

Reports on Sub-regional Conferences

Central Africa, 4–5 October 2003, Douala, Cameroon

The Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa (CODESRIA) organized a sub-regional conference in central Africa in Douala (Cameroon), on October 4 and 5, 2003. This event took place in the context of the celebration of CODERIA's thirtieth anniversary, as the Council was "established in 1973 out of the collective will of African social researchers to create a viable forum in Africa through which they could strive to transcend all barriers to knowledge production and, in so doing, play a critical role in the democratic development of the continent." Among the series of events scheduled for this commemoration, four additional sub-regional conferences are to be held in southern, western, eastern and northern Africa. These meetings will be followed by an international conference of wide amplitude, which will take place in December 2003, at the Council's headquarters in Dakar.

Starting from the premise that "the period since the 1960s in Central Africa has been marked by a continuous search for the most effective framework for the establishment of a representative system of government that is capable of serving the goals of nation-building, the needs of the citizenry, and the autonomous development of the state", CODESRIA's Executive Secretary, Prof Adebayo Olukoshi invited the researchers to reflect on the theme "Central Africa: Crises, Reform and Reconstruction."

Taking advantage of this opportunity, the African academic community replied en masse to the call for a fresh reading of the central African experience. For two days, this commemorative event opened a fertile arena of discussion for the sixty-some scholars in attendance, whom had travelled from the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Burundi, the Republic of Congo-Brazzaville, the Republic of Central Africa, Cameroon, Nigeria, and France.

The opening ceremony set the pace of the conference with the welcoming speeches delivered by Prof. Lucien Kombou, Dean of the University of Douala's FSEGA, Georges Kobou, André Mbata Mangu, both members of CODESRIA's Executive Committee, and CODESRIA's Executive Secretary, Adebayo Olukoshi.

Prof. Bruno Bekolo Ebe, Chancellor of the University of Douala, gave the opening allocution by welcoming CODESRIA's timely initiative to gather the academic communities of Cameroon and other central African countries to discuss a topic at the heart of the preoccupations of the region's intelligentsia.

Prof. Georges Nzongola-Ntalaja (Director of the PNUD Center for Governance in Oslo), the first keynote speaker, began a reflection on "African intellectuals and central Africa's political crisis."

Following the Chancellor's brief economic, political and social contextualization of the region, Prof. Nzongola presented a rather bleak diagnosis of the situation in Central Africa, one of the principal cradles of conflict on the continent. He attributes this

situation to "intellectuals' failure as a social force in the prevention of conflicts." The guest lecturer did not confine his intervention to documenting failures but also attempted to suggest a number of viable alternatives to the crisis. The solutions envisioned by Prof. Nzongola require a necessary reassessment of the intellectual's status, "by struggling against the factors of his instrumentalization (meagre wages, working conditions, etc.) and by promoting the development of universities, networks such as the CODESRIA, international partnerships, as well as the integration and use of new technologies placed at the service of research and communication".

The first plenary session, chaired by Georges Kobou (Vice-Dean of the Faculty of Economic Sciences and Applied Management at the University of Douala), opened the stage for a debate on the contexts and agents, both historical and contemporary, of the experience of prolonged sub-regional crises, which permitted a delineation of their origins and dimensions. Inscribing his presentation in the longue-durée, Prof. Goma-Thethet Joachim Emmanuel (History Department, Faculty of Letters and Human Sciences, University Marien Ngouabi of Brazzaville) reset the terms of the conference theme in broader historical perspective, and focused on the historiography of the quest for democracy in central Africa from 1960 to 2001.

Prof. Mbata B. Mangu André (Department of Constitutional, International and Indigenous Law, University of South Africa) revisits the political and constitutional realms of central African states, and the social responsibility of intellectuals in the sub-region. Musing over which path to walk towards a national reconstruction, Prof. Mbata observes that "the African renaissance which the sub-continent seems to deny for itself demands both politicians and intellectuals able to transcend authoritarian constitutional façades and straitjackets to cast the foundations of a genuine democracy and democratic constitutionalism in the central African states."

