



# INTERNAL EVALUATION: MEMBERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE



2015

## **Members of the CODESRIA Internal Review Committee**

- Professor Thandika Mkandawire (Chairman of the Committee) former Executive Secretary of CODESRIA, Director of the United Nations Research Institute of Social Research and currently Professor and Chair, London School of Economics and Political Science
- Dr. Pierre Sane. Former Regional Director of IDRC; former UNESCO Assistant Director-General for Social and Human Sciences. former Secretary General of Amnesty International; Founder and President of Imagine Africa
- Professor Aki Sawyerr, former President of CODESRIA, former Vice Chancellor of the University of Ghana Legon; and former Executives Secretary of the Association of African Universities

## Abbreviations

CERDAS	Centre for the Coordination of Social Science Research and Documentation in Africa South of the Sahara
CLACSO	Latin American Council of Social Sciences
CODESRIA	Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa
FLACSO	Latin American School of Social Sciences
IDEP	African Institute for Economic Development and Planning
IDRC	International Development Research Centre
IDS	Institute for Development Studies, Nairobi
NISER	Nigerian Institute of Social and Economic Research
OAU	Organization of African Unity
OSSREA	Organization for Social Science Research in Eastern and Southern Africa
SAUSSC	Southern African Universities Social Science Conference
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

## Part 1

### **Introduction and Background**

This year marks the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of CODESRIA. This is as good point as any to pause not only to celebrate CODESRIA's remarkable past but also collectively to reflect on the institutional demands and the challenges of the future. The Executive Committee has chosen this process of reflection as the core preoccupation of this year of celebrations. This report is written in the spirit of both celebration and reflection on an organization one of whose strengths has been, over the years, its capacity for self-reinvention. The critical tone of the report should, therefore, be understood as stemming from a concern not about failure but about managing success. We take as given CODESRIA's strengths and consequently devote little time to them. We, instead, focus on problems that have over time been identified by the governing bodies of CODESRIA and the research community, and that have become a source of increasing unease. These problems have been eroding the institutional coherence of CODESRIA and, if unaddressed, could ultimately undermine the entire organization.

CODESRIA has over the years emerged as the premier social science organization in Africa. Its major challenge is managing and sustaining this success, which is today threatened by a number of inappropriate institutional features that have a bearing on its scientific leadership and standing.

CODESRIA as an institution has been subjected to a wide range of external evaluations of its research programmes, its administrative capacity, its financial and scientific management, its publications, outreach, etc. It has also had its own internal evaluations on all these issues. This is as it should be, as CODESRIA must fully control the continuous reform of its governance structures if it is to retain its scientific autonomy.

One source of CODESRIA's success and resilience is the culture of self-evaluation and self-criticism that has allowed the organization to overcome serious challenges and to adjust to new situations. This is the spirit in which this review was undertaken.

Much has changed over the past 40 years. Today CODESRIA has to function in an environment that is significantly different from when it was set up, and from the 1980s and 1990s when CODESRIA dramatically increased its range of activities. For a start, CODESRIA is no longer the only pan-African network engaged in the social sciences. Second, the research community which it serves is operating in radically different conditions, both in terms of quantity and quality of research and teaching institutions and of incentives for research. Third, there is a revival of the African university with new demands on CODESRIA, which for many years had functioned in the context of the crisis of the African university. Fourth, there has been a proliferation of institutions in

which social science research and thinking are taking place – ranging from consultancy agencies to full-time research networks. This is leading to both diversity and fragmentation of the social sciences and the social science community on the continent. Fifth, the social science community has expanded enormously and there are today more post-graduate students than when CODESRIA was founded. Sixth, the new information technologies are shaping networking among researchers and their institutions, obviating certain roles of traditional networks, while highlighting new locations and forms of coordination and leadership. Finally, there is a fierce battle among institutions for visibility and intellectual presence, given the explosive expansion of the internet and the obsession of funders with “impact” or public reach.

In light of all this, CODESRIA needs to revisit its mandate, goals and institutional capacity to function in a changed environment. More specifically, it needs to re-examine its governance structures, which have enormous bearing on the legitimacy, coherence and scientific capacity of the Council.

We are convinced that at the heart of any institutional reform must be a re-examination and redefinition of what are the dominant criteria for the selection of leadership in CODESRIA – General Assembly, Executive Committee and Secretariat.

Over the years the rules governing the institution have been periodically adjusted in response to emerging challenges and opportunities. Although some major reforms have been deliberate and well thought out, quite a number have been of an *ad hoc* nature. While the flexibility implied by this succession of reforms may have contributed to the stability of the institution, their accretion has had many unintended consequences. The cumulative effect has been increasing incoherence in the governing structure and arrangements, making the governing bodies, especially the General Assembly, fraught with tension. Already, in the late 1990s, the Governance Reform Committee talked about “crisis that requires a surgical operation to arrest what is threatening to develop into a crisis of legitimacy”<sup>1</sup>

## Terms of Reference

The original objectives of the review were:

- Strengthening of the Secretariat to ensure better management of critical events such as the GA;
- Reinvigoration of CODESRIA’s intellectual agenda and the consolidation of its programmes, so that it ensures and enhances its leadership role in the field of African human and social science research; and
- Strengthening of its governance structures to allow it to respond efficiently to the growing and changing needs of its constituency.

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<sup>1</sup> Report of the Governance Committee, CODESRIA, 2002

Following consultations between the Review Team, the Executive Committee and the Executive Secretary, a narrower agenda was agreed upon, taking into account the limited time available for the task. It was further felt that the Secretariat and the intellectual agenda required separate and specialized review. In the circumstances, this review is limited to consideration of the following specific issues in the original terms of reference document:

1. Review of CODESRIA membership policy, the nature of the current membership, membership rights as well as responsibilities;
2. Review of the rules for elections – who is eligible and who can vote, proxy voting, internet voting, etc.;
3. Review of the mandate, composition, mode and criteria of selection of the Scientific Committee, as well as its relations with the EC and the Secretariat;
4. Review of membership, terms of office, criteria of selection and procedure of election of the President and members of the Executive Committee; allocation of responsibilities and relations among the Executive Committee, the Secretariat and the Scientific Committee;
5. Review of the CODESRIA Charter in order to identify gaps and terms needing to be amended (as in the case of the review of the governing bodies, membership, and rules of elections); and
6. Examination of any other issues that the Committee considers important for improving CODESRIA's performance and relevance.

Our understanding is that we are not supposed to “evaluate” CODESRIA. CODESRIA has been heavily reviewed over the years. We understand that our mission is to provide a basis for reforming CODESRIA's structures and revisiting its activities. More specifically, our understanding is that the real challenge is to design an organization that serves its principal purpose – “the development of social science research in Africa”. In recent years, too many of our institutional arrangements have tended to serve other purposes (such as political balance) that, whatever their value, may have little scientific purpose or merit.

Institutions do not only set norms and constraints on people's behaviour but also act as focusing devices drawing people's attention to one aspect of reality and not another. They also generate incentives towards certain actions producing outcomes that are not context specific, and are not intended. One consequence is that institutional designs that work in one context may not work well in another. Institutions also create path dependence/inertia which allows certain norms to persist beyond their intended purpose or predisposes individual action towards particular choices. They may also attract or create interest groups that will resist reforms.

One other aspect of institutions is unintended consequences. For instance, the Charter provisions “regionalizing” CODESRIA's representation, intended to guarantee inclusiveness and a truly pan-African participation, have in some cases led to regional affiliation trumping intellectual orientation and competence.

This points to the need for an institutional framework that blunts the perverse incentives that have contributed to debilitating practices, while promoting a culture of intellectual excellence that privileges collaboration over scientific endeavour.

Institutional reform is not always an easy exercise. It has to overcome received ideas and existing interests and the inertia that is inherent to “institutionness”. An institution that changed at every drop of a hat would cease being an institution. This underscores the importance of combining change with continuity.

