

Editorial

Creating African Futures and Creating CODESRIA Futures

The year 2014 is the year of CODESRIA's 14th General Assembly. The General Assembly is the most important governing organ of CODESRIA. The scientific conference of the General Assembly is also the most important scientific event of the general assembly year, given the importance of the theme of the conference, the extent of the mobilization of members of the community and of colleagues in our partner institutions to participate in it, the agenda setting role that this conference often plays. This year's General Assembly will be no different. The theme of the conference, *Creating African Futures in an Era of Global Transformation: Opportunities and Prospects*, will, it is hoped, incite the scholarly community to initiate research programmes and participate in the public and policy debates on the transformation of Africa, and our societies, cultures and governance systems in ways that work for all Africans.

Prospective studies, and multidisciplinary studies on how various sections of our societies perceive, think about, and prepare or relate with the future in other ways are in short supply in African universities and other research institutions. The debates at the scientific conference of the 14th General Assembly, we hope, will lead to more research being done on how we are, at various levels, trying to create futures for Africa and Africans in their diversity, but also in unity. The research community also needs to engage the African Union's *Agenda 2063*, as well as with debates on *The Africa we Want*.

In addition to the scientific conference of the General Assembly, CODESRIA will also be holding two other major conferences this year: a conference to celebrate the 40th anniversary of the Council; and a conference on 'International Justice, Peace and Reconciliation in Africa: The ICC and Beyond'.

The role that the International Criminal Court (ICC) has been playing in the international justice system, and its interventions have become major issues in Africa, to the extent that the African Union has had to make it a key agenda item of its summits. Much of the passionate discussions on the potential impact of the interventions of the ICC on African institutions and on peace and reconciliation processes in several African countries do not seem to be backed by social research. This conference (to be held in Dakar in July 2014) will be preceded by a series of studies on international justice and alternative institutions of justice in Africa. It will also look beyond the legal issues, and consider the political dimensions, as well as the relationship between justice and reconciliation.

The celebration of CODESRIA's 40th anniversary began with a press conference held in Dakar on 1st February 2013, 40 years after the first meeting of the executive committee of CODESRIA was held in Dakar. There have been several other events commemorating the anniversary in the course of the past year or so. *Building on 40 Years of Research and Knowledge Production for Africa* is the theme of the concluding conference that will be held in Dakar 10-11 June 2014. We invite members of our community to join us in celebrating 40 years of achievements, and in reflecting on how to interpret the CODESRIA mandate and develop appropriate mechanisms that will enable CODESRIA to fulfil the mandate in the changing regional and global context we are in today.

The conference will focus on a few major, cross-cutting issues and themes that have been and continue to be at the heart of the intellectual agenda of CODESRIA: the epistemological issues and how to bridge the knowledge divides within our own communities as well as at the global level; crises, transitions and revolutions – i.e. change in all its forms, the pace it has taken in different contexts and at different moments, over the years, the main actors and issues in the change processes, etc.; development and transformation; the future, and the new frontiers in research. We will also be re-examining CODESRIA itself: its structure and governance.

Therefore, it is also about creating CODESRIA futures. Indeed, following up on discussions held during the 13th General Assembly in Rabat (December 2011), the Executive Committee set up an Internal Review Committee to carry out a review of CODESRIA's structure, membership, and governance. The Committee, chaired by Thandika Mkandawire, former executive secretary of the Council, has begun its work and is engaged in broad consultations with members of the community and will present its draft report to participants in the 40th anniversary conference. The debate on CODESRIA will continue on other forums, and will also be taken up at the 14th General Assembly.

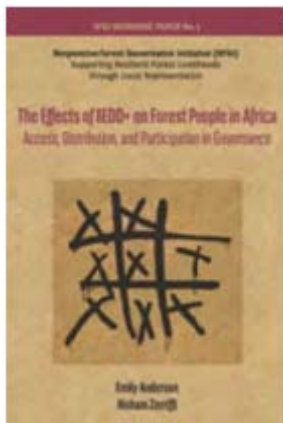
As in all other years, there will also be many other seminars, workshops, symposia and conferences on the various issues of themes that the Council is addressing through its programmes. This, we believe, speaks to the vitality of the Council and of the African research community.

Long live CODESRIA!

Ebrima Sall
Executive Secretary

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Head, Publications

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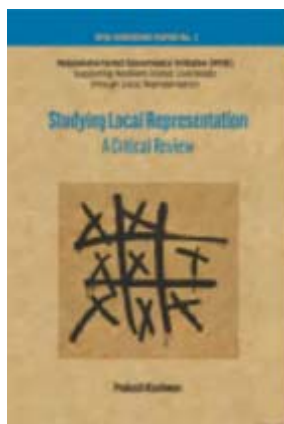
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The Responsive Forest Governance Initiative (RFGI) is a research and training program, focusing on environmental governance in Africa. It is jointly managed by the Council for the Development of Social Sciences Research in Africa (CODESRIA), the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and the University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign (UIUC). Natural resources, especially forests, are very important since they provide local governments and local people with needed revenue, wealth, and subsistence. Responsive local governments can provide forest resource-dependent populations the flexibility they need to manage, adapt to and remain resilient in their changing environment. RFGI aims to enhance and help institutionalize widespread responsive and accountable local governance processes that reduce vulnerability, enhance local wellbeing, and improve forest management with a special focus on developing safeguards and guidelines to ensure fair and equitable implementation of the Reduced Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD+) and climate-adaptation interventions.