In the following paper, Dr. Forbin reminded us of the importance of processes of memory associated with traumatic events (conflicts, inter-ethnic massacres), as essential factors in the emergence of modern and democratic nations in the sub-region. He then traced the roots of these phenomena in the colonial and post-colonial periods and their consequences on Cameroon's development.

Kiyulu N'yanga – Nzo Joël (Director of Research at the Faculty of Letters and Human Sciences, UNIKIN), whose talk focused on the "challenges of the cultural dimension and peace reconstruction in central Africa" brought a cultural touch to the debates on the morning of October 4. He shed light on local populations' perceptions of peace through a sociolinguistic analysis of the terms used in the Democratic Republic of Congo to express peace and laid out the cultural strategies employed in conflict resolution.

Four parallel sessions followed the plenary session. The first one was chaired by Ndolamb Nokgwey, and staged five participants (Kibanda Matungila, Dzaka Théophile, Bougou Bazika

Jean Christophe, Ngodi Etanislas and Bello Oladiran), who presented communications on central Africa's geostrategic resources and their relation to the historic and contemporary actors claiming rights over these resources.

The delegates of the second parallel session (Ndjetcheu Louis, Avom Desiré, Mayeko Léon and Ntangsi Max Memfih), presided by Gérard Tchouassi, lent their attention to the actors, internal and external factors critical to the changing political-economy in the CEMAC zone.

The topic of struggles for democracy and the quest for a democratic renewal in the sub-region exerted much fascination on the conference participants. Placed in the third and fourth parallel sessions, respectively chaired by Eyeffa Ekomo Sylvie and Forje John W., eight presenters (Rutake Pascal, Guiyama-Massogo Clément Anicet, Ngoma-Binda, et Ameli Valentine, Fouda Ongodo Maurice, Mouiche Ibrahim, Lubanza Mukendi André and Muluh Henri) explored these axes of research.

The second day of talks began with a plenary session, chaired by Prof. Mbata Mangu. The main speech was presented by M. Alice Karakezi (Center of Conflict Management, National University of Rwanda), who put an emphasis on the participation of civil society, women and children in the conflicts. Her reflection on "Intellectuals and the Pan-African Ideal" was articulated on a reframing of the conference theme through the lens of gender and citizenship.

The following parallel sessions continued to deepen the debate of the dimensions of crises and their resolutions in central Africa, enriching the palette of presentations with discussions of country- or region-specific case-studies. Thus, under the chairmanship of Jean-Christophe Bazika, researchers of the fifth parallel session (Forje John W., Dirat Jean-Raymond, Awoumou Côme Damien Georges, Bachirou Hamadou, Ekambi Dibongue Guillaume, Same Kolle Samuel and Fru Tassang Celestina) presented experiences of post-conflict reconstruction and a regional framework for the resolution of crises of identity and citizenship in central Africa.

In the sixth parallel session, chaired by Ntegeye Gloria Renee, participants (Liyongo Empengele Jean, Mwaka Bwenge Arsène, Missie Jean-Pierre, Pidika Didier, Raquin Emilie, and Hamadou Adama) focused their presentations on popular strategies of social survival deployed by the poor to cope with long-term crises of the state and the economy.

The quest for the full realization of the rights of the citizen in central Africa and the constraints inherited from policies and

governance were discussed by participants to the seventh parallel session (Yene Awasom Susanne, Nkene Blaise-Jacques, Abé Claude, Lapika Dimomfu Bruno, Ayike Margaret, Ndolamb Ngokwey), presided by Mouiche Ibrahim.

Delegates of the eighth parallel session (Ndo Minlaa Salomon Richard, Ntuda Ebode Joseph Vincent, Tshibwabwa Kuditshini Jacques, Saïbou Issa, Tharcisse Yamuremye), chaired by Pascal Rutake, examined the sources, nature and dimension of crises of the state, and its construction in central Africa.