## **Approach**

The evaluation is based on a review of the governance documentation of CODESRIA and consultation with relevant members of the social science community through discussions at scientific meetings and electronic communication.

In addition to extensive reading of official documents of CODESRIA and reports of previous evaluations of CODESRIA by external agencies, we have relied on internal debates within CODESRIA, conversations with many African scholars and persons who have been active in CODESRIA in one form or another and, ultimately, on our personal knowledge and insights of CODESRIA both as insiders and outsiders.

## **Central Premise**

We start from the position that both the mandate and character of CODESRIA must be driven by an abiding concern for the intellectual enterprise of social science research in Africa and its contribution to social development. In the matter of governance, this places a premium on aspects related to its scientific management. There is deep concern within the scientific community about CODESRIA’s governance structure: its relevance to the current conditions, its adequacy to the tasks it has taken on, and its scientific standing and credibility among its constituency and supports. While these concerns have to do with a variety of subjective perceptions about the organization, there can be little doubt that a major source of concern relates to governance. The governance deficits are highlighted during General Assembly meetings, and during transitions in the Secretariat and Executive Committee. Dissatisfaction with the governance structures was heightened by the events surrounding the 2011 General Assembly, as is made explicit in this excerpt from the draft Terms of Reference:

“The problems experienced during the 13<sup>th</sup> General Assembly of CODESRIA (held in Rabat in December 2011) prompted a passionate debate among CODESRIA members about the necessity of an institutional review. The administrative and programmatic lapses in the organization of this General Assembly, the extra-ordinarily high number and diversity of participants, the perception that certain groups and countries were over-represented or under-represented, and the difficulties surrounding the election of the Executive Committee, caused disquiet among sections of CODESRIA’s constituencies.”

There are two separate issues here. One has to do with the management of the General Assembly. The other has more far-reaching implications as it goes to the heart of the matter: the character and governance of CODESRIA as an organisation.

Although the original terms of reference referred to the 2011 General Assembly meeting in Rabat, Morocco, we believe the problem goes beyond that Assembly.

The governance failures and the discontent they breed within the community affects several of CODESRIA's most important *acquis*, namely, credibility as a scientific organization in which academic merit is central; the confidence of our institutions of learning and research that involvement in CODESRIA's work signals merit and, thus, assists the institutions in evaluating their own standing as well as the performance of their staff; and belief by young researchers that any credentials (participation in workshops, receipt of grants or publications, etc.), or mentoring provided directly or indirectly by CODESRIA will add to their academic standing and enhance their scholarly ambitions. All this could be easily undermined by poor governance structures to the degree that they impugn the integrity of the scientific processes of CODESRIA and raise even the slightest doubts about the competence of its decision makers.

The mandate and nature of CODESRIA demand that aspects of its work take into account other concerns, especially in terms of staff recruitment, appointment to committees and access to its programmes. But none of that should compromise the central focus on merit. Failure on this front has sometimes led to accusations of bias but, as noted in the SIDA evaluation:

”... there is no other way to address the suspicions of bias than being meticulously transparent and professional in all processes of assessment and selection.”<sup>2</sup>

## History

Although the acronym CODESRIA has been maintained, it has stood for different things at different times. First as the *Conference of Directors of Economic and Social Research Institutions in Africa*; then as a *Council for the Development of Economic and Social Research in Africa*; and, finally, as the *Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa*. In all its forms, however, the acronym speaks to the central purpose of CODESRIA – **the development of social science research in Africa**. Thus, whatever the institutional reforms proposed, it is important to bear in mind this central objective. Other considerations, important as they are, must be subsidiary to this, and all the bodies of CODESRIA must be aligned to this central mission.

The origins of CODESRIA can be traced to a conference on “Economic Research in Africa” organized in Bellagio, Italy, on 27 September-2 October 1964, under the auspices of the Rockefeller Foundation. The purpose of the conference was to review the type of research that had taken place in post-colonial Africa. Significantly, of the 10 directors of

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid



research institutes invited, only two were African – Professor Adebola Onitiri from the Nigerian Institute of Economic and Social Research at the University of Ibadan, and Professor Omer Osman from Sudan. The rest were either French or British. The seed of continued collaboration among African economic research institutions was to be a newsletter to be edited by the African Institute for Economic Development and Planning (IDEP), through which member institutes would exchange information and conduct debates on critical issues about research in Africa.

Three years after the Bellagio conference, Professor Onitiri organized a pan-African Conference of Directors of Economic and Social Research in Africa (CODESRIA) at NISER, University of Ibadan. It was the first of many to follow. In those early years the organization was an informal body, its main activity being to convene the directors of research institutes. The second meeting in 1971 was held at the Institute for Development Studies, University of Nairobi, under the directorship of Dharam Ghai.

The first meeting of the Executive Committee of CODESRIA was held in Dakar on 1 February 1973. Institutionally, the meeting had particular significance for securing the autonomy of CODESRIA from the host institution – IDEP. The charter was amended, especially with respect to the mission of the Council.

At the Nairobi Conference, IDEP was designated as the official CODESRIA Depository Centre (CDC), with Samir Amin, IDEP's Director, elected Vice-Chairman of the Standing Committee. Soon thereafter, the role of CODESRIA was redefined from being merely an informal organization of directors and a depository of research, to one of animating analytical research. Professor Onitiri spent his sabbatical at IDEP and, together with Samir Amin, helped lay the basis for a new, more formalized CODESRIA. Drawing lessons from the Latin American Council of Social Sciences (CLACSO), the team transformed CODESRIA into a body that would carry out research on a broad range of themes. CODESRIA thus became a “council” for sustained work, rather than simply an event-driven (conference) organization with a documentation centre.

To enable it to carry forward its new mandate, CODESRIA received a small grant from the World Bank for its Secretariat, while the Ford Foundation promised to fund the Documentation Centre.

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## Objectives

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As the name suggests, CODESRIA's main scientific mission was the “development of social science research in Africa”. This scientific purpose was always associated with the Pan-Africanist ideal of bringing African social scientists together to conduct research appropriate to the continent. There was always a tension between, on the one hand, representation on the basis of scientific quality and, on the other, the exigencies of pan-African inclusiveness and diversity, the latter concerned to ensure equitable representation along regional or linguistic lines. In many ways, the current governance problems of CODESRIA mirror this tension, which has, in some instances, led to the scientific considerations for leadership of CODESRIA being compromised by political exigency.

The scientific objective would favour such criteria as merit, scientific competence and familiarity with the management of research. The more political objective privileges attributes such as representativeness along linguistic or regional lines. While a combination is obviously necessary, it vital to strike a very careful balance to ensure the attainment of the core objective of the organization – in the case of CODESRIA, leadership of a scientific enterprise.

There is a general unease over whether, indeed, CODESRIA's systems of selection bring on to the governing organs adequate capacity for the credible scientific oversight of the Council's key programmes. We insist that despite the importance of other objectives of CODESRIA such as pan-African inclusiveness, the foundational criteria for assumption of any key position in CODESRIA must reflect scientific merit. This must be a central preoccupation of CODESRIA.

