

CODESRIA STRATEGIC PLAN, 2002 - 2006

The CODESRIA Journey in a Historical Perspective

The African intellectual environment of the 1960s and 1970s was characterised by the existence of a relatively small number of universities and centres of advanced social science research. Most of these universities, set up on the eve of independence or soon after, were established as part of the strategies for national development adopted by the nationalist politicians who inherited state power after the departure of the colonialists. However, a significant core group of the universities played an important regional role, serving as melting pots that attracted students and scholars from across the sub-regions in which they were located. Among the universities in this category were Makerere, Dar-es-Salaam, Fourah Bay, Ibadan, and Ahmadu Bello located in Zaria, northern Nigeria. Equally interesting to note is the ability of many of these universities to attract staff internationally, including from outside Africa. In this sense, several African universities could, in the period leading up to the 1970s, be considered as veritable international centres of learning. Remarkably, this internationalism was not at the expense of the development of a local academic community; indeed, in the most successful cases, it was built on the vibrancy and input of the local academy.

Yet, for all the strengths and achievements of that small group of universities that played important regional roles, their example was not widely replicated across the continent. If anything, as the 1970s wore on, all of them, almost without exception, became increasingly inward-looking, a trend not helped by the onset of economic crises and, in some cases, prolonged experiences of political instability that were accompanied by varying degrees of violence. Moreover, the relationship between the academy and the political authorities was not always a happy one, especially in the context of the gradual erosion of all semblance of a consensus around the goals of nation-building and development that fired the national independence movement. These developments meant that the university increasingly suffered resource shortages and neglect. Thus it was, for example, that Makerere, a leading centre of regional and international learning located in Uganda gradually became reduced first to a narrowly-focused Ugandan university and then, in the face of political crises, a shell of its former self, under siege and bereft of all forms of serious scholarship. Side by side with this trend was an acceleration of the process of the establishment of new universities designed primarily as national institutions in the service of domestic needs - both political and economic - as defined by incumbent governments.

The CODESRIA Mission

One consequence of the “de-regionalisation” and “de-internationalisation” of universities across Africa was the further narrowing of the already limited opportunities for cross-national and pan-African networking which existed on the continent. It was against this background that the idea of the establishment of the Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa (CODESRIA) was borne. Drawn mainly from across the social science faculties and research centres of African universities, the founding members of CODESRIA were driven by a determination to combat the dispersal and fragmentation of knowledge production on the continent through the creation of a forum where networking on a continental scale would be encouraged as a central element of its work. Equally important in the thinking of the founding members of the Council was a desire to breakdown disciplinary and linguistic-geographical barriers to scholarship in the African research community. Emphasis was placed on the need for knowledge produced on the continent to be holistic. Over the years, an effort has also been made to include the goal of overcoming gender and generational barriers to networking among African scholars.

The early programmes undertaken by the Council took the form of support for advanced research and the sponsorship of grand debates/reflections designed to define a set of priority research concerns on which social scientists on the continent might wish to focus. As the impact of the Council began to be felt and its foundations became more firmly rooted, the networking component of its mandate was further strengthened through the introduction of national and multinational research working groups that were, almost invariably, multidisciplinary in terms of the composition of their membership and the definition of their objectives. The multinational working groups were also consciously designed to transcend linguistic and gender barriers. In all cases, as the Council's funding base developed,

emphasis was placed on the need to insulate the African social science research community which it was set up to serve from donor and non-donor pressure with regard to research content and methodology. For this reason, the Council also came to assume an important role as a guarantor of the academic freedom of African social scientists.

In the period from around the mid-1980s onwards, with CODESRIA firmly established as the premier and pioneer African social science research organisation, its activities underwent a further expansion with the introduction of grants and fellowships for advanced research and, subsequently, smaller grants for thesis-writing by postgraduate students in different African universities. Institutes, running for between four to six weeks, were also established first on Democratic Governance and then on Gender, to cater for the needs of middle-level/mid-career academics in the areas of the refinement of concepts, conceptual frameworks, methodology, and the state of the literature. A summer school on methodology was similarly set up for post-graduate students. Furthermore, the publications programme of the Council was significantly expanded to cater for the increasing needs of the community and strengthen the African voice in the market place of ideas and knowledge dissemination.

From the outset, the Council was founded on a principle of active membership which, in the early years, consisted solely of institutional members – social science faculties and organisations – but which, in subsequent years, was extended to include individual members. The Council easily boasts one of the most open structures and processes of participation for potential and actual members among similar international organisations. Members of the Council constitute the General Assembly which is the highest organ of the institution and which sets the broad outlines of the intellectual direction which the institution should follow. Precisely because it is open to all students of social research in Africa, the Council has been able to establish itself as perhaps the leading player in the mobilisation of the community of scholars. But as the demands of servicing the membership have grown, the institution has also, in recent times, come under considerable pressure partly with regard to the delivery of timely and qualitative services. This is a development which has become a source of frustration and which all are agreed must be brought under control as quickly as possible.

