



**CODESRIA
CODESRIA
GENDER INSTITUTE**

Topic: Gender, Land Management and Food Security in Africa

Date: 8th – 26th June, 2015

Venue: Dakar, Senegal

DEADLINE: 20th April 2015

Call for applications: Session 2015

The Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa (CODESRIA) is pleased to announce the 2015 session of its annual Gender Institute. It therefore invites researchers to submit their applications for participation in this Institute to be held from **8th to 26th June, 2015** in Dakar, Senegal.

Launched in 1994 by CODESRIA, the Gender Institute is an interdisciplinary forum which brings every year together about fifteen researchers from various parts of the continent and the Diaspora, as well as some non-African scholars who are undertaking innovative research on topics related to the general theme of Gender. Initially aimed at promoting widespread awareness of the concept of gender in the social science research community, the Institute has subsequently been organized around specific themes designed to strengthen the integration of gender analysis into social science research in Africa and encourage the emergence of a community of researchers versed in the field of gender studies.

The General Assembly of CODESRIA will be held from 8 to 12 June 2015. In order to give young researchers the opportunity to participate in such an event, the 2015 session of the Gender Institute will exceptionally take place from 8 to 26 June 2015.

Organization

The sessions are led by a scientific director who, with the support of the selected resource persons, ensures that the laureates are exposed to a wide range of research and policy issues. Each laureate is required to prepare a research paper to be presented during the session. The revised versions of such papers will undergo a peer review for publication by CODESRIA. The CODESRIA Documentation and Information Centre (CODICE) will provide participants with a comprehensive bibliography on the theme of the Institute. Access to a number of documentation centers in and around Dakar will also be facilitated.

Languages

The CODESRIA Gender Institute will be held in French and in English through simultaneous translation.

2015 Session Theme: Gender, Land Management and Food Security in Africa

The food deficit and soaring prices of basic foodstuff resulting from the 2008-2009 crisis has brought to light the need for African states to pay close attention in their public policies, to vital issues of land, food security and even food sovereignty. The July 2009 Declaration of the

African Union (AU) on *Land Issues and Challenges in Africa* reaffirms "the crucial importance of land in socio-economic growth and sustainable development, and in securing the social, economic, cultural and livelihood means" of populations. It is worth recognizing the imperative need to address food sovereignty which is considered as the right of every people and every state to acquire the means to directly provide for its basic food requirements, especially since FAO admits that over 200 million people suffer from malnutrition in Africa.

Addressing this issue is all the more urgent because of land grabbing by foreign investors in collusion with governments and local elites. This disturbing trend has affected over 200 million hectares of land over the past decade, disregarding the rights of owners and users, especially women. On top of that, are the already negative effects of climate change on agro-food systems.

Sub-Saharan Africa is not outside of this large scale dynamic of land rights acquisition. In 2006, like South Korea, the United Arab Emirates, Japan and Saudi Arabia, China signed with several African states cooperation agreements that allowed the establishment of experimental farms in Zambia, Zimbabwe, Uganda and Tanzania. In West Africa, requests for farm land acquisition are increasing in countries such as Mali and Senegal. However, some experts on the issue of land grabbing in Africa have posited that the continent could, in a few decades, become one of the largest food producers and exporters while continuing to be confronted with food insecurity.

Understanding the dynamics of such phenomena requires linking them with food security policies implemented by States. The failure of the latter to guarantee the right to food has prompted the call by some social movements for radical reforms in the agro-food system in Africa and for protection of the rights of local producers and consumers. For these movements, the connivance of the neoliberal State and the global capital is to be identified as the source of food insecurity. This connivance serves the interests of some local level elites and does not contribute to a significant transformation of the agro-food system for the benefit of populations, especially the most vulnerable. Therefore, we should understand the State no longer as a neutral space that helps to regulate the agro-food system but rather as a complex arena of struggle between different stakeholders or classes. These struggles result in the definition of new variable-geometry political spaces where, at different levels, issues emerge around the control of the agro-food system.

While the visions developed in recent decades by many social movements around the "food security" concept call for radical changes in the agro-food systems have been very critical, however, the insufficient attention paid to the gender issue is worth noting. Yet, it has already been proven that a better accounting of gender in agro-food policies could help a significant increase in agricultural yields and productivity. In these radical changes of the agrarian systems, how to address the gender dimension in order to ensure food security? This consideration implies addressing issues related to the democratization of land access and control within communities but also institutional choices that can facilitate this democratization.

We must not forget that land is the productive base of agriculture. It is an important factor for building social cohesion and national identity. More than an economic property, land is also essentially a social and cultural resource.

However, women, particularly those in rural areas, are often subject to discriminating practices in the access to land, due to two main factors: (i) the pluralism of legal systems with

the pre-eminence of customary or traditional land tenure system over modern law (which tends to limit the scope of the enshrinement of the legal principle of gender equality); and (ii) socio-cultural constraints. Women are generally disadvantaged in the entire process of land allocation, even within family farmlands. Essentially, they obtain access to land through bequest or collectively through women's groups that are generally granted small plots.