Few evaluations of CODESRIA have addressed the issue of governance and the scientific quality of persons eligible for appointment or election to CODESRIA's governance institutions. In those few cases, the question reconciling the focus on merit with regional, language or gender balance, has loomed large. For instance, the SIDA Evaluation of 2007 observed as follows:

*“One issue arising from the local visits stands out. How can a correct balance be struck between academic merit and regional belonging? The report has paid special attention to development of the Council's capacity to undertake independent scholarly assessments and peer reviewing. The achievements are noteworthy and go a long way to satisfy the need for reasonably objective criteria. But what about ‘regional balance’? ... It is widely accepted, for instance, that regions that have been marginalized because of the inevitable dominance of English and French should be specially accommodated. But should it be at the expense of academic merit? What is ‘academic merit’ anyway in a context marked by very different academic traditions? ... Should it be the policy of the Secretariat to correct such imbalances or should it rely on an autonomous assessment of merit alone? There is no obvious solution to this dilemma. One is to adhere religiously to a procedure based on merit while using other means (‘special initiatives’ etc.) to ensure that potential constituencies that have been marginalized, nationally or continentally, are included in the network while simultaneously raising awareness about the differences in outlook and academic traditions. Another route is to be even more explicit on the regional considerations by which merit-based recruitment is adjusted to secure greater balance and address historical inequities. In any case, the transparency of procedures is paramount in ensuring confidence and cooperation. It is also important that the criteria agreed are effectively communicated, understood, and accepted within the scholarly community, not just by those who have been in a position to benefit from the Council's*

*services. ..., the criteria themselves must be sufficiently explicit to stand public scrutiny.”<sup>3</sup>*

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## The Crisis in the University

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CODESRIA cannot isolate itself from what is happening in the African university and research environment. In the late 1960s and early 1970s, the initial years of CODESRIA, research centres were quite prominent as funders of CODESRIA activities. It is remarkable that the first three pan-African conferences were organized by member research institutes – by NISER in 1967, by IDS (Nairobi) in 1971 and IDEP in 1973. In the 1980s, many African countries were faced with serious balance of payments problems that compelled them to seek financial assistance from the international financial institutions. These institutions did not confine themselves to providing balance of payments support but also insisted on involvement in a wide range of African economic issues. More immediately relevant to CODESRIA was the position taken by key donors on higher education. The donors’ new understanding was that the social rate of return of higher education was lower than that of other levels of education. The consequence of this understanding was massive withdrawal of funding for African universities. In addition, many African governments turned against African universities, which they saw as havens of opposition or producers of useless knowledge.

Since then, and particularly during the crisis of the African universities in 1980s and early 1990s, the CODESRIA Secretariat has become relatively stronger and increasingly less dependent on the resources of its member institutions. Foreign exchange constraints had become so severe that even those members who were willing could not pay because of currency conversion problems.

Furthermore, the internal hierarchal structures of African universities and the repressive political and academic environment in which they operated tended to push young researchers towards CODESRIA, which, free from those constraints, allowed more space for intellectual initiative. This new constituency of younger scholars did not feel represented by directors of research institutions and the Deans and Heads of university faculties and departments. Therefore, they pushed for individual membership. Compounding matters was the growing African Diasporic academic community which also sought representation, either as a “region” or as individuals.

One consequence of the “crisis” of the African university at the time was that, for young researchers, CODESRIA provided a useful avenue for career advancement through its programmes and projects: small grants and the intellectual prestige attached to them, publication outlets, workshops and specialized institutes. Although some have viewed this self-interest-driven adhesion to CODESRIA as opportunistic and against the political spirit behind CODESRIA, it should be recognized as evidence of the success of

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<sup>3</sup> SIDA Evaluation 07/26 Consolidation and Renewal Prepared by Björn Beckman, Inga Brandell, Lloyd Sachikonye, Mohamed Salih, Department for, Research Cooperation, CODESRIA in the New Millennium. 2007. Page 19

CODESRIA in its scientific mission. What became and remains problematic is the view that being a beneficiary of CODESRIA entitles one to privileged access to the decision-making bodies and processes of CODESRIA.

The curious aspect of this development was that participation in CODESRIA's scientific activities was never premised on membership – one did not have to be a member to access CODESRIA's research funds and other resources, or to participate in its various scientific activities!

## New Challenges

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### Revival of African Universities

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The single most important feature of the new environment within which CODESRIA operates today is the revival and expansion of universities in Africa. In tandem, the social science research community has expanded dramatically, as African governments have responded to the acute demand for higher education and the need for the production of faculty trained within the African continent. Much of the functioning of CODESRIA in the 1980s and 1990s was, in effect, making up for the failures of the African university and trying to maintain a scientific community buffeted by dwindling research facilities and an often repressive environment. This explains, in part, the wide range of activities embarked on by the Council.

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### Changing Donor World

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Another feature of the contemporary scene is that after years of detachment from African universities, many funders are now paying attention again to the universities, providing them with more resources. Although CODESRIA always insisted on the centrality of universities both for its *raison d'être* and its sustenance, it did, by default, benefit from a shift of donor support from universities to research networks during the period of the crisis of the African university. Today, CODESRIA must perform in an environment in which the case for networks is not always self-evident!

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### New Institutions

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A third feature has been the proliferation of institutions populating the research environment today that were not in existence when CODESRIA was conceived. In addition to the many new private universities, some of which are mere extensions of foreign universities, there are also many independent institutions and think-tanks that conduct research and training outside the universities.

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## Distribution of Resources – Quota or Open?

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CODESRIA has many resources of value to researchers: research grants; access to research networks and meetings; publication outlets for books and monographs; training workshops; documentation and information, etc. As CODESRIA has matured, it has become an important source of resources for researchers and African social science institutions generally. It is precisely in relation to access to these resources that the tension between merit and inclusiveness has been most acute. Thus, in the selection of beneficiaries of CODESRIA's programmes and resources, to what extent should considerations of inclusiveness, language and regional balance, gender and age be allowed to modify considerations of merit? In striking the right balance in this matter, the greater the variety of criteria and considerations that guide the allocation resources, the greater the need for efficiency, integrity and credibility of CODESRIA's governing bodies.

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## Research Culture

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While for much of the 1980s and 1990s, the major constraint on African social science research was the poor research infrastructure, this is no longer so pronounced, in light of the considerable improvements that have been made in a number of countries through new investments in the universities as well as advances in technology. There is a growing realization that an additional factor was the weakening, during and since the “lost decades”, of a research culture driven by scientific curiosity, peer pressure and the university rewards system. Competing with it was the growing consultancy culture in which the consultancy report was more rewarding than a published academic paper. It has been a real struggle weaning many researchers away from this latter culture.

## Membership

At the core of the governance of CODESRIA is its membership base, and yet that remains one the most unclear and most contested aspects of the institution. The question of membership is a recurring one in both internal and external commentaries and evaluation reports on CODESRIA. Given the governance arrangements of CODESRIA, the character of its membership determines the composition of the General Assembly, the election of members of the Executive Committee and, ultimately, the appointment of the Executive Secretary. Membership is, thus, at the root of many of the governance issues CODESRIA has had to grapple with over the years. This, of course, has a significant impact on the scientific work of the Council.

To appreciate the salience of the membership issue, it is necessary to understand the evolution of the membership base of CODESRIA.

In the original charter of CODESRIA (1976), membership was defined as follows:

*“There will be two categories of membership – full and associate. Full membership of the Council shall be open to such national, sub-regional and regional institutions located in member countries of the OAU and of the*

*Economic Commission for Africa as are engaged in research related to economic and social development with or without training activities.*

*Associate membership shall be open to other African and foreign institutions, including training institutions. In those African countries where there are no eligible institutions as such, the Executive Committee shall encourage the setting up (of) Research and Training Institutes. Only full member institutions will have the right to vote at meetings of the Council.*

*The Executive Committee will consider applications for membership and admit members provisionally subject to approval at a General Assembly Meeting of the Council”<sup>4</sup>*

In the same year, some amendments were made to reconcile CODESRIA’s statutes with its application for observer status with the OUA. The following changes in CODESRIA’s Charter were made.

The following sentence was added under “Title”:

*“... The Council shall function under the auspices of the OAU. The OAU Charter shall be binding on CODESRIA”*

The change further specified that the location of CODESRIA’s Secretariat would rotate among African countries after a reasonable stay in one country. A change of the location of the Secretariat could be made by a majority vote of the members of the Executive Committee. More specifically, it delineated the constituencies for membership of the Council according to the OAU’s division of Africa.

These changes were fully incorporated into the Charter in 1982, with no further changes in membership.