CODESRIA has been able to support the various activities which it has undertaken since 1973 with the generous support of a variety of donors from around the world. For many years, a significant proportion of the funding received came by way of core resources in support of the priority activities defined by the Council itself. More recently, however, especially since the onset of the 1990s, earmarked funding has grown considerably in the Council's overall programme budget. Relative to the funds available, the Council has displayed a good absorptive capacity; in fact, in some cases, CODESRIA's ambitions have surpassed the resources available to it for the implementation of all of its activities. However, one area of concern which has been raised as much by the members of the Council as its donors, is the question of operational and administrative costs which have shown an upward trend, exceeding an average 30 per cent of all funds received over the period 1998 – 2000. This trend represents a major challenge that needs to be faced in order to ensure that a greater proportion of resources mobilised goes into the scientific mandate of the Council.

CODESRIA's Contributions in the First 25 Years of its Existence

Much of the interventions of the Council in the African intellectual milieu during the period from the 1970s to the 1990s was driven and shaped by a desire to contribute to the strengthening of the African higher education system, especially the universities and centres of advanced research. Indeed, this goal of strengthening the institutional basis of knowledge production on the continent is one of the central and unique features of the Council's founding Charter and it is a mission which sets the organisation apart from all the other networks which have been established since its formation. It is in this context that the Council's *modus operandi* for the determination of its research priorities should be noted, namely, a reliance on the General Assembly, its highest organ, to delineate the grand lines of a possible research agenda which the Secretariat then formulates into proposals that the Executive Committee elected by the Assembly and the Scientific Panel nominated by the Committee consider for adoption. This bottom-up approach to the scientific work of the Council has been one of its enduring strengths and contributions as it ensures an institutional culture of openness to different perspectives and elicits a degree of membership commitment which only participation in the various scientific networks or the General Assembly can fully bring out to the observer.

In adopting a “bottom-up” approach to its work, the Council has, in addition, played a role, which cannot be quantified, in the development and sustenance of an independent African intellectual space, one which, moreover, is underpinned by a vigorous defence not only of the highest standards of scholarship - as evidenced, for example, by the peer review system which the Council adopted from the very outset – but also the insistence on the freedom of thought. Furthermore, CODESRIA became a platform through which the African intellectual perspective on the experiences and concerns of the peoples of the continent, both historically and contemporaneously, could be projected without let or hindrance. For many of those who saw in the Council a vehicle for arguing an African perspective, there was also a commitment which they carried to the institution of a transformatory project in Africa. Little wonder then, that CODESRIA became a platform for extended debates and reflections the kind of which did not exist on a continental scale and which continued to function even when national universities with a sub-regionalist orientation such as Dar-es-Salaam, Makerere and Fourah Bay were in recession.

A key test of the CODESRIA's relevance is its ability to identify the needs of the African academy and then formulate these into programmes which the academy is mobilised to help animate. In this connection, some of the other contributions that have been made by the Council over the last 25 years include:

- i) Its support for the development and survival of a networking culture among African social scientists, this networking occurring **in** Africa and on an intellectual agenda defined **by** Africans to address issues that are thought to be relevant to the continent and the rest of the world;
- ii) Its central role in assisting to redress the crises of the African academy during the 1980s and 1990s by ensuring that a critical mass of senior, post-doctoral level scholars or those with equivalent experience on the continent retained a culture of active research – including field visits and time-off for concentrated reflection, participation in local and international scientific conferences, publication in scientific journals, etc.;
- iii) The alleviation of the African book famine of the 1980s through its robust publishing programme under which CODESRIA Books were distributed free of charge to university and research institute libraries across the continent. This publications programme which, in many instances meant that CODESRIA Books accounted for the bulk of the new accessions in many libraries was supplemented by the services rendered to individual researchers by the Council's documentation centre, CODICE, whose bibliographic data base was consciously enhanced to ensure that African scholars could keep abreast of trends in the world of ideas. CODICE's services to the national and multinational working groups of the Council, as well as the various institutes, included the compilation of a bibliographic reference for each of the researchers involved;
- iv) The alleviation of some of the problems of capacity in the universities associated with the twin and inter-related problems of politico-economic crises and the brain drain through a summer school on methodology, the institutes on gender and governance, the textbook-writing project, the defunct reflections programme, etc.;
- v) The establishment of a programme, including some limited funding, for distressed academics faced with persecution by incumbent political authorities or university administrators for matters which border on the independence and/or integrity of scholarship or simply for holding differing views. This programme was to play a key supportive role for scholars at a time of intense contestation of the African political space during the 1990s;
- vi) The gradual integration into CODESRIA's work of members of communities which, otherwise, tend to be marginal to or are marginalized from the African intellectual universe. Success in this area was particularly strong with regard to the raising of consciousness about gender and generational issues, even if the point ought still to be underscored that there is considerably more room for greater progress to be made. The point cannot, however, be denied that in addition to increasing the role of women and the profile of gender in its work, the Council is probably the only continental platform where the four generations of African social scientists that exist meet regularly;

