



CODESRIA

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## POLICY DIALOGUE SERIES

Conscious of the paucity of sustained interaction among researchers, practitioners and policy makers, and determined to redress this as part of its contribution to reviving a culture of public policy discussions in Africa, the Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa (CODESRIA) has decided to initiate a Policy Dialogue Series designed to serve as a forum for addressing specific questions that are central to Africa's development. The immediate aim of the Policy Dialogue Series is to encourage social scientists to play a greater role in disseminating the outcome of their research to the African policy community and to expose the policy community to rich output of African scholars. Over the long-term, it is hoped that this interaction will also deepen the content and relevance of policy discourses and practices in Africa.

Each dialogue in the series will be held as a one-day intensive discussion around a specific theme to which researchers, policy makers and practitioners will be invited to contribute their experiences, viewpoints and perspectives. The dialogue will also serve as an opportunity to bring to the attention of participants, the results of CODESRIA-supported research activities relevant to the particular theme/issue under consideration. It is planned to hold three such dialogues annually. A synthesis of the proceedings of each of the dialogues will be published in order to bring the conclusions reached to a wider audience and invite critical responses.

### **Productivity, Market and Agricultural Financing in Africa**

It is proposed that the first meeting in the dialogue series should be held on the theme of *Productivity, Market and Agricultural Financing in Africa*. This is a theme which is particularly pertinent to the contemporary African experience and context, especially as it pertains to the issue of the food deficit that continues to confront the continent. Various explanations have been proffered as to why Africa is still faced with a food crisis: "inappropriate" public policy options; poor levels of mechanisation; and inadequate market mechanisms and institutions, among others.

Irrespective of the particular view which may be taken, one issue is clearly not in dispute: the limited performance of the African agricultural sector is not a self-evident matter or a foregone conclusion. Given that, objectively, Africa has enough resources to cater to the needs of its peoples, the challenge remains as to how to harness these resources to respond to the needs of the populace. Fresh perspectives need, therefore, to be brought to bear on such basic questions as the internal and external constraints that limit the expansion of agricultural productivity, the policy directions and strategies that need to be developed to achieve food security, and the challenges of reform that need to be addressed.

The proposed dialogue will involve the participation of researchers, farmers, farmers' organisations, agricultural traders and processors, agricultural policy makers, officials of public agricultural agencies, NGO representatives active in the agricultural sector, and development practitioners, among others. Participants will be invited to undertake a frank and open exchange of views around a structured programme of presentations and discussions. Among the issues which will be focused upon are:

- The necessary social and technical conditions for the improvement of agricultural output and productivity;
- Institutional Pre-requisites for Improved Agricultural Production;
- The Development of Local and International Markets.

For further information about the dialogue programme, please contact:

### **The Policy Dialogue Series (Attention: Virginie Niang)**

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