Adhesion to the OAU Charter meant that regional representation was viewed through the lens of the OAU. This had a significant impact on how CODESRIA grouped member states. The result was a division of the constituency of CODESRIA along the OAU regional map, with five regions. This has had a lasting effect on membership and the composition of the Council’s governing bodies, as it fuelled increasing insistence on representation in the governing bodies along regional lines. Overlaid on this regional structure has been the linguistic division of the continent with its own exigencies of representation. Much of the politicization of issues within CODESRIA has also, unfortunately, played out along those lines.

Almost from its very inception, CODESRIA has been contested terrain. Two issues regarding membership have arisen at various stages. The first relates to the determination of membership – who can become a member of CODESRIA and how? As noted above, CODESRIA started with membership confined to directors of social science research institutes. This was the Latin American CLACSO model in which members consist of research centres which may be full members of the Council “provided they establish their

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<sup>4</sup> Charter of CODESRIA, 1976

academic policy in an autonomous manner”. The incorporation of a new member is subject to the approval of the General Assembly, which can also revoke the membership of an institution. CLACSO, with membership consisting of research centres, was complemented by FLACSO, which has a membership consisting of faculties of social science. Thus, the adoption of a CLACSO model for CODESRIA proved restrictive without a FLACSO complement. CODESRIA, therefore, decided to work on a broader front and include faculties. At the time, African social scientists had begun to organize themselves in professional associations such as the African Association of Anthropologists, African Association of Political Science, etc. These associations, together with others, such as the Association of African Women Researchers on Development, sought representation in CODESRIA. Also in the wings were regional social science organizations such as OSSREA (Organization for Social Science Research in Eastern and Southern Africa) and SAUSSC (Southern African Universities Social Science Conference), to whom CODESRIA had provided seed money or support for specific activities.

The inclusion of faculties and associations as members of CODESRIA was finally codified by amendments to the Charter. This effectively merged the CLACSO-FLACSO models in a new one, but without fully thinking through the implications. For instance, what was the situation of research centres that actually belonged to a faculty? Did the payment of membership by a faculty cover all centres under its mandate? To compound the situation, some National Working Groups that CODESRIA had supported on a project-by-project basis sought a more permanent relationship with CODESRIA, and were sometimes perceived as “branches” of CODESRIA, although this had no basis in CODESRIA’s Charter.

The inclusion of Associations was liable to bring along additional problems, as they were based on individual membership. Some of these Associations became quite active in CODESRIA and sought to align CODESRIA institutions with their own institutional arrangements. To complicate matters, ideological and intellectual problems emerged. Some of the associations, mainly the African Political Science Association, viewed CODESRIA’s Executive Committee as being dominated by conservatives or the academic establishment, and not in sync with what was seen as CODESRIA’s scientific stance. It was felt that this establishmentarian leadership could only be wrestled out of power by allowing individual membership.

This state of affairs lasted until the 7th General Assembly of 1992, when the Charter was amended to allow for individual membership. Membership now consisted of the following categories:

1. Full individual members;
2. Full institutional members;
3. Associate individual members;
4. Associate institutional members;
5. Honorary members.

It is important to recall and appreciate how this came about. As noted by the Governance Committee (2002):

“...the [CODESRIA] Charter designed to achieve these lofty objectives could hardly have anticipated the dynamics and restiveness of the Social Science community on the continent in the '80s and '90s, as the third generation of Social Scientists stormed the General Assembly following the liberalization of membership during the 7th General Assembly in 1992. A motion, which was to transform the composition and temper of the General Assembly, was passed. Although considered an innocuous motion aimed at changing the name of the organization, it was a name ‘signalling the attainment of a condition of formally embodying an assembly of all social scientists’ rather than just economic and social researchers in Africa. The motion resulted in a new CODESRIA Charter approved at that General Assembly. Unfortunately, it has never been clear to successive evaluators as to who originated the Charter and in response to what problem(s), or whether the procedure and conditions for amending and or adopting a new Charter were fulfilled.”

What appears to have happened was that the institutional members of CODESRIA – the “real members” – some of whom had not paid their membership dues for years, were pressured by the younger and more activist researchers (the so-called “Third Generation”), who had come for the scientific conference held on the occasion of the General Assembly, into conceding major changes to the Charter, which opened the door to individual membership without careful forethought about its implications for the way CODESRIA organizes and works.

### **Problem of Member Institutes**

As indicated above, CODESRIA’s membership was initially confined to institutes of development research and then extended to faculties of the social sciences. For a number of reasons these institutes failed to play their proper leadership role and lost authority within CODESRIA.

First among the reasons for this loss of influence was non-payment of membership dues, in part as a result of difficulties with getting convertible currency for the purpose – an unsurprising factor in the 1980s and 1990s.

A second problem was the high turnover of leadership of African research institutes, captured by one evaluation teams thus:

“The heads of the member institutions tend to rotate frequently, thus having little knowledge of CODESRIA’S ongoing affairs; and, they have no legitimacy vis-à-vis the executive bodies of CODESRIA inasmuch as the institutions they represent do not pay their membership fees nor are they involved in supporting CODESRIA’s regular activities.”

A third factor was the limited time heads of institutions at the time devoted to continental organisations. This can be illustrated by an experience in 2005. CODESRIA scheduled a conference of Deans of social science faculties, and put out a call for papers. The poor response to this call is captured as follows in the report of the Executive Secretary:



“Perhaps, the most important of these – and certainly one that is worth bringing to the attention of the EC – is the Conference of Deans of Faculties of Social Sciences and Humanities which was billed as one of the most significant of the new initiatives which the Council would be undertaking in a long time. The Conference was very widely advertised early in the year and, following guidelines proposed by the EC at the 62nd EC held in Kinshasa, prospective participants were invited to submit abstracts of papers they would wish to present for consideration. Regrettably, however, at the end of the over six months given for the development of abstracts, the number of applications received was very low – about 20 for a continent with over 1,000 public and private universities which offer training in the Social Sciences and Humanities. This low level of subscription to the conference was reflective not only of the depth of the crises of African higher education but also the weak position of the social and human sciences within the system. For the problem that arose was not so much that deans of faculty were not aware of the initiative – many reported that they saw or received the announcement – as that they did not have the time or the will to propose an abstract. And of those who sent abstracts, only a handful really addressed themselves to the call for applications that was issued; the others went on a trajectory of their own as if the intellectual content of the announcement did not matter. In consequence, there was no option than to postpone the Conference to the end of the first quarter of 2007.”<sup>5</sup> And finally there was the lack of incentives (material or symbolic) that were aimed directly at institutions.

Any of these problems are related to the question of membership. Quite a number of senior scholars think CODESRIA is for the younger generations who need the research grants and benefit from many capacity building networks.

So in a profound sense, one of the main problems is re-engaging the institutions in the affairs of CODESRIA both as members and sources of support, and remaining interesting and useful to the senior scholars.

### **Individual Membership**

We now turn to the impact of individual membership, especially on the selection of the leadership of CODESRIA. First, we must recall that a large number of younger researchers that came to the General Assembly in 1992 had come primarily to present scientific papers at the accompanying conference, for some their first such conference. However, as individual “members”, these young scholars suddenly found themselves involved in a political process in which their votes were being sought by individuals about whom they knew nothing. Some even ended up as elected members of the

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<sup>5</sup> Report of the Executive Secretary, CODESRIA 65th Meeting of the Executive Committee, 7-10 December 2006, Port Louis, Mauritius.

Executive Committee of CODESRIA, an organization about which they knew next to nothing!

This constituted a serious breach of the spirit of the Charter and had all the features of a putsch.

Things came to a head at the General Assembly of 1998, when, in a cynical exploitation of loopholes in the Charter provisions, people were quite literally brought in from the “byways and alley ways” of Dakar as newly recruited members to vote in the election of the President and Members of the Executive Committee. That loophole exists to this day, as long as individuals can join as members at the General Assembly and proceed to vote on vital matters of the institution. Some of the consequences of this – the rancour, factionalism and regionalism and the loss of moral authority of the leadership of CODESRIA – are discussed at length in the *Governance Report of 2002*. In conclusion, the Report calls for:

“ . . . a fundamental review of the governance structures and the provisions relating to (a) the membership of the General Assembly, (b) the composition of the Executive Committee, and (c) the criteria and procedure for the appointment of the ES, and (d) the relationship between different organs of governance.”