- vii) The establishment by the Council not only of a bridge across linguistic/geographical barriers on the continent but also between African researchers and scholars from other regions of the world, including Asia, Latin America, the Caribbean, Europe and North America. Codesria's role as an African window to the world is one which is widely recognised;
- viii) The facilitation of a dialogue between the social sciences and the humanities as part of the effort to ensure that social knowledge production in Africa is holistic; and
- ix) The encouragement, through its catalytic example, of the establishment of other regional and sub-regional networks many of which draw their inspiration from its work and/or are modelled after it.

Changes in the African Intellectual Environment during the 1980s and 1990s

Implicit in the argument that CODESRIA's programmes during the period from the 1970s to the 1990s were regularly tailored to meet the shifting requirements of the academy is an assumption that the academy itself was, for better or for worse, undergoing a process of multi-faceted change. A closer assessment of the African intellectual environment and the changes which it has undergone since CODESRIA's founding in 1973 is, therefore, called for so that a useful insight can be gained into the kinds of challenges which the Council might be confronted with in the years ahead. The starting point in this regard is to note that compared to the early 1970s when CODESRIA was founded, Africa now has many more universities which are also generally much bigger in size, especially with regards to student enrolment. As observed earlier, the vast majority of these universities are geared towards serving national/domestic needs, a departure from the situation which existed in the 1960s and 1970s when several of the universities, though relatively few in number, served as important regional centres for training and knowledge production.

Side by side with the expansion in the number and size of universities is the dramatic increase which occurred in the period from the 1990s in the number of independent, non-governmental research organisations. Mostly formed in response to the prolonged and continuing crises of funding, curriculum development, motivation and autonomy experienced by many universities in the period since the early 1980s, the vast majority of these independent research groupings are domestic/national in orientation and focus; only a handful have been able to develop a sub-regional role for themselves, often following the CODESRIA "model" from which they invariably draw their inspiration. More recently, a trend has emerged whereby autonomous research centres affiliated directly to and even physically located in universities have been registered. Irrespective of the fact that many of the different categories of independent research organisations, especially those at the national level, are confronted with a host of difficulties – some structural, others having to do with credibility - their formation speaks to the increased thirst in most countries for genuinely autonomous spaces for intellectual work. The persistence of the factors that have undermined university-based knowledge production and dissemination is likely to ensure that this trend will continue for some time to come.

Furthermore, although the typical African university still remains a publicly-financed institution, the phenomenon of the private university, whether owned by religious or secular organisations, has emerged and is spreading rapidly across the continent. This development, itself also partly a response to the crises of the public higher education system, poses the question of popular access to advanced training and the future of higher education in the service of a public purpose. Equally interesting is the introduction into the public and private university system of a strong, often narrow market/commercial logic not only in the provision of some services but, more disturbingly, in the design of curriculum and modes of instruction. In one case, there has been the outright privatisation of the university. Knowledge production *qua* knowledge production is increasingly being discarded in favour of a notion of the university as a training centre narrowly tied to the needs of the "market"; in such a context, the ideal of the university as a site for concentrated reflection finds little or no resonance amongst some of the administrators of the higher education system who increasingly see themselves as running business enterprises. These developments are occurring at a time when a culture of consultancies has overtaken the culture of research and participation in local, regional, and international scientific activities.

In addition, the end of formal, officially institutionalised apartheid in South Africa and the gradual re-entry of that country into global and African scientific networks represents a significant development which CODESRIA cannot ignore. Although under pressure in the face of competing needs for post-apartheid reconstruction, the resources available to the best known South African universities are generally better than those in most African countries. At the same time, however, the historically black South African universities, and the universities set up in the Bantustans as part of apartheid strategy are not only poorly endowed but remain marginalized. Both categories of universities have attracted faculty and students from across the rest of Africa, a development which requires to be further assessed for its problems and potentialities. In addition to all the other questions that might arise – including the way in which an organisation like CODESRIA might creatively interact with the South African academic environment, it will be useful to keep in mind, the issue of whether the prospect exists at all for South African universities to play the kind of regional role which Dar-es-Salaam, Makerere, and Fourah Bay, for example, once played, the conditions under which this might happen, and what role CODESRIA might take in this.

