

Information Bulletin on the 10th General Assembly

No. 2, 2002

Contents:

- [Editorial Note](#)
- [Procedure for the Selection of Papers for the 10th General Assembly](#)
- [The CODESRIA Web Site](#)

Editorial Note:

This Information Bulletin is an innovation which has been adopted by CODESRIA to keep all members of the African social research community informed of every aspect, and the different stages of the Council's preparation for the upcoming General Assembly scheduled for 10 – 12 December, 2002 in Kampala. In doing so, the Bulletin is also designed to serve as a mobilisation tool as the countdown begins in earnest to an event which promises to be the biggest gathering of scholars on the African continent this year and a true festival of ideas and debate. As frequently as the need arises, the CODESRIA Secretariat will issue this Information Bulletin right up to the first week of December 2002. It is hoped that you will find the Bulletin informative and useful.

Procedure for the Selection of Papers for the 10th General Assembly:

Date: 03 September, 2002

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Preparatory to the 10th General Assembly of CODESRIA scheduled for 08 – 10 December, 2002 in Kampala, Uganda, the Secretariat issued an open and widely disseminated call for the submission of abstracts and panel proposals. In all, over 500 hard copies of the call for papers were distributed across Africa; an equal number was also sent out electronically using the e-mail addresses of researchers available to us in the Secretariat. Furthermore, the call for papers was posted on the CODESRIA website.

The Secretariat is pleased to report, for the benefit of the members of the research community, that over 300 abstracts and panel proposals were received as 01 September, 2002, the first working day after the deadline of Saturday 31 August, 2002 that had been set as the deadline for the receipt of abstracts. By all yardsticks, this is a very enthusiastic response for which we would like to thank you. Beyond the use to which the abstracts/panel proposals received will be put in establishing the programme for the 10th General Assembly, they will also serve the important role of assisting the Council's Secretariat and the Scientific Committee to establish a clear reading of the research interests, directions and trends in the social research community. Naturally, all those who sent in abstracts and proposals for panels would want to know the selection procedure that will be used by the Council to determine which abstracts/panel proposals to accept and which to reject. In this connection, the Secretariat wishes to bring to the attention of the research community the decision which was made by the CODESRIA Executive Committee at its 56th meeting in Maputo, Mozambique at the end of July 2002. The Committee decided that the selection process for all abstracts/panel proposals received in connection with the General Assembly should be handled entirely by the Council's Scientific Committee. This Committee, with membership drawn from all the regions of the continent, and reflecting the disciplinary, gender, generational and linguistic diversity of the CODESRIA community of scholars, will, on the basis of the merit of the abstracts and panel proposals received help to establish the list of papers to be accepted for presentation at the Assembly.

To further guarantee the integrity of the selection process, it has been agreed with the Chair of the Scientific Committee that each abstract/panel proposal will be read by two members of the

Committee. Also, all abstracts and panel proposals will go out to the Committee members without the names of their authors; for this purpose, each abstract/panel proposal received has been assigned a number and the persons evaluating them will not have the privilege of knowing in advance the authors of the work which they are evaluating. In making their recommendations, they would be required simply to indicate the number of the proposal in order of overall quality/suitability. *In all of this, neither the Executive Committee nor the Executive Secretariat will play a direct part in the evaluation of abstracts/panel proposals.*

As you will notice, a great deal of effort is being put into the goal of establishing a level playing field for selection for participation in the 10th General Assembly. In doing so, there is also a determination to restore the peer review system to its rightful place in all aspects of the scientific work of the Council. But above all else, the adoption of an independent review procedure is designed to give concrete meaning to the long-standing pledge that has been made by the Council to ensure that its 10th General Assembly is first and foremost a major scientific encounter that will be worth the while of all the scholars in attendance. Once the evaluation process is completed, authors of abstracts and those who have proposed panels will be notified immediately by e-mail of the outcome of the exercise so that full papers can begin to be prepared.

Adebayo Olukoshi,
Executive Secretary

The CODESRIA Web Site:

For those members of the research community who may not yet be aware, CODESRIA has a new web site which we would like to encourage you visit as up-to-date information on the different activities of the Council, including the upcoming General Assembly, are posted on the site. The web site address is: www.codesria.org