It must be noted that this reading of the consequences of the reform in membership is not unanimously shared. The Strategic Plan of CODESRIA considers this opening of membership a positive step:

*“The amendment of the Charter in 1992 to allow for individual membership of CODESRIA, i.e. the broadening of the constituency and the membership of CODESRIA was a reflection of the growth and diversity of the social science research community, and the multiplicity of sites of knowledge production as well as the mobility of the researchers”.*<sup>6</sup>

## **Members’ Rights and Responsibilities**

The second issue has to do with members’ rights/authority and responsibilities. Any system based on membership must create channels of accountability, the exercise of rights and carrying out of duties.

In response to an attempt at getting clarity on the matter, the following considerations were suggested by CODESRIA's President Fatima Harrak at a meeting of the Executive Committee which discussed the Rabat General Assembly:

- The maximum time between two mandates before being eligible again;

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<sup>6</sup> CODESRIA STRATEGIC PLAN FOR 2012-2016: Extending the Frontiers of Social Science Research and Bringing Social Science Research to Public Issues.

- Conditions to be met in order to vote in the General Assembly;
- The profile required of candidates for election to the Executive Committee;
- Mechanisms permitting renewal of membership to assure continuity;
- The possibility of voting by proxy or from a distance;
- The way representativeness should be defined;
- Equitable representation not confined to countries at the centre of their regions.

Some have suggested a further broadening of the membership. For instance,

“In the discussions which followed the Executive Secretary's presentation [at a meeting of the Executive Committee], it was stressed that CODESRIA had to be considered as a platform at the service of African intellectuals as a whole, and not simply serving universities and researchers. Thus research on social movements, mass movements and democratic movements must play a part in CODESRIA's priorities.”<sup>7</sup>

The regionalisation of representation has not resolved other demands because of conflicting claims within the regions themselves. In some cases, the large regional constituency has marginalized some groups. Thus lusophone Africa finds itself squeezed between the three main languages and there have been suggestions that special arrangements be made to ensure representation along language lines.<sup>8</sup>

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## Inclusiveness and Intellectual Openness

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One recurring theme has been the reconciliation of collegiality, democracy and participation on the one hand, and on the other, the institutionalization of a scientific organization in which merit and mentorship play important roles. This tension is at core of some of the problems of CODESRIA.

Related to this is the debate about the ideological direction of CODESRIA. One strong view that emerged from the joint IDRC/SAREC/Ford Foundation Evaluation<sup>9</sup> of CODESRIA in 1996 was the “ideological bias” of CODESRIA:

“Involvement and identification with CODESRIA was perceived to hinge also on another aspect of the organization, namely its representative character. There is in fact a majority who think that CODESRIA does not adequately express the manifold composition of the African social sciences as they actually exist”.

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<sup>7</sup> CODESRIA 78th Meeting of the Executive Committee, 4, 8-9 June 2012, Dakar (Senegal).

<sup>8</sup> CODESRIA 78th Meeting of the Executive Committee, 4, 8-9 June 2012, Dakar (Senegal)

<sup>9</sup> CODESRIA Evaluation 1996: Herschelle S. Challenor, Clark Atlanta University; Aaron Gana, University of Jos. P.117

In the IDRC review, one strong point apparently voiced by a diverse group of people was that “CODESRIA should have no ideological commitment, i.e. it should not ascribe itself to any particular school of thought or politico-intellectual tendency”.

There are two aspects here: one is an institutional adherence by CODESRIA to one specific ideology; the other is the dominance of any particular paradigm within the African social scientific community which may be reflected in the numerical strength of one position in the organisation. In more recent years, the “Left” has bemoaned the “right-wing” shift of CODESRIA, again reflective perhaps of what is happening in Africa’s intellectual community. It is important that these shifts are seen as not based on the *diktat* of the executive bodies of CODESRIA or, as in many other research networks in Africa, by donors. Here, once again, the transparency and integrity of CODESRIA institutions are vital in maintaining a credibly open intellectual endeavour.

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### Regionalization and Decentralization of CODESRIA Activities

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The issue of representativeness has also been related to that of the visibility of the institution. It has been suggested in various ways that CODESRIA is too remote from its community. A number of solutions have been proposed.

One has been to move its main activities around geographically. The General Assembly has thus been held in Yaoundé, Maputo and Rabat. These events have proved extremely costly and unwieldy, with the Rabat one bordering on disaster.

The Governance team led by Professor Issa Shivji suggested sub-regional General Assemblies from which representatives to the General Assembly would be selected.

Others have suggested decentralisation and the setting up of sub-regional offices of CODESRIA, while still others have proposed the setting up of regional social science organisations.

The idea of decentralisation of management has not been well received in CODESRIA. The 10<sup>th</sup> General Assembly in Kampala in December 2002, considering the recommendations of the Governance Review Committee that had been established in 1998, decided against sub-regional offices and assemblies. It, however, recommended decentralisation of activities i.e. holding certain activities on regional lines.

The IDRC Evaluation of CODESRIA had reached the same conclusion after extensive interviews with the African Social Science Community:

“In the periodic debates about ways to ensure that CODESRIA with its pan-African vocation has greater visibility and more regional participation, decentralization has emerged as one policy option. Very few respondents considered decentralization, by which we mean out-posting of CODESRIA Secretariat staff to other regions in Africa, a viable option. While recognizing that opening CODESRIA regional offices would increase its visibility and expand regional participation in its programs, the most common reasons advanced against decentralization were that it would be too costly and might erode the Pan-African perspective of the CODESRIA. Executive Committee

members were the strongest opponents of decentralization (83 percent). As one might expect, most Cooperating Institutions also opposed decentralization (57 percent). No one indicated that decentralization would improve program execution. Although Secretariat members commented on the advantages and disadvantages of this decentralization none of them registered their position of this option. One logical alternative to institutional decentralization is the decentralization of programs through subcontracting arrangements with local institutions.”<sup>10</sup>

Interestingly, donors who had pushed for decentralization of CODESRIA have themselves closed down their regional offices for both administrative and financial reasons.

## General Assembly

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### Internal Debates about the General Assembly

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The problem of the General Assembly has preoccupied virtually every Executive Committee since the inception of CODESRIA. A few examples highlight the problem. A report of the General Assembly of 1988 starts its report of procedures by noting that, “There were lengthy discussions to finalize the work agenda of the Sixth General Assembly and to settle procedural matters”.<sup>11</sup> Among the issues discussed were membership and the right to vote in the General Assembly.

The General Assembly was to be attended by representatives of member institutions. Initially it was to meet biannually but this was extended to triennially.

For the 8<sup>th</sup> General Assembly, the Executive Committee (38<sup>th</sup> Session, 24 June 1995) had agreed on the following criteria for the invitation of individual Members:

- Coordinator of a CODESRIA programme;
- Author of paper for the General Assembly accepted by the Paper Selection Committee;
- Representative of a professional association;
- Ex-Executive Secretaries and ex-Deputy Executive Secretaries;
- Laureate of Gender Institute;
- Representative of fully paid-up member institutes

In its 40<sup>th</sup> Executive Committee meeting (3-4 November 1995), the issues of the Charter and General Assembly that were discussed included:

- Voting rights – the role of institutional and individual members;
- The role and rights of professional associations;
- The election of the President and the principle of rotation;

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<sup>10</sup> CODESRIA EVALUATION 1996 Submitted by DR. HERSCHELLE S. CHALLENGOR, CLARK ATLANTA UNIVERSITY DR. AARON GANA, UNIVERSITY OF JOS

<sup>11</sup> Report of the Sixth General Assembly of CODESRIA, held in Dakar December 1988

- The potential conflict of interest between the regional representation of the President and his pan-African mandate.