The end of the 1980s also marked the onset of acceleration in the generational shift in the management and leadership of most African universities. Across the continent, ageing members of the first generation of social scientists took their exit from an active academic life in the university, giving way to the second and third generation of scholars. But the conditions under which the second and third generation scholars are emerging are radically different from those under which the first generation was formed. For instance, the first generation, mostly trained in Europe and North America, came into their own in the context of the post-1945 nationalism and developmentalism that ushered Africa into independence and moulded a vision of the university over which they presided. The second and third generations, especially the latter, are children of the economic, political, and ideological crises that marked the end of the post-colonial model of development. Both the second and third generations of scholars were exposed to the full weight of the African economic crises and twenty years of unrelenting orthodox structural adjustment. It is they who have borne the full brunt of the crises of African higher education that is the object of much donor interest at the present time.

Similar to the generational shift which has occurred is a shift in the gender composition of the community of scholars. Compared to the 1970s, there are today many more women students and scholars in the African higher education system. True, the goal of achieving genuine gender equality and balance in the academy, as in other spheres, is one which still needs to be achieved; the progress that has been made in this direction is, however, significant enough as to make it impossible to ignore taking the gender issue fully into account. Including a greater number of women in research activities and bringing gender perspectives to bear on the analyses of the social realities of contemporary Africa have become tasks which no self-respecting, modern institution in Africa – or indeed elsewhere can ignore if it is to be both relevant to and representative of the diverse constituencies that make up the African social science community.

The macro-political context of knowledge production in Africa has also been undergoing changes which cannot be ignored. These changes have been most dramatically illustrated by the collapse of single party and military rule across the continent and the embrace by most countries of electoral pluralism. However, the transition to “democracy” has not necessarily led to an abatement of conflicts in Africa; if anything, violent conflicts have intensified with mostly adverse implications for the work of the research community. Also, “democracy” has been embraced in the context of a continuing economic crisis that has taken a huge toll on the higher education system in Africa.

Amidst the far-reaching changes taking place within Africa in the environment of knowledge production, a number of other developments need to be highlighted not just for their importance in themselves but also because they represent challenges which CODESRIA needs to take into account. Perhaps most important in this connection are the pressures of globalisation and the information revolution, developments which are beginning to creep, unevenly, into the work of the African academy and which raise questions about the mode of generation and delivery of knowledge as experiments in cyber research and education gather pace. Other changes along similar lines are

indicated by the birth and rapidly spreading popularity of electronic journals and libraries. A clear CODESRIA appreciation of these changes is important not just because of its pioneering role in Africa in the application of the computer to the processing of knowledge but also because it has successfully played a role as a platform for the kinds of experimentation in knowledge production and dissemination which the universities are unable to do for a variety of reasons.

Also, there have been important changes in the environment of knowledge production and dissemination about Africa outside the continent. These changes have various dimensions to them but in summary, they could be said to include the massive growth during the 1980s and 1990s of the African academic diaspora as participants in the brain drain, whether voluntary or enforced, took up positions in universities teaching and/or researching Africa. At the same time, African Studies, as such, has been hit by a funding crisis whose origins are in dispute but which has nevertheless taken a toll on the production of knowledge about the continent. Furthermore, there has been a generalised shift in perspectives about Africa which, for want of a better shorthand way of describing it, could be said to revolve around different genres of "Afro-pessimism".

Clearly, between 1973 when CODESRIA was established and today, there has been a dramatic and continuing transformation in the terrain and context of knowledge production in and about the African continent. Yet, the increase in the number of universities, public and private, and in the number of independent research organisations has not necessarily translated into an increase in the quality of the knowledge produced and the scholarly exchanges that are undertaken. The deep-seated funding problems experienced by the public universities, coupled with the continuing deterioration in the environment of learning, teaching and research, have weakened and sapped capacities in a manner and direction which threaten the overall foundations of continued knowledge production in Africa. The independent national research organisations are often too unevenly spread, under-resourced and self-centred to make a significant difference; the private universities are often too mired in a commercial and/or narrow evangelistic logic to serve as credible alternative to the teeming numbers of young Africans searching for opportunities for quality higher education, or, indeed, an autonomous public space for the free interchange of ideas. With the brain drain from Africa persisting and the teaching and/or researching of Africa within and outside the continent in differing degrees of difficulty, it would seem that the future of the African and even Africanist academy is inextricably tied to the (restoration) of the health and fortunes of the public higher education system, a concern which has been central to the CODESRIA agenda since its founding and which now, more than ever before, is in need of renewal and extension to face the emerging, new challenges.

Opportunities and Challenges posed for CODESRIA by the Changing Context of Knowledge Production in Africa

Against the backdrop of the changes which have occurred in the environment of knowledge production in and about Africa, several opportunities and challenges are posed before CODESRIA which, if properly addressed, should assist the Council to remain not just an institution that is relevant to the needs and aspirations of the African academy but also one which is sufficiently innovative in the renewal and updating of its mandate. This calls for a clear recognition by the Council of the opportunities which are available to it in the changed context within which it must function and the challenges to which it must respond if it is not just to survive but also to grow from strength to strength. Both the opportunities which are available to the Council and the challenges which are posed call for broad-ranging reforms, including programme innovations, over the next few years, issues to which attention will be turned shortly.