Presentations in the ninth parallel session (done by Nkama Arsene Honore Gideon, Ngamba Tchapda Hélène, Eyeffa Ekomo Sylvie, Mouko Félix, Tchouassi Gérard, Ngefan Mpandjo Sombe Catherine Suzanne, Mbanga George N.), under the supervision of E. S. D. Fomin, centered on the actors, internal and external factors in the changing political-economy of central Africa.

The final parallel session, chaired by Claude Abé, consisted of seven presenters (Nguimè Mbengué Martin, Taguem Fah Gilbert Lamblin, Ntegeye Gloria Renee, Tshishimbi Evariste, Vubo Emmanuel Yenshu, Obotela Rashidi Noël, Cibangu Franck Kamunga) who gave attention to the frontiers and contexts within which identities develop, merge, are crafted and refashioned in the sub-region.

The second day of debates ended with a third plenary session, which focused on issues of governance and was the object of passionate debate.

The closing speeches were given by the two members of CODESRIA's Executive Committee and by Adebayo Olukoshi. Thus, Profs. Mbata and Kobou thanked CODESRIA for providing central Africa's academic community with the opportunity to diagnose regional problems and initiate productive critical reflection on its reconstruction.

CODESRIA's Executive Secretary's conclusions stressed the symbolic character of this meeting, which will experience its apotheosis in December in Dakar, as several generations of researchers, from diverse horizons, join their minds to reflect on the theme "Intellectuals, Nationalism and Pan-African Ideal."

Ndèye Sokhna Guèye Conference Secretary

Southern Africa, 18–19 October 2003, Gaborone, Botswana

The Southern Africa Sub-Regional conference on: National Liberation to Democratique Renaissance was held in Gaborone Botswana from 18 to 19 October 2003 at the Grand Palm Hotel. Forty height 48 papers were selected and they were presented by researchers from: Botswana, Mozambique, South Africa, Angola, Nigeria, Zimbabwe, Lesotho, Swaziland, Namibia, USA, Malawi.

The different themes during those two days were:

- Revisiting the national liberation struggles in southern Africa
- Construction of democratic / Participatory rule in post-liberation southern Africa
- Race, identity and democracy in southern Africa

- Coming to grips with post-liberation xenophobia
- Cooperation / Integration question
- Issues in the Contemporary Political economy of southern Africa
- The political economy of land and labour in southern Africa
- Politics, governance and justice in southern Africa

The discussion was strengthened with the participation of many young new researchers and senior researchers. Professor Archie Mafeje one of CODESRIA's founders gave the conference an authentic aspect. There was equally a strong participation of Lusophone researchers from Mozambique and Angola, and the University of Botswana community. The ceremony was opened by Lidia Brito the Minister of Education in Mozambique who made a very interesting speech on racism.

East Africa, 30–31 October 2003, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

On the 30 and 31st October, 2003, the East Africa Sub-regional Conference was held in Global Hotel, in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia on the theme: East Africa: In Search of National and Regional Renewal.

Researchers from the East Africa Sub-region, coming from Comoros, Kenya, Ethiopia, Sudan, Tanzania Uganda and South Africa were invited to explore different dimensions of the challenges of renewal confronting the countries in East Africa.

Opening the Session, Professor Abdallah Bujra, the one of the founding CODESRIA Executive Secretary welcomed the participants. After that, we had the welcoming speeches delivered by Professor Bahru Zewde Chairman of the Board at the Forum for Social Studies, Ms Zenebeworke Tadesse, the current President of the Executive Committee. The opening allocution was given by Professor Adebayo Olukoshi, the CODESRIA Executive Secretary, who welcomed the participants and invited their active participation during the two days of the Conference.

