental summit that can link the dots and maybe create a new synergy."

Also on board with organising the summit is the African Union Commission, Association of African Universities, CODESRIA – Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa – the

UN African Institute for Economic Development and Planning, South Africa's National Research Foundation and the African Development Bank.

The government of Senegal is the host. "From the North we've got the Carnegie Corporation of New York, the MasterCard Foundation and World Bank," says Murisa, who took over the leadership of TrustAfrica on 1 October.

"We think all these organisations are movers and shakers in their own right, and that by bringing them together into a place, we can revitalise interest and try to make sure that higher education is back on the policy agenda."

Summit Aims and Organisation

“One of the key processes that as Trust-Africa we are keen on influencing is the African Union-led Africa 2063 agenda – what Africa should look like in 50 years time. We think that higher education should be part of that kind of conversation,” Murisa explains.

“If higher education is going to play a central role for Africa’s transformation, what kind of investment is needed? And if higher education is going to contribute to increased growth, what kind of graduates do we need? What does the relationship between the marketplace and the universities in Africa look like, and what needs to be done?”

The summit organisers are in the preliminary stages of reaching out to people, Murisa says. “We have been pleasantly surprised at the response of the government of Senegal, which has not only accepted being the official host but has also committed itself financially to the summit and is helping us to invite African heads of state.

“That has helped us to make sure that the summit is considered official. It is now appearing on the African Union calendar as an important event. So at a political level there is huge buy-in, which is what we were hoping for. This is one of the major milestones we have had in terms of preparing for the summit.”

The summit is making room for 500 delegates but is going to struggle to contain the numbers. The partners alone have 250 guests they would like to invite. “We cannot have more than 500 people or the summit will become difficult to manage,” Murisa stresses.

“There is overwhelming interest and we’re going to be seeing more. Our fear is that we are going to be overwhelmed by the demand from people who want to be at this meeting.”

In a way, says Murisa, the conference has already started. Papers have been commissioned and a team created to solicit input into what will be called the African Declaration on Higher Education.

The organisers are talking to academic and non-academic staff unions, universities and students across the continent, seeking wide input as there will be space for only limited representation in Dakar. “We’re trying to ensure that we get representation of all the different stakeholders.”

The summit itself will not be about presenting papers but about holding lively panels that provoke discussions. The website will feature background papers that participants – those in Dakar and those who cannot physically be there – can engage with and make input into.

“Our website will be live throughout the conference and will be used as a platform for soliciting inputs into the declaration and the other processes,” says Murisa. The main sessions will be live-streamed; there will be podcasts and feedback will be enabled and encouraged.

“One of the advocacy points is to make sure that African higher education gets to the top of the African Union’s agenda and that national governments also reprioritise. We’re hoping that what we do will trigger action beyond the two days.”

Le genre dans l’enseignement supérieur / Gender in Higher Education

Edited by / Sous la direction de Michael Bourdillon / ISBN: 978-2-86978-597-7



This book is about how work enters and affects the lives of children in Africa, taking for granted neither the traditional values surrounding children’s work, nor the international standards against it. Many African societies nurture their children on the ingrained notion that children must work as part of their process of growing up. Children participate in their families and communities through the work they do in the house and in whatever else their families do. Such views are, however, antithetical to the dominant views in Europe and North America which see childhood as a time of freedom from responsibility and economic activity. These views have become so popular with the elites in other countries to the extent that they now drive international campaigns against ‘child labour’, and have been incorporated into what are now considered universal international standards and conventions.

This book was conceived within the framework of the CODESRIA tradition of taking African perspectives seriously and not allowing social research in Africa to become subservient to values from outside. African scholars remain keenly aware of the need not to isolate themselves from developments in the wider world, which could lead to stagnation. This book, through empirical observation of the lives of African children, the work they do, its place in their lives, and what the children say about it, proposes new perspectives towards a new understanding of this complex stage of human development. Work is not simply about the right to income: work provides identity and status in society, and participation in the community. People relate to one another through work. Those who do not work are often without status and are at the periphery of society. One of the major ways in which this book differs from most of the available literature is in the understanding it brings to the problem of ‘child labour’. There are economic reasons why children may need an income of their own. There is the demographic fact that the proportion of children to adults in low-income countries is nearly double that in high-income societies. This book attempts to demonstrate that work is both necessary and beneficial in terms of a child’s development to become a full, responsible, and respectable member of society.