

CODESRIA

INTERNATIONAL COLLOQUIUM

"LUSOPHONIE" IN AFRICA: HISTORY, DEMOCRACY AND INTEGRATION

CALL FOR PAPERS

As part of its strategy for reinforcing its research programmes in the Portuguese-speaking countries of Africa, CODESRIA is organizing an international colloquium from 28 to 30 April 2005 in Luanda, Angola. The theme of the colloquium is:

"Lusophonie" in Africa: History, Democracy and Integration

History, democracy and integration are recurrent themes in African social science research. Placed in the context of the African countries that use Portuguese as their official language, these themes develop a particular resonance which suggests that they are not simply abstract questions. Their essence results from a variety of contested specificities connected to the experiences of these countries as site of some of the most difficult moments in the recent history of Africa. The Portuguese-speaking countries of Africa, with the kind of relations that linked them to their former colonizer, have developed an identity that goes beyond the simple use of a common language; they have all been shaped by a long history of rapacious external exploitation and domination. The slave trade, colonial domination, the fascist administration, a system of economic pillage and an aggressive assimilation policy are some of the salient features of the "Lusophonie" in Africa. These experiences have all fed into the contemporary modes of expression that have been forged by the peoples of Angola, Cape Verde, Guinea Bissau, Mozambique and Sao Tome.

The relationships of domination and exploitation that were established during the colonial period were central to the shaping of the state and the articulation of state-society relations. The persistent political instability which many Lusophone African countries have experienced is linked to the type of colonization to which they were subjected. The civil wars in Angola, Guinea Bissau and Mozambique, as well as the political difficulties in Sao Tome were not only the results of contradictions exacerbated during the post colonial period; they are, in fact, closely linked to historical factors that go back to the period before independence. Colonialism in Lusophone Africa was founded on highly authoritarian modes of governance. This heritage, which produced repressive political regimes during the colonial and postcolonial periods, justifies the popular demand for the establishment of democratic institutions in these countries. This is all the more so as Cape Verde that has followed the same colonial itinerary and experienced a one-party regime has also in recent years enjoyed a spectacular rate of development that is an example for the rest of the continent. Yet, the wave of democratic transitions that spread across Lusophone African countries during the 1980s has encountered serious difficulties which, if they are to be understood, must be located in the historical processes that have helped to shape each of these countries.

The colloquium will be an opportunity to reflect on the link between history and the dynamics of change in Lusophone Africa in the context of the new challenges posed by the economic, social and political transitions of the last twenty years. Political liberalization plays an important role in this process of change. Beyond the specificities that define them, it will also be useful to reflect on the involvement of Lusophone African countries in the political and ideological dynamics that are shaping contemporary Africa. Among the Lusophone

countries themselves, local differences can be decisive. In this collective movement, how does this Lusophone particularity assert itself? How does it distinguish itself and how does it connect with processes elsewhere? What, for instance, is the common denominator between the political instability in Guinea Bissau and the growth of Capeverdean democracy? The colloquium will provide participants with an opportunity to better understand the political reach of the transitions taking place in Lusophone Africa, the connections that link them and the specificities that separate them.

To discuss "Lusophonie" in Africa implies not only taking stock of political dynamics, but also of the complex and related economic problems that manifest themselves at the national, regional, continental, and even global levels. The proximate contexts of these problems are admittedly local, but they cannot be separated from their regional contexts, which is why it is important to pay attention to the dynamics of trans-border exchanges between Lusophone African countries and their neighbours to better understand the individual and collective actions of the actors. It is also important to assess the modalities for the assertion of "Lusophonie" in relation to the strengthening of regional integration. Will cooperation among Lusophone countries be an essential stage towards a financial and economic cooperation at the international level? Will membership of this "Lusophonie" give birth to a new political community that is able to act as one in the international political system? How will the Lusophone African world participate in the collective response of African countries to the challenges of globalisation?

Social researchers, whether Lusophone or not, are invited to reflect on the various analytical issues generated by the experiences of the Portuguese-speaking countries of Africa. In light of the objective of the colloquium, which is essentially to identify the links between history, democracy and integration, CODESRIA is inviting contributions on the following sub-themes:

- 1- *Perspectives on the Historical Heritage of Lusophone African Countries;*
- 2- *Political and Social Mutations in Lusophone African Countries and in the Context of the African Democratic Project;*
- 3- *"Lusophonie" and African integration.*

These themes are being treated as the three broad clusters around which it is hoped to structure the symposium. However, abstracts on other related themes are also encouraged, including proposals for special panels and roundtables. All the abstracts and proposals must reach CODESRIA by 15 January 2005. Researchers whose abstracts are selected will be informed by 30 January 2005 and will be invited to send their final contributions by 31 March 2005.

All correspondence pertaining to the colloquium should be sent to the following address:

International Colloquium on "Lusophonie" in Africa
CODESRIA, P.O. Box 3304, CP 18524
Avenue Cheikh Anta Diop X Canal IV
Dakar, Senegal
Tel : +221 8259822/8259823
Fax : + 221 8241289
E-mail : lusophonafrica@codesria.sn
Web site: www.codesria.org