Opportunities and Strengths

- i) Amidst the changes which have characterised the landscape of knowledge production in and about Africa, CODESRIA enjoys the distinct advantage of still being the only genuinely Pan-African institution, one which also remains dedicated to the goal of

- consciously transcending all barriers to research and combating the fragmentation of knowledge production;
- ii) Linked to the foregoing is the fact that the Council also enjoys the historic advantages of being a pioneer that is known and tested not only among the community of scholars but also among funding agencies. This advantage is one which is critical in a period of uncertainty and flux such as Africa is currently traversing;
 - iii) The Council also enjoys the distinct advantage of being able to draw on a wide pool of goodwill from its members, many of whom are often prepared to go beyond the call of duty to defend the integrity of the institution, but also of donors who have often shown an uncommon degree of understanding for the founding aspirations that led to the establishment of the Council;
 - iv) At a time when on account of funding difficulties, a commercial logic, or an evangelical zeal, many universities have become terrains which are constrained in one form or another, CODESRIA continues to enjoy the advantage of being an institution which can afford to be at the cutting-edge of innovative responses to the crises of higher education and advanced research in Africa;
 - v) The Council also has an opportunity to reinforce its role as an “incubator” for the reproduction of the African academic community but also a credible site for experimentation;
 - vi) The Council retains its head start in serving as a bridge not only across the barriers that militate against networking in Africa but also between Africa and the rest of the world, a role which it has played creditably since its founding and in which it has accumulated a great deal of experience;
 - vii) The Council also has the distinct advantage of having in its networks, a diverse collection of scholars drawn from the different disciplines and also reflecting the four generations of African social scientists;
 - viii) The Council is the only research organisation with a continental reach with an active presence in 38 countries spanning Anglophone, Francophone, Lusophone and Maghreb Africa; and
 - ix) Finally, the Council is also in an advantageous position of projecting the African voice through a consistent policy on the publication and dissemination of the output of African Scholars.

Challenges and Threats

- i) Although a pioneer, the fact that many national-level and sub-regional institutions have been established since the end of the 1980s suggests that the Council cannot take its continued existence as a serious player in the African intellectual milieu for granted. Out of this consideration emerge a number of things, including the necessity for the Council constantly to carve a niche for itself whilst simultaneously seeking to build links with the other independent research organisation in order to minimise a duplication of efforts. Also, the need has never been greater for the Council to review the quality and speed of its programme delivery in order to meet the aspirations and expectations of the community of scholars. The innovation which is called for in this area needs to go hand-in-hand with a wholesale programme review designed to respond to the changes in the landscape of learning and research across the continent, this being done in a manner that is consistent with the broad Charter objectives of the Council;
- ii) The necessity for the Council to make a push at increasing the presence in its work of communities which still remain marginalized, whether these communities be defined by geography, language, gender, generation, discipline, or methodology. In this connection, special initiatives need to be considered and put in place over the medium term to reach these communities and in so doing enhance the credentials of the Council as an institution that is representative of the diversities of the community of scholars it serves;
- iii) The inevitability of internal governance reform at the Executive Secretariat not only to re-build the foundations of the Council as an institution in the service of a community of scholars but one which, in addition, is set to meet the challenges of the next phases

- of expansion and institutionalisation as a modern, forward-looking and coherent organisation which is professionally managed;
- iv) The need to ensure that as the Council grows, the Executive Secretariat and the operational costs which it manages do not eat disproportionately into the resources allocated to the fulfilment of its scientific mandate. This calls for innovations in the mode of programme delivery that would allow for an expansion at that level without falling into the danger of producing an over-bloated staffing situation in the Secretariat; it also has implications for investments in equipment and staff training designed to raise productivity and enhance professionalism at all levels;
 - v) The need to ensure that the intellectual aspirations of those at the helm of the Secretariat do not overshadow or get conflated with the popularly-defined mission of the Council whilst simultaneously seeing to it that improvements are brought into the quality of scientific life in the Secretariat. One related objective that would need constantly to be kept in mind is the question of ensuring that the Council remains a platform that is open to all of the shades of opinion that are represented in the African academy;
 - vi) Striving to raise the quality of the scientific output of the Council and the various networks which it supports as CODESRIA moves on to the next stage of its institutional development. Quality assurance will also entail innovations in the way in which the Secretariat works with the various research networks which it supports as well as the ways in which the networks organise themselves;
 - vii) Addressing the question of how to reach out more effectively to the African policy community without having to tailor its programmes and activities to narrow or narrowly-defined policy needs;
 - viii) Positioning the Council to take an early part in the deployment of new information and electronic technology in the performance of its tasks;
 - ix) The need to ensure that the Council is able to raise the level of core funding which is available to it and in so doing, reversing the increasing share in its activity budget taken by the special programmes and collaborative projects; and
 - x) The necessity for the Council to prepare itself for the possibility of a dramatic shift in donor attitudes and interests in a direction which might either undermine the established principles on which the organisation functions or even challenge the very *raison d'être* of the institution.

