

## Editorial

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**C**ODESRIA entered the year 2012 with a new Executive Committee, a new President and a new Vice President, all of whom were elected during the 13<sup>th</sup> General Assembly of the Council held in December 2011 in Rabat, Morocco. The new President is Professor Fatima Harrak of the Institute of African Studies, Mohammad V Souissi University in Rabat, and the Vice-President is Prof. Dzodzi Tshikata of the University of Ghana, Legon. The full list of members of the new Executive Committee follows this editorial.

As the 13<sup>th</sup> President of CODESRIA, Prof. Harrak took over from Prof. Sam Moyo of the Africa Institute of Agrarian Studies in Harare. CODESRIA, with the guidance of the Executive Committee, achieved quite a lot, including the launching of new research and policy dialogue initiatives, the publication of many good books and the launching of a new journal of social science research methodologies, the adoption of new internal regulations, the revamping of the CODESRIA website and, indeed, almost the entire CODESRIA communications system, making effective use of the new social media to the extent of being ranked in the 2011 Go To Global Think Tanks Report of the Think Tanks and Civil Societies Program of the University of Pennsylvania (USA) among the top 30 think tanks in the world "with the best use of the internet or social media to disseminate information and knowledge and engage the public". In the same report, CODESRIA also featured among "the top 30 international development think tanks in the world".

The new Executive Committee is already at work, managing an evaluation of CODESRIA, and a Strategic Planning process, while continuing to perform its normal oversight and leadership roles. Although the Council still has many challenges to overcome, the good news is that the results of the evaluation are positive.

The theme of the scientific conference of the 13<sup>th</sup> General Assembly was "Africa and the Challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century". The General Assembly brought together about 600 people, mostly scholars from the continent and its

Diaspora. Rabat also confirmed a trend that began earlier on; the General Assembly is becoming a great scientific attraction for scholars around the world. The debates on climate change, global knowledge divides, higher education leadership, the "Arab Spring" / "African Awakening", China-Africa relations, land grabbing, the future of multilateralism, the meaning of pan Africanism today, international migrations, and other major issues were extremely rich, as can be seen in the summary of the report of the General Assembly published in this issue of the Bulletin. The full report will also soon be published. Most of the 200 or so papers presented at the Assembly are already on the CODESRIA website, and revised versions will be published in special issues of CODESRIA journals and in the Book Series, as a way of extending the debates that started in Rabat to the wider scholarly community. In an attempt to enable the community to follow the debates in Rabat live through the internet, the plenary sessions were actually all streamed, and many people were able to follow the discussions. Video recordings of the keynote lectures and some of the roundtables are being re-formatted for uploading on the website.

In this issue of the *CODESRIA Bulletin*, we publish two of the papers that were presented during the General Assembly; addressing issues such as higher education, the knowledge systems and the question of how prepared Africa is to face the challenges of the second decade of this century, and the African Diaspora (Africa's Sixth Region).

This issue also carries the reports from the conferences of CODESRIA Journal Editors and the Deans of the Faculties of Social Sciences and Humanities of African universities, both of which were held in Rabat on the back of the General Assembly. The keynote address at the editors' conference, entitled "Equitable Higher Education, Inclusive Development and the Commercial Academic Publishing Industry", was delivered by Professor Adam Habib of the University of Johannesburg. He described the current journal industry, involving the

multinationals of the journal publishing industry, as a bizarre one 'in which the authors of journal articles are paid by the public purse, those that painstakingly review the quality of the product are also paid by the public purse, and then the product is sold by a private European or North American company back to public institutions at a huge profit...' The effect of this is that the not-so-well-endowed universities 'do not have access to a quality academic journal base which is an absolute necessity for quality higher education...' This is part of the strategic issues the African academy needs to address; otherwise, how are we going to develop a high quality education system that is capable of producing high profile scholars and professionals needed for the continents development and building a new generation of scholars to sustain our academic institutions? In his address (the text of which was published in issue 3&4, 2011 of CODESRIA Bulletin), Prof. Habib also explains how countries like Brazil and South Africa are trying to address this global challenge about which even some of the universities of the North that have huge endowments are beginning to express serious concern.

The Deans' Conference was organized around the theme "The Place of the African University in the Building of a Global Higher Education Space". The keynote address, delivered by Professor Mahmood Mamdani, decried the prevailing 'culture of consultancy' that was taking space

and resources at the expense of teaching and research, the primary responsibilities of universities. The missing link is the ability of African young researchers to theorise and define Africa's problems, a very possible task if these skills can be inculcated into the new and upcoming doctoral students. In addition to discussing this topic, the Deans also addressed three other issues: (i) "African Universities and Globalization"; (ii) "African Universities and the Implementation of the BMD Reform" and; (iii) "Rethinking Humanities and Social Sciences in a Global Higher Education Space".

Featuring also in this edition are announcements of new activities and scientific reports, including that of the 2011 Gender Symposium, held in Cairo 1<sup>st</sup> to 3<sup>rd</sup> November, 2011, written by Brahim El Morchid. The theme of the symposium was "Gender and Media in Africa". Among other issues, this forum emphasises the role of women as agents of change in the economic, political and social struggle and development of African states; and discourages social structures that militate against women empowerment and recognition. Some of the major issues discussed included how to discourage traditional stereotypes and reductionist representations of women in the media in favour of empowerment, positive projection and greater recognition of women, as well as diversification of gender roles.

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