On top of women's low status, there is the ignorance by the vast majority of them of laws that could enable them to claim their rights. Even when they know the legislation, sociological burdens prevent them from questioning social rules, particularly relationships between men and women.

However, most studies (FAO) today recognize that women are responsible for over 60 percent of food production in developing countries and are at the heart of the economy of *care*. For women to use land more advantageously, and thus contribute more to food security, they need to **have access to it, manage it and benefit from the economic incentives** related to its control.

Several countries have initiated land reform policies (Mali, Senegal, DRC, Madagascar, etc.) placing private property at the heart of the process. Emerging questions include: how to ensure that these processes take into account the specificities of women and gender-specific constraints? How to reconcile agricultural productivity, agri-business and a secured access of women to land? How to make gender a central focus of food security in public policies? How, in connection with land management, are these various issues relating to security and food sovereignty tackled in the public policies implemented by African States and in the claims of social movements? What is the impact of the global context on local experiences in terms of land management and food sovereignty? How is this impact reflected, especially on gender relations? What alternative proposals have been experimented and what are their limits? What are the discourses and theories contributed by African social sciences to give meaning to national, regional and global challenges related to gender, land management and food security in Africa?

The 2015 Gender Institute has set three objectives:

1. exposing laureates, on the one hand, to the concepts and methodological tools of women and gender studies, methods of feminist criticism and gender analysis ;
2. engaging discussions from a gender perspective on issues related to the theme of the Institute; and
3. developing a critical perspective on the relationships between gender, land management and food security.

The Director

CODESRIA will select a senior scholar or researcher who has been conducting research for many years on issues of **Gender, Land Management and Food Security in Africa** to direct the 2015 Gender Institute. The Director of the Institute will carry out the following tasks:

- Participate in the selection of laureates and the identification of appropriate resource persons;
- Interact with resource persons and laureates towards adequate preparation for the Institute;

- Design the courses for the session, including the specification of sub-themes;
- Deliver a set of lectures and conduct a critical analysis of the papers presented by resource persons and laureates;
- Submit a written scientific report on the session;
- The Director will edit the revised versions of the papers presented by the resource persons with a view to submitting them for publication in one of CODESRIA's collections. He will also assist CODESRIA in assessing the papers presented by laureates during the Institute for publication.

Resource Persons

Lectures to be delivered during the session are intended to offer laureates an opportunity to advance their reflections on the theme of the Institute. Resource persons should therefore be senior scholars or researchers who have published extensively on the theme, and who have significant contributions to make to the debates on it. They will be expected to produce lecture materials which would stimulate laureates to engage in discussion and debate around their respective lectures and the general body of literature available on the theme.

Once selected, resource persons must:

- Interact with the Director of the Institute and the laureates to help the latter readjust their research questions and their methodological approaches;
- Submit a copy of their course materials for reproduction and distribution to participants no later than one week before they deliver their lectures;
- Deliver their lectures, participate in debates and comment on the research proposals and the papers of the laureates;
- Review and submit the revised version of their lecture notes or research papers for publication by CODESRIA not later than two months following their presentation at the Institute.

Laureates

Applicants should be PhD candidates or scholars in their early career with a proven capacity to conduct research on the theme of the Institute. Intellectuals active in the policy process and/or social movements and civil society organizations are also encouraged to apply. The number of places offered by CODESRIA at each session is limited to fifteen (15). Non-African scholars who are able to raise funds for their participation may also apply for a limited number of places.

Application for resource persons

Applications for the position of resource person should include:

1. An application letter;
2. A curriculum vitae;
3. Two (2) published papers;
4. A proposal of not more than five (5) pages in length, outlining the issues to be covered in their **three (3) proposed lectures**, including one on methodological issues;

Applications for laureates

Applications for the position of laureate should include:

1. One duly completed application form;

2. An application letter;
3. A letter indicating institutional or organizational affiliation;
4. A curriculum vitae;
5. A research proposal not more than ten (10) pages including a descriptive analysis of the work the applicant intends to undertake, an outline of the theoretical interest of the topic chosen by the applicant, the relationship of the topic to the problematic and concerns of the theme of the 2015 Gender Institute ;
6. Two (2) reference letters from scholars or researchers known for their competence and expertise in the candidate's research area (geographic and disciplinary), including their names, addresses, telephone numbers and email addresses;
7. A copy of the passport.

Applications Deadline

The deadline for submission of applications is **20th April, 2015**. The laureates will be notified of the results of the selection in early **May 2015**. They will thus be able to use the rest of the month of May to gather field information and improve their draft research report to be presented at the Institute. The laureates will be required to work on the document and prepare it for publication after the Institute.

Submission of Applications

All applications should be sent electronically to: gender.institute@codesria.sn.

For specific questions, please contact:

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