Professor Issa Shivji, Professor of Law at the University of Dar es Salaam and member of CODESRIA Executive Committee was the first keynote speaker. His presentation on “The Rise, the Fall and the Insurrection of Nationalism in Africa” explored the ‘National Question’ and its erstwhile expression, nationalism.

The first plenary session, chaired by Professor Eric Aseka opened the stage for a debate on the Construction of Democracy in East Africa, after the presentation of Mr. Godwin Murunga whose presentation was on the Democratization in Kenya, followed by Mr. Sabiti Makara and Kulumba Mohammed who talked about the democracy in Uganda.

The afternoon began with two parallel sessions. The first on East Africa in Search of Nation Hood was chaired by Mr. Babere Kerata Chacha and staged four participants, Mr. Mohammed Bakari, Mr. Hussein Mahmoud, Mr. Maurice Amutabi, and Mrs Felicia Arudo Yieke.

The second parallel session chaired by Dr. Murindwa Rutanga, the dean of the faculty of social sciences at Makerere University staged five participants: Mr. Edward Waswa Kisang’Ani, Mr. Kasaija Philip Apuuli, Peter Wafula Wekesa, K. Inyani Simala who presented communications on East Africa and the Quest for Regional cooperation / Integration.

After these two parallel sessions, the interesting subject on East Africa in global geo-politics gather all the participants in the second plenary session, were we had three presentations.

The one of Mr. Aaron Mukwaya, Alfred Anangwe and Mr Babere Kerata Chacha. This session was chaired by Mrs Felicia Arudo Yieke.

On the 31st October the third plenary session chair by Ms ZenebeworkeTadesse. The keynote address was delivered by professor Seithi Loth Chachage, Associate Dean at the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, University of Dar es Salaam in Tanzania, who focused his presentation on the New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD), as an intellectual “product”

of African intellectuals, and its claims of the renewal and regeneration of Africa within attempts to unite Africa.

In the fourth plenary session, chaired by professor Issa Shivji, the three presentations made by Dr. Hamed Hawi Omer, Professor Ismael Ibourou, Mshaï Mwangola were focused on the actors and factors in the renewal of the state in East Africa.

Four parallel sessions followed this plenary session. The first one was chaired by Mr. Godwin Murunga and staged four participants: Mr. Emmanuel Okoth Manyasa, Ms Roselyne Ajika, Ms Constance Ambasa, Mr. Adam Azzain Mohamed, who presented communications on the Ethnic Question in East Africa.

The parallel session on Economic Development in East Africa was chaired by Professor F.E.M.K. Senkoro, from the University of Dar es Salaam. In this session, there were four presentations from Professor Stephen Miti Kapunda, Isaac Tarus, William Muhamuza, and Dr. Elijah Mushemeza.

Delegates of the fifth parallel session were Okello Richard Nixon, Peter Simatei, Caroline Van Niekerk and Professor Senkoro talked about the Popular Culture in East Africa. The session was chaired by Ms Mshai Mwangola.

The debates of the sixth parallel session presided by Dr. Hamed Hawi Omer staged three participants, Professor Eric Aseka, Mr. Katusiimeh Mesharch Walto and Dr. Murindwa Rutanga.

The discussions ended with a debate on the fifth plenary session focused on Governance in CODESRIA.

The closing speeches were given by Professor Adebayo Olukoshi and Ms Zenebeworke Tadesse who thanked the participants for their active participation.

Francine Adade

Conference Secretary

North Africa, 27–28 September 2003, Cairo, Egypt

The second in the series of sub-regional conferences organized to commemorate the 30th Anniversary of CODESRIA, the North Africa conference took place in Cairo, Egypt on 27-28 September 2003. The conference theme was *North Africa and the Pan-African Movement: Retrospect and Prospect* and the event was attended by some 66 participants. 38 papers were presented. A number of ambassadors representing African countries in Egypt also attended the meeting and discussions centered around issues like the historical context and issues, the Africa policy of North African countries, cross-cultural exchanges and influences, economic and commercial issues, political and identity issues, etc.