Regarding voting modalities at the General Assembly, the Executive Committee was constrained to state, “As for voting modalities during the General Assembly, it was decided that since the latter is sovereign, it could settle the question during deliberations.”

A small committee was to be set up to address these issues.

The Minutes of the 58<sup>th</sup> Meeting of Executive Committee meeting held in Dakar on 29-30 March 2003 raise the issue of regional quotas for participants at the General Assembly. Apparently, an earlier meeting of the Committee had taken a decision to limit participation of any region to a minimum of 10 percent or a maximum of 25 percent of delegates to the General Assembly. However the decision was reversed. It was then decided the selection of delegates presenting papers to the General Assembly would be undertaken by the Scientific Committee “on the basis of merit but with attention paid to gender, linguistic and disciplinary diversity”. Since the selection of papers by the Scientific Committee was based on anonymous submissions, the quota could only be ensured during a second round of allocations.

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## Evaluations and the General Assembly

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The IDRC Evaluation of CODESRIA argued:

“To begin with, CODESRIA was perceived as having little or no internal democracy, arguments were raised with respect to the bureaucratic tendencies in its functioning. The General Assembly was viewed as an ineffective or easily manipulable body because: the members (i.e. the directors of member institutions) have at best only a (sic) cursory information about CODESRIA; they do not want to get involved in the setting up of the more general policies of an organisation from which they feel estranged”.<sup>12</sup>

## Executive Committee

The Executive Committee is at the centre of the management of affairs of CODESRIA. How it is constituted, its legitimacy and scientific standing in the research community has huge implications.

The original Charter states this about membership:

“In between the General Assembly Meetings, the affairs of the Council will be directed by an Executive Committee. The Committee shall consist of six members, elected by the General Assembly. The six members will elect among themselves a Chairman, who is appointed by the Executive

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<sup>12</sup> CODESRIA EVALUATION REPORT Sponsored Jointly by IDRC, SAREC and the Ford Foundation August 1985

Committee. He shall be an ex-officio member of the Committee. Only persons belonging to full member institutions will be eligible for election. Members of the Executive Committee will have a tenure of two years, but a retiring member will be eligible for re-election.

Not more than one elected member of the Executive Committee will belong to national institutions in the same country. In electing members of the Executive Committee, adequate attention will be paid to balanced geographical and language representation.”

The 1982 revisions changed the number of members of the Committee from six to eight and their tenure was extended from two to three years.

It is interesting to note that there were no regional specifications about the members of the Executive Committee. Names would be proposed to the General Assembly entirely on the merit of individuals and, when seconded, be put to secret ballot. There were, nevertheless informal attempts to achieve regional balance in terms of representation,

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## Regional Representation

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By 2005, this non-specification of regional representation had been replaced by a more specific representation of regions as initially defined by the OAU. According to the revised Charter adopted during the 11th General Assembly of CODESRIA held in Maputo on 10 December 2005, Members of the Executive Committee were now to be elected by the General Assembly, representing equally the following regions:

- Central Africa;
- Eastern Africa;
- North Africa;
- Southern Africa;
- West Africa.

Each region would propose three candidates to the General Assembly, which retained two as full members of the Executive Committee. The third candidate would have the status of a substitute member and not more than one elected member of the Executive Committee should come from the same country;

The new Charter failed to attach objective scientific criteria for selection/election. The only criterion highlighted was regional representation, a point underscored by the Governance Review Committee as a source of the “deep crisis of governance” of the 1990s.

It is also important to recall that this regional representation paid no attention to the number of countries in the various regions or the population size of the academic community of member states and of the region as a whole.

One danger of this regionalisation of membership was that individuals actually saw themselves as representing their region at Executive Meetings. In a meeting where

regionalism was evoked, the Executive Secretary noted “that although members of the EC were nominated by sub-regions for commendation to the General Assembly in plenary session, they were in fact elected to their position by the entire General Assembly and are, therefore, not necessarily representatives of sub-regional interests. They are located in the different sub-regions but they hold a pan-African brief. It was, therefore, important to avoid any temptation either to overplay the sub-regional card or assume a role of sub-regional gatekeeping especially as it pertains to activities taking place in the different sub-regions.”<sup>13</sup>

The most important implication of this change is that it cemented the primacy of regional representation above all other possible bases of representation.

As the Committee on Governance observed:

It is not an exaggeration to suggest that the current crisis in CODESRIA is at least partly the crisis of governance, no doubt played out on a larger canvass of various forces outlined briefly in the last chapter. Its origin can be located in the provision in the 1995 charter which made representation regional without attaching objective criteria for selection/election. Article 18(a) of that charter states, inter alia, that ‘members of the Executive Committee shall be elected by the General Assembly representing equally the following regions: Central Africa, East Africa, North Africa, Southern Africa, (and) West Africa. Sub-section (b) of the same article stipulates that ‘each region proposes three candidates to the General Assembly, which retains two as full members of the Executive Committee. The third candidate will have the status of a substitute member.’ Article 17(c) stipulated that ‘no more than one elected member of the Executive Committee shall come from the same country.’ Notwithstanding the foresight embedded in this provision, CODESRIA has been plunged into a deep crisis of governance, partly due to the overplay of (linguistic) regionalism and, which resulted in the forced resignation of its third Executive Secretary since inception. This is a crisis that requires a surgical operation to ‘arrest what is threatening to develop into a crisis of legitimacy, not only for the organs of governance, but even more fatally, for the organisation as a whole. To get at the root of this crisis, it is important to take a historical swipe at the origins of these organs, their elaboration over time and sources of conflict that culminated in the crisis of succession, whose ripples will remain for years to come.’<sup>14</sup>

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## Election of President and Vice-President

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Another significant change was that a President and a Vice-President for CODESRIA would be elected by the General Assembly from among members of the Executive Committee and its governing organs.

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<sup>13</sup> CODESRIA 60th Meeting of the Executive Committee, 4-5 August 2004, Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of Congo

<sup>14</sup> Report of the Governance Committee, CODESRIA, 2002, Page 22



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## Professionalization of the Secretariat

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It is clear from the original documentation that the Secretariat of CODESRIA was expected to be a small operation whose location could be moved around. The presumption was that African academics would take up jobs as professionals for short stays and return to their respective jobs. Consequently, there was no provision for career paths within the organization. One strong argument for such a position was to encourage a steady flow of new minds to the Secretariat and to combat bureaucratic entrenchment. We believe this matter of the Secretariat needs a specialised review and management audit.

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## Scientific leadership of CODESRIA activities

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A central task of CODESRIA decision-making bodies is managing or overseeing the “development of the social sciences in Africa”. This is fundamentally an intellectual responsibility of the Executive Committee.

## Some Elements for the Future

The Governance Review Committee made suggestions about membership as indicated in Box 1 below.

### **BOX 1**

#### **Recommendations of the Governance Report on Membership**

Originally CODESRIA’s membership was confined to directors of university-based research and training institutes. Over the years, it has been found that, in practice, individual scholars have been far more active and are largely responsible for the successes of CODESRIA. The 1995 Charter provides for both institutional and individual membership open to all ‘African universities and organisations’ engaged in social science research and training and African social science researchers respectively. Both these categories are full members but curiously, the Charter provides that ‘only institutional members shall have the right to vote.’ In practice, as far as we are aware, this provision has not been adhered to and in fact is inconsistent with other provisions of the Charter.

We are of the view that CODESRIA’s practice should be affirmed by the constitution. It should have both institutional and individual membership but a careful balance must be maintained between these categories insofar as representation is concerned. In our detailed recommendations, we have taken account of the fact that representation of institutional membership ought not to

overwhelm individual membership representation and institutes from one region ought not to dominate. This is to maintain regional balance.

Associate membership, open to both institutions and individuals, should also continue.

All members, whether full or individual, should be fee-paying and fees should be payable three years in advance. In the past CODESRIA, for reasons of difficulties in transferring funds, etc., has not been strict about enforcing payment of fees. These reasons are no longer valid and members should be able to pay reasonable fees.

We recommend two categories of membership: full and associate.

We recommend that both full and associate membership should be open to individuals and institutions.

We recommend that all categories of members must pay appropriate fees and this requirement should be strictly observed. (The eligibility for membership is discussed in the next section.)

## Part 2

### PROPOSALS/RECOMMENDATIONS

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#### Introduction

As appears from the history outlined above, a critical feature of CODESRIA's governance arrangements has been *a persistent lack of clarity about membership of the Council and its incidents* – who/what is entitled to be a member, with what rights and obligations? From the exclusively institutional membership with which it started, the Council, under the pressure of events and through a series of *ad hoc* accommodations, mutated into a mixture of institutional and individual membership. This occurred without a deliberate thinking through of the full implications of the serial adjustments for the desired membership, governance structure and workings of the institution. A particularly telling factor in this process was the holding of CODESRIA's major scientific conference on the occasion of the General Assembly and at the same site, which made it difficult to exclude conference participants from exercising membership rights, including voting for office holders at the General Assembly on payment of "membership" fees – some without having considered or applied for such membership ahead of the Assembly!

Again, despite the formalization of individual membership by the Charter in 1992 (the 7<sup>th</sup> GA), key questions have remained unanswered. Among these are questions as to eligibility criteria and the incidents of individual membership, the relationship between individual and institutional members and the weighting, if any, of voting and representational rights of the two categories of membership.

Compounding this have been major gaps in relation to the qualities required of office holders and the processes for leadership selection. There are no stated criteria for eligibility for appointment to the Presidency or the Executive Committee other than that of being a CODESRIA member, therefore, no formalized process for assessing eligibility, and only a crude process for election – by regional groupings convening *ad hoc* at the General Assembly. While this loose approach may have been adequate in the initial phase when membership was limited to a relatively small group of institutions, with leaders who knew each other and were established figures on the social science scene, the approach became increasingly dysfunctional as the constituency became larger and more diversified, and as formal membership was expanded.

It became easy to take undue advantage of these governance deficits, as has occurred regularly over the past two decades or so. Despite efforts to address the problem, this has resulted in the most embarrassing near-disasters at every General Assembly since then, contributing to a loss of control over the quality of its elected leaders and some loss of

credibility of the Council's scientific leadership and standing within the social science community. It is the considered view of this Review Committee that without addressing these issues in a deliberate, decisive and consistent manner, and setting up a robust governance structure and process, CODESRIA will continue down the path which the current Executive Committee, reflecting the views of most members of the community, wishes to arrest.

It is appreciated that governance reform cannot be undertaken without reference to a clarification and affirmation of the vision and values and thus, the essential identity of the institution. Furthermore, such reform will have clear implications for management structures and practices. The following proposals are, therefore, to be taken together with the intellectual vision review and management audit currently under way.

With that proviso, the following proposals and recommendations made in respect of:

- A. MEMBERSHIP
- B. GOVERNANCE AND LEADERSHIP
- C. MANAGEMENT AND ADMINISTRATION and
- D. CHARTER AMENDMENT

are put forward for consideration by the Executive Committee and further processing as appropriate.

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## A. MEMBERSHIP

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To move away from the current state of paralysing ambiguity, it is necessary to rationalize and formalize the basis and incidents of *membership* of CODESRIA, as distinct from access by institutions and individuals to its grants, scientific activities and other programmes. This distinction should pose no serious problem as membership has never been a condition for access to CODESRIA grants or participation in its scientific programmes, activities and other benefits.

It is proposed that membership of CODESRIA continue to be open to African centres/institutes, professional associations and networks involved in social science research and teaching, as well as to individual social science and humanities researchers. Further, a person, institution or other body seeking membership should meet set eligibility criteria, put in an application and undertake to be bound by the CODESRIA Charter and Code of Ethics. In addition, every member should pay appropriate membership dues. Thus, while participation in its work will continue to be open to institutions and individuals on merit, eligibility to membership of CODESRIA and its incidents should be clearly delimited.

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## Eligibility for Membership

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### Full Membership

*Institutional Membership:* open to African social science and humanities research and teaching centres and units within and outside universities; discipline-based and issue-focused professional associations and networks; national research bodies; and not-for-profit research NGOs – all accredited under applicable laws, having standing within the scientific communities to which they belong, with a letter of support from a member in good standing.

Membership of such centres, units, networks, professional associations and NGOs confers no special rights or benefits on individual staff or researchers, except where such individuals represent their centre, or other body.

*Individual Membership:* open to African members and Fellows of social science and humanities faculties and departments of universities, independent research centres, units, networks, professional and issue-focussed associations and not-for-profit NGOs; independent African researchers, writers and public intellectuals with a record of continued engagement in intellectual production; and African students engaged in doctoral studies in the social sciences and humanities.

Associate Membership As in the Charter, Associate Membership is available to non-African institutions and individuals who otherwise meet the criteria for Full Membership, as set out above.

Honorary Membership As in Charter, but for the substitution of the phrase “... African social sciences and humanities...” for “..... African social sciences .....”.

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## Process

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Current as well as prospective institutional and individual members shall apply for membership to the Secretariat, which shall vet all applications in light of the eligibility criteria and make recommendations for approval by the Executive Committee.

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## Incidents of Membership

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**Full members**, the following rights, privileges and obligations flow from membership of CODESRIA. First is participation in the governance of the Council through the right to vote and to hold positions at all levels of the Council, as well as to participate in or be represented at the General Assembly and on its committees and other organs. These rights are balanced by an obligation to uphold the highest standards in their scientific

work, support the vision, principles and programmes of CODESRIA, and abide by the CODESRIA Code of Ethics.

*Associate Members* [as in Charter, with modifications]

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## Voting Rights

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Unless otherwise specified, votes shall be so weighted as to accord 40 percent to institutions, 60 percent to individual members.

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## Code of Ethics

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In line with the proposed re-visioning and reinvigoration of CODESRIA, a Code of Ethics must be drawn up and made binding on all members and office-bearers of the Council.<sup>15</sup>

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## B. GOVERNANCE AND LEADERSHIP

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### GOVERNING ORGANS OF CODESRIA

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- (a) **The General Assembly**
- (b) **The Executive Committee**

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### General Assembly

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The General Assembly, as the primary governance body, is constituted by members – institutional and individual – and participation in its work must be on a basis that ensures appropriate representation of the entire constituency in its disciplinary, gender, generational, language, and sub-regional diversity. To that end, *participation at the General Assembly shall be open to all fully paid-up members, who have had that status for at least three months prior to the General Assembly, whether present or by remote means.*

We have proposed new processes for the election of office holders which do away with the practice of using regional caucuses for the purpose at the General Assembly, and the needless tensions they have occasioned in the recent past. That should help create an

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<sup>15</sup> The existing Code might be amended to make it generally applicable.

atmosphere conducive to the broadest possible participation in discussions at the General Assembly. Indeed, consideration might be given to allowing non-member participants in a concurrent scientific conference to take part in such discussions, *but without the right to vote*. Given the age and calibre of participants at such conferences, their presence would be a positive for CODESRIA – enriching Assembly discussions with a “young” perspective, and, perhaps, helping to recruit the next generation of CODESRIA members.

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## Executive Committee

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### Eligibility for Office

On the issue of eligibility for office in CODESRIA, and given the essentially scientific nature of the mandate and practice of CODESRIA, it is necessary to make explicit and binding what has been implicit from the beginning, namely, *the primacy of scientific credentials, integrity and standing in the community, and familiarity and concurrence with the CODESRIA vision, as the bases for the selection of the President, Members of the Executive Committee and the Executive Secretary*. Complementary criteria include experience and credibility within the scientific community, and a record of Pan-Africanist social scientific work. It will also be necessary to ensure an overall balance of disciplines, geographic/linguistic divisions, gender and generations, etc. *But the latter considerations must not be allowed to undermine CODESRIA’s essentially scientific standing and credibility.*

### Composition

The Executive Committee shall consist of 15 elected Members, made up of the President, the Vice-President and 13 Members, with the Executive Secretary as a non-voting Member.