CODESRIA's Programmatic Vision and Objectives for the Period 2002 - 2006

Viewed against the background of the pressing need to develop activities that feed into and strengthen the African higher education system, CODESRIA's programme for the 2002 – 2006 period has been designed with a view to promoting:

- i) Programme Innovation, Diversification and Relevance;
- ii) The Number and Diversity of Scholars Participating in Council Activities;
- iii) Opportunities for the Greater Integration of Marginalized Communities;
- iv) Accountability at all levels to the Membership and Partners;
- v) Community Input into the Work of the Secretariat;
- vi) The Quality, Quantity and Diversity of Output;
- vii) Stability in Medium to Long-Term Funding, an Increase in the Proportion of Core Funds Available, and a Diversification of the Funding Base;
- viii) Professionalism of the Personnel;

In view of the foregoing, the following are the core strategic visions and objectives which the Council will attempt to develop and follow over the next five years beginning January 2002:

- i) Position the Council as a modern, responsive and accountable institution in the forefront of the challenge of mobilising the African social science community to face

the task of understanding, assessing, and redressing the problems of livelihood in Africa at a time when inherited concepts that inform analysis are increasingly inadequate for capturing the multi-dimensional nature of the dynamics of economy, politics, culture and society in contemporary Africa;

- ii) Offer the opportunity and autonomous space for a critical mass of African scholars to continue freely to undertake research, training, and publishing unencumbered by immediate problems posed for their work by the continuing difficulties confronting the universities, the daily challenges of livelihood associated with the prolonged crisis of economic decline and adjustment in most African countries, and the enduring structure of power in the global system of knowledge production and dissemination;
- iii) In pursuit of (ii) above, strive to raise the level of core funding accruing to the Council from the various agencies and organisations that offer it grants to implement its mandate;
- iv) Constitute the platform for innovative, creative experimentation in knowledge production and dissemination in Africa in ways which universities and their research centres are either not able to do or lack the flexibility to do in order to achieve the maximum results;
- v) Contribute to efforts aimed at retaining and renewing talent and capacity within the African higher education and advanced research system through programmes targeted at different categories of researchers and which add up to produce the minimal incentives necessary for keeping the members of the academy both motivated and engaged;
- vi) Sustain the central role which the Council has come to assume as a platform for pan-African scientific networking and, in so doing, enabling researchers from different parts of the continent to forge enduring working relations;
- vii) Extend the Council's role in the production of inter-disciplinary and multi-disciplinary knowledge through the initiation of activities that promote a dialogue among the social science disciplines and between the social sciences on the one hand and the humanities, the health/medicinal sciences, and the agricultural sciences on the other;
- viii) Create opportunities for deepening the dialogue between different generations and sexes of African social scientists, this task being achieved through the mainstreaming of gender and inter-generational networking in the core and special programmes of the Council;
- ix) Strengthen the links between African researchers and researchers from other parts of the world through the initiation and systematic extension of joint scientific activities that promote structured South – South and North – South academic encounters;
- x) Make a conscious effort to increase the comparative component of CODESRIA-supported research activities as part of the attempt to strengthen the input by African social scientists into the growing body of comparative literature on the continent;
- xi) Reinforce the role of the Council in the training of junior and mid-career scholars through the renewal and expansion of the annual institutes, the small grants programme, and the summer methodological sessions which have been an integral part of its core activities;
- xii) Renew the Council's commitment to its Charter mandate of strengthening the institutional basis of social science research in Africa by commencing a programme from 2002 of systematically rotating its annual institutes among different African universities in the different regions of Africa, this being a strategy not only for de-concentrating CODESRIA activities away from Dakar and, in so doing, strengthening the CODESRIA presence across Africa but, even more importantly, extending institutional linkages between the Council, the universities, the growing number of independent national research organisations, and the sub-regional research organisations;
- xiii) Further the role of CODESRIA in the institutional development of the social sciences by also fanning out the editorial production and, possibly, the publication of some of its

journals to university faculties and centres of advanced research in the different regions of the continent, this being done on the basis of a three-yearly contractual agreement between the Council and the institution selected. The successful experiment with the *African Sociological Review* could serve as one possible model in this regard;

- xiv) Take a leading role in the development and strengthening of institutional cooperation and coordination between CODESRIA and other regional and sub-regional research organisations such as AAPS, OSSREA, SARIPS, AERC, etc., in order to achieve greater mileage out of their interventions and minimise the duplication of efforts;
- xv) Strive to raise the overall quality of research and publications sponsored by the Council to new heights by putting in place, in the Secretariat and within the various networks, a variety of new outreach, monitoring and evaluation mechanisms; and
- xvi) Take further concrete programmatic steps to tackle the problem of the marginalization of certain communities – whether these be countries, linguistic groups, disciplines, themes, and methodologies – by promoting new initiatives aimed at integrating these groups into the mainstream of CODESRIA's activities.

