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EDITORIAL

The Africa of 2022: Crisscrossing Crises

SIPHAMANDLA ZONDI , TINUADE OJO  & JOSEF KEUTCHEU 

Editors

Salute to Africa that is changing for better!

The year 2022 marked the 20th anniversary of the African Union (AU). The AU marked a realisation that the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) established in 1963 had fulfilled its mandate of ridding the continent of overt colonial rule and a new platform was needed to drive Africa towards full prosperity. Conceived amid the revisiting of the discourse of African Renaissance, the AU was meant to respond to both historical and contemporary imperatives. It was born to be a more agile, efficient, and effective institution. Born long after the Cold War ended, it was meant to reposition Africa strategically in global affairs.

Out of this were born a lot of initiatives, many efforts, and many changes. But the condition of Africa, to use Ali Mazrui's 1971 phrase, remains dire in many respects. In many areas, the dream of a prosperous and peaceful Africa remains deferred.

As the year wrapped up, the memory of the devastating period of Covid -19 pandemic continued to fade away. The disease caused so much dis-ease during 2020 and 2021 and was rumoured to be on an imminent comeback sometime during 2022. The thought of it was traumatising because Africa simply cannot afford such a brutal and virulent disease. It can hardly cope with lockdowns that free economic, social, and political activities, further diminishing the already compromised quality of life for many.

Covid just did not allow Africