

## **CODESRIA**

### **SYMPOSIUM ON GENDER**

Topic: **Women's Struggles Today**

Date: **9<sup>th</sup> -10<sup>th</sup> May, 2016**

Venue: Cairo, Egypt

**DEADLINE for application: 25 March 2016**

The Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa (CODESRIA) announces the organization of the CODESRIA Gender symposium on 9 - 10 May in Cairo, Egypt. This year, the topic of the annual forum will be **"Women's Struggles Today"**.

Paying attention to African history is to try and understand, beyond silences and omissions, women's struggles to bring key contributions to the development and emancipation of their societies. Without travelling far into history, one can say that through their participation in anti-colonial fights to defend both their economic interests and political rights as well as their frontline involvement in popular protests of the post-colonial period, African women have always demonstrated their ability to evade the private space configured for them by society and its patriarchal values. The celebrated women's march to Grand Bassam, the resistance of the Lagos women traders through multiple and varied protests and petitioning, the sacrifice of the Nder heroines, female presence in the FLN, PAIGC, MPLA armed struggles, or even still in the anti-apartheid fight are as many illustrations.

This continuous presence and permanent action in the public sphere will, from the 70s on, have special resonance with the way African women appropriated, the discussions (the various conferences of Mexico, Copenhagen, Nairobi, Beijing, Cairo) and international and regional conventions (CEDAW, the Maputo Protocol, etc.) to focus their claims on issues pertaining to having control over their bodies, sexuality and fertility, but more importantly, over their democratic rights, thus widening up for themselves democratic and economic governance spaces.

Today, women's struggles must be understood through a paradox which materializes the complexity specific to our days. If globalization has set as horizon of meaning democracy and human right compliance with the issue of male-female equality as consequence/corollary, never before have women's rights been so battered or in so utter vulnerability. Even if African women have gained greater visibility thanks to the positions they currently fill in local, national and international organizations, one cannot avoid the feminization of poverty, the non-attainment of the MDGs, the scale of gender-based violence and terrorism which downgrade them to the status of mere human bombs and sex slaves serving ideologies which ignore the sanctity of life.

What struggle strategies do African women develop today in a context marked by neoliberal hegemony with an amplification of poverty and inequalities in societies in which they live in greater vulnerability, especially in an environment of land grabbing and climate change? How do African women struggle and develop a discourse in their quest for equality and the full realization of their citizenship in a context of resurgence of cultural and religious fundamentalism, with terrorism and insecurity gaining more and more ground on the

continent? What can be the impact of the rise of homophobia on African women's struggle and even the very receptiveness to their discourses?

What are the new challenges imposed today on the struggle of African by the current trajectory of the African States which looks like an "ambiguous adventure" of democracy (the Arab Spring, constitutional changes, empty political debate and fragmentation of the political space)? To which extent does the observed security drift, both at global and local levels, and the exacerbation of violence it generates impact on the struggle of African women today? How do women build spaces for contesting and for influencing public policies for greater consideration of their rights and liberties?

How have the African Union and the sub-regional organizations carried the struggles of African women and how does this influence the agenda of these organizations to better reflect the issue of gender equality both economically and politically?

This important meeting shall also provide an opportunity to question the female leadership personalities emerging today on the continent, the new types of women's organizations and the features of the women's social movement in the current context. Other highlights will include new issues in the women's struggle agenda and how women's ways of doing things are impacted by the social networks and other ITCs. What have been the responses of the States and other segments of society?

These issues and others not listed here shall be at the heart of the debates for the 2016 edition of the CODESRIA Annual Gender Symposium.

Applications for the candidates should include:

1. An application letter;
2. A curriculum vitae;
3. Two (2) published papers;
4. A proposal of not more than ten (10) pages in length;
5. A copy of the passport.

The Symposium will provide an opportunity for African scholars to present their research on the selected theme and also to exchange views with their peers and contribute in the development of an African perspective. All interested researchers are invited to send their contributions no later than 25 March 2016 to the address below:

[gender.symposium@codesria.sn](mailto:gender.symposium@codesria.sn)

**For specific questions, please contact:**

**CODESRIA  
GENDER SYMPOSIUM**

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