Areas of Programmatic Innovation during the 2002 – 2006 Period

In line with the strategic vision and objectives spelt out in the preceding section, attempts have been made to design some innovations in CODESRIA's programme development and delivery over the period 2002 - 2006. Among the innovations which are been proposed are:

- i) The rationalisation of the National Working Group (NWG) concept by targeting it more at marginalized communities, disciplines and themes especially in areas where research and networking capacities are weak, dispersed, or fragmented;
- ii) The rationalisation of the Multinational Working Group (MWG) concept by providing a greater scope for members of the CODESRIA community to propose sub-themes and constitute research teams to work on the sub-themes within the broad umbrella of thematic areas advertised by the Council;
- iii) The introduction of a new research instrument known as the Comparative Research Networks (CRN) designed to encourage comparative research activities on the continent;
- iv) The strengthening of the scientific work of the CODESRIA Training and Grants and Publications and Communication departments through the initiation of two new projects, namely, *An Intellectual History of Africa* and *African Voices*, to be co-ordinated by those departments drawing, on the one hand, on the contributions made by the African social science community in CODESRIA journals and, on the other hand, the perspectives projected by young African researchers who have benefited from the small grants thesis-writing programme;
- v) The introduction of a Lusophone Africa Initiative aimed at integrating Lusophone Africa Studies and Lusophone African scholars more centrally into CODESRIA activities and network;
- vi) The reinforcement of the CODESRIA Child and Youth Studies Programme through the introduction from 2002 of a Child and Youth Studies Institute;
- vii) The extension of the Council's support to the post-doctoral research community in Africa through the introduction of an Advanced Research Fellowships programme to be organised annually around a theme, this programme being intended to serve as a successor to the highly successful CODESRIA Reflections Programme;
- viii) The reinforcement of the Council's commitment to gender research through the establishment of a Gender Co-ordinating Unit in the Secretariat and the designation of an assistant to be responsible for this Unit. The Unit will be responsible for monitoring

and co-ordinating all of the gender programmes housed in the different departments of the Council;

- ix) The introduction of an annual inter-generational, multi-disciplinary social science campus as a successor to the “summer university” on methodology;
- x) The systematisation of CODESRIA’s outreach and dissemination activities through the introduction of a Policy Dialogue Series aimed at bringing researchers, policy makers, and civil society groups together on a regular basis;
- xi) The refining of the CODESRIA small grants programme by strengthening the component dedicated to supporting doctoral level candidates and expanding the number of scholarships awarded;
- xii) The introduction of a field-based system of monitoring and evaluation to be coordinated by the Executive Secretariat and designed to complement the peer review system in assuring a higher level of quality in the output of the Council; and
- xiii) The publication, under broad CODESRIA leadership, of an *African Review of Books*, this being undertaken on the basis of a contractual arrangement between the Council and an appropriate African university group or research organisation outside the West African sub-region but with editorial board membership drawn from across the continent and other parts of the world.

New Research Themes for the 2002 – 2006 Period

The programme innovations which will be implemented over the 2002 – 2006 period are being accompanied by the introduction of a number of new thematic areas which will constitute the core of the intellectual agenda for the next three years. These new themes will complement a number of others which are being carried over from the previous programme period. Among the new themes are:

- i) Health, Politics and Society in Contemporary Africa;
- ii) Higher Education in Africa: Crisis, Reform, Transformation;
- iii) Reforming the African Public Sector: Retrospect and Prospect;
- iv) The Changing Political Economy of Land in Africa;
- v) Africa and the Challenges of Globalisation;
- vi) The Popular Arts, Identity and Culture in Contemporary Africa;
- vii) Conflict and Reconstruction in Africa;
- viii) State and Governance in Africa;
- ix) Colonialism, Customary Law, and Post-Colonial State and Society;
- x) State, Political Identity and Political Violence;
- xi) Rethinking (African) Development and Reviving Development Thinking in Africa;
- xii) Migration Dynamics and Changing Rural-Urban Linkages in Africa;
- xiii) The African Diaspora and Diaspora Linkages;
- xiv) Continuity and Change in African International Relations; and
- xv) New Regionalist Impulses in Africa.