### Eligibility to Executive Committee Membership

Each Member of the Executive Committee, which provides leadership to the Council and answers directly to the General Assembly, must satisfy the eligibility criteria for leadership, with appropriate modifications, and be elected according to the process outlined below. Only persons or institutions that are and have been full members for at least the preceding three years shall be eligible for election to the Executive Committee (President, Vice-President or Member).

To ensure inclusiveness in this vital organ of the Council, the current Charter provides for the allocation of two seats on the Executive Committee to each of the five African Union regions, with an informal understanding regarding linguistic representation. The current practice is for this allocation to be done by regional caucuses meeting on the occasion of the GA and each region proposing three names out of which the GA elects two for a total of 10 Members. The Charter further provides that adequate attention be paid to balanced gender, generational, sub-regional, linguistic, and disciplinary representation.

Tenure of Members: It is not proposed to alter the relevant provision in the Charter.

Functions It is not proposed to alter the relevant provision in the Charter, except for the deletion of the provisions relating to the establishment of a Scientific Committee (Art 20 g) and TITLE X).<sup>16]</sup>

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## President

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Effectively, the “Leader” of the African social science community, the President of CODESRIA must have impeccable social science credentials and track record. This cannot be assured by the current practice, by which the President is elected by the General Assembly from the list of members newly selected for the Executive Committee by regional groupings convened for the purpose at the General Assembly, with no explicit reference to scientific merit, special qualifications, or functions. To correct the situation, a different, more deliberate approach is proposed below.

### Tenure

No change from current practice – one term, non-renewable.

### **Election of Officers (President, Vice-President, Executive Committee members)**

Over the past two decades and more, the General Assembly has been so overwhelmed by the process and tensions around the election of officers that other vital business, such as the receipt and discussion of reports from the Executive Committee, and the debating and approval of strategic plans and the expenditure programme, have attracted little attention or interest.

To correct this by facilitating a more deliberate and informed process for the election of our leaders, and to allow space for important substantive work to be done in an appropriate atmosphere at the Assembly, we propose that *the election of the President, Vice-President and Members of the Executive Committee be conducted mostly in advance of the General Assembly, through an electronic/postal process, as follows:*

- A five-member ***Independent Nominations Panel*** shall be appointed by the Executive Committee at least 12 months ahead of the General Assembly. The responsibility of the Independent Nominations Panel will be to solicit/receive and process nominations of candidates for the Presidency, Vice-Presidency and membership of the Executive Committee that is to assume office at the Assembly.

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<sup>16</sup> We do not recommend a separate scientific committee established by Charter. The co-existence of two autonomous bodies both reporting to the General Assembly has been a source of friction. It has also encouraged the view that the leadership of an organisation such as CODESRIA could be separated from the Council’s scientific task. Our assumptions about the scientific leadership of the Executive Committee and rigorous selection process proposed, assume that the composition of the Executive Committee will be sufficient to provide the broad scientific leadership required. The Executive Committee is free to appoint a Scientific Sub-Committee, with membership beyond itself. It may also call upon individual scholars to take on tasks, as is the practice, for instance, in the Small Grants Programme.



- Membership of the Panel should be as follows: (i) one former President, (ii) four highly respected members in good standing, drawn from the entire membership of the Council, with due regard to disciplinary, regional, linguistic, gender and generational factors.
- Nominations for institutional and individual candidates, with CVs and such other details as set out in the Bye-Laws, shall be solicited from all members in good standing by electronic and other means. After the set period, nominations received shall be scrutinized, validated and assessed by the Panel in accordance with the set criteria for membership eligibility. Final slates of eligible candidates for the Presidency, the Vice-Presidency and the two categories of membership of the Executive Committee shall be developed, with justifications, by the Panel and circulated to all members in good standing to cast their votes for candidates of their choice for the various positions of President and Vice-President, institutional and individual members of the EC. The notices shall include a reminder to all voters of the high value attached by CODESRIA to diversity – disciplinary, regional, linguistic, gender and generational.
  - Upon receipt of the results, the Panel shall collate, validate and rank the votes for the various positions – President, Vice-President, institutional member and individual member – and declare the results of the elections as follows:
    - (i) For the position of President, the candidate receiving the highest number of votes in that category shall be declared President;
    - (ii) For the position of Vice-President, the candidate receiving the highest number of votes in that category shall be declared Vice-President;
    - (iii) For institutions, the five candidates receiving the highest number of votes in that category shall be declared members of the EC; and
    - (iv) For individual candidates, the eight receiving the highest number of votes in that category shall be declared members of the EC.
  - The slate of successful candidates, made up of
    - (i) the names of the candidates elected President and Vice-President;
    - (ii) the names of the five institutions elected members of the EC; and
    - (iii) the names of the eight individual persons elected members of the EC

and accompanied by the full profiles of all elected candidates, shall be submitted to the EC for announcement to the full membership of the Council, which shall occur at least three months before the GA at which the new EC is to be inducted into office.

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## C. MANAGEMENT/ADMINISTRATION

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### **The Executive Secretary**

The Executive Secretary, who heads the Secretariat and, under the authority of the Executive Committee, leads the operations of the Council, shall be appointed by the Executive Committee, as at present. In order to ensure that she/he has credibility within the community and with the EC, as well as capacity to manage the enterprise, care must be taken to ensure that the Executive Secretary has a solid background of academic and managerial experience.

### **Relationship between Executive Committee and Executive Secretariat**

The day-to-day running of CODESRIA is by the Secretariat headed by an Executive Secretary appointed by the Executive Committee. A recurring theme in many CODESRIA documents is the accountability of the Executive Secretary to the Executive Committee. At the same time, successive Executive Secretaries have complained about a tendency of the Executive Committee occasionally to go beyond its normal oversight functions. This is acknowledged as one set of problems that would have to be resolved if CODESRIA is to secure its future.<sup>17</sup>

After careful consideration of the issue, and taking into account the views of both the Executive Committee and the Executive Secretariat, the Review Committee affirms the view that, ultimately, the answer lies in the calibre of persons elected or appointed to the respective positions, their appreciation of their functions, and their adhesion to the Charter of CODESRIA, and their integrity.

### **Management Audit**

There is urgent need for a thorough management audit to determine the *proper establishment* and *job descriptions* within the Executive Secretariat, as well as to consider the introduction of a *performance management system* to bring the Secretariat up to top international standards. Also to be assessed are the Secretariat's *ways of working*, *particularly in respect of relations with the Executive Committee*. This is an undertaking currently under consideration by the Executive Committee.

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<sup>17</sup> Report of the Sixth General Assembly of CODESRIA, held in Dakar in December 1988. [PROBLEM SOLVED, NO?]

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## D. CHARTER AMENDMENT

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For the reasons advanced in this Report, the relevant provisions of the CODESRIA Charter of 2005 need to be clarified and rationalized along the lines outlined in this Report, and as set out in the attached draft amendments to the Charter. Upon approval by the Executive Committee, these amendments may be tabled as such, before the next General Assembly for approval and adoption in accordance with the Charter.

Alternatively, the Executive Committee may opt to present the proposed amendments to a Constituent General Assembly, i.e., one convened along the lines set out in this Report for the specific purpose of approving the proposed Charter amendments. This would obviate having to deal with the old-style General Assembly, with the attendant risk of running into the very problems that the new proposals seek to avoid.

Whichever position is taken, the Executive Committee will have to undertake a widespread and sustained communication and canvassing process to clarify the background and make the case for the proposed changes and the process adopted for bringing them into being.