



CODESRIA's 30th Anniversary Celebrations

North Africa Sub-Regional Conference

Cairo, 27 – 28 September, 2003

Call for Abstracts

The Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa (CODESRIA) is celebrating its 30th anniversary this year. It will be recalled that 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. As part of the series of events planned to mark the anniversary, five sub-regional conferences are being organised in Central, East, North, Southern and West Africa. These sub-regional conferences will be followed by a grand finale conference to be held at the Council's headquarters in Dakar, Senegal. The North Africa sub-regional conference is scheduled for September 2003 in Cairo, Egypt. Its theme will be: **North Africa and the Pan-African Movement: Retrospect and Prospect.**

The origins of exchanges and interactions between North Africa and the rest of the continent date back to antiquity. Historians, Philosophers and Archaeologists, not least among them, Cheikh Anta Diop, have demonstrated that these exchanges covered a broad and expanding spectrum that included cultural, scientific, diplomatic, military and commercial flows; it is a broad pattern of exchanges carried over into the modern period in spite of the interruptions experienced at different historical moments. The emergence and efflorescence of ancient civilisations and state forms across the African continent benefited from these flows; the process of state and nation-building in the contemporary period continues to refract influences from the changing nature, content and context of interactions between North Africa and the rest of the continent. The movement of populations— voluntary or forced— in both directions across the Sahara was as significant to the transformation of state, economy and society in the ancient times as to the establishment of the basis for the quest for reconstruction of identities in the more modern history of relations between the sub-region and the rest of the continent. As a typical feature of all such histories, there have been high and low moments, periods characterised by conflict and predation and periods marked by co-operation and solidarity, seasons of ambiguity and seasons of sure-footedness especially in the definition of common destinies.

The ties between North Africa and the rest of the continent have been crucial to the definition of the role and place of the sub-region in the pan-Africanist process and of the pan-African movement's perception of the strategic importance of the sub-region in the pan-African project. CODESRIA's own history and mandate are closely tied to the ideal of the unity and indivisibility of the African continent, with all the responsibilities which this imposes on scholars to, among other things, strive to transcend all linguistic, geographical, gender, and disciplinary barriers that may be thrown up. On the occasion of the Council's 30th anniversary, it is therefore entirely appropriate that attention should be paid to North Africa's place and contribution to the pan-Africanist movement, in a manner that is at once historically-rooted and critical.

Participants in the proposed conference are invited to re-visit the history of relations between North Africa and the rest of the continent with a view to offering new interpretative insights and perspectives; re-read the vast and competing historiographies that have been produced on relations between North Africa and the rest of Africa; comment on the use and abuse of sources in the (re-)construction of the history of exchanges between North Africa and the rest of the African continent; reflect on the central factors, including especially religion, population movements and commerce— that have helped to shape the history of relations— and with what consequences; examine the changing historical significance of the Sahara to the development of relations; consider the central issues in the history of North African identity formation and what these have meant for the pan-African process; re-examine the trade in slaves across the Sahara in terms of its historical and contemporary consequences; debate the impact of the struggle for national liberation in North Africa on the pan-African movement both on the continent and in the Diaspora; assess the competing visions and ideological currents represented in North Africa, not least, the Nasserite movement, in the quest for post-independence African unity; examine the processes of sub-regional co-operation and integration promoted in North Africa and their connections/disconnections with the pan-African process; assess Africa's place in the foreign policies of North African countries; explore the role of North African countries in the work and activities of the defunct Organisation of African Unity; assess the role of North Africa in the processes leading up to the establishment of the African Union, the emergence of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) and in the work of the Economic Commission for Africa; and project on the future of pan-Africanism in North Africa.

Researchers interested in participating in the conference are invited to submit abstracts of their papers to the CODESRIA Secretariat by **31 July, 2003**. The authors of abstracts selected will be notified by **08 August, 2003** and they will be expected to send in their full papers by **08 September, 2003**. All abstracts and full papers should be addressed by post, E-mail or Fax to:

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