Service to the CODESRIA Membership

Within the overall context of the challenges posed to CODESRIA as an institution in the service of a community of scholars, and as part of the determination to strengthen the foundations of the Council, it is proposed to ensure over the period 2002 – 2006 that:

- i) The quality of service to the CODESRIA membership is raised significantly through the establishment in the Secretariat of the post of a Membership Services Assistant to be responsible for responding to all queries and inquiries coming from the membership;
- ii) A major drive is made to increase the size of the membership of the Council in line with changes to the definition of membership that might emanate from the on-going work of the Governance Reform Committee;
- iii) A web-based culture of accountability to the membership is developed not only with regard to activities which take place in the Secretariat but also through the posting on the web site of the Council's annual report;
- iv) The Outreach programme of the Council is revamped in order to ensure that members are kept fully abreast of its work, this programme being developed in a manner that ensures that it has a strong scientific component as well;
- v) A revamping of the structure of the CODESRIA General Assembly is undertaken in order to enhance the effectiveness of accountability to the membership, a task which is integral to the mandate of the Governance Reform Committee;
- vi) A comprehensive data base of researchers and research institutions that are active in CODESRIA networks is compiled and made available both in hard copies and electronically; and
- vii) The strengthening of the capacity of the Codesria Documentation and Information Centre (CODICE) to service the scientific needs of the members and all those who take an active part the organisation's research networks.

Renewing the Internal Administrative Governance of the Secretariat

A first step towards the renewal of the internal administrative governance of the Council was taken with the formal codification in 2000 of staff mandates and the elaboration in the same year of a formal manual of procedures derived out of the existing internal regulations of the Council. Some of the steps which have been taken in this direction would be reinforced by the recommendations which are expected to flow from the work of the Governance Reform Committee. However, beyond the strengthening and codification of internal rules and procedures, the Council is faced with a number of challenges centring around the issues of staff professionalism, rationalisation of operational costs, productivity, evaluation and incentives system, and training. During the 2001 transitional year, some steps were taken to address these challenges. Beyond these, it is proposed over the period 2002 – 2006 to:

- i) Further fine tune the manual of procedures in order to make administrative procedures less cumbersome whilst retaining the high level of controls and transparency which it is meant to guarantee;
- ii) Introduce a new staff development programme whose components would include an annual staff training plan; a new staff evaluation system; a formally codified staff handbook spelling out rights and obligations; a formalised system of internal information flow; and a new staff salary and welfare package;
- iii) A total revamping of the Council's procurement procedure through the institutionalisation of the competitive bidding system for service provision, the role of the Tender Committee that was established in 2001 being central to this goal;
- iv) Contain the annual administrative and operational costs of the Council well below 20 per cent of the budget, an objective which is linked to the goal of ensuring that as much of the resources received by CODESRIA are devoted to the scientific objectives of the organisation;
- v) Strive for an overall improvement in the Council's cost efficiency both as a step designed to institutionalise a culture of financial prudence and in support of the bid to extend the scientific mileage covered by the organisation;
- vi) Recruit new international staff members, including a deputy Executive Secretary who will be simultaneously responsible for the Department of Training and Grants, a Programme Officer, and a Programme Coordinator; and
- vii) Integrate a quarterly internal administrative audit system into the routine of the Secretariat as part of a broader internal control and accountability mechanism in the Secretariat.

Rebuilding the Foundations of CODESRIA's Relations with the Donors

In line with the goal of ensuring a higher level of professionalism in the management of the work and relations of the Council, and particularly with a view to ensuring that the numerous hitches which characterised relations between the Council and its funders in recent times do not repeat themselves, it is proposed to:

- i) Establish an institutional mechanism linked to the office of the Executive Secretary to improve reporting to the institutions that support CODESRIA through the offer of grants, a step which has become central to the goal of re-building relations with donors on a foundation of mutual respect and trust;
- ii) Reinforce steps which have been taken so far to improve on the structure and process of financial and administrative decision-making;
- iii) Improving upon the readability of CODESRIA accounts as part of an investment in all-round transparency;
- iv) Strive towards a greater diversification of funding sources both as a strategy for reducing dependency on a single donor or a small group of donors and in order to be better able to manage the autonomy of the institution;
- v) Source funding from African countries and organisations as part of a conscious desire to raise the interest and stake of the African policy community and civil society organisations in the activities of CODESRIA;
- vi) Encourage CODESRIA's main funders to embrace a long-term funding cycle in their relations with the Council;
- vii) Strengthen the scientific component of the dealings of the Council with its funders, especially in the context of review missions undertaken by the funders to assess the work of the institution; and
- viii) Convene a donor's conference during 2002/2003 as a step, *in part*, towards the establishment of an endowment fund that could help to secure the financial foundations of CODESRIA.

Financial Projections for the Realisation of Set Objectives

In order to achieve the scientific and administrative objectives that have been set out in this document, it is estimated that a total global sum of USD 37, 547,200 will need to be raised over the period 2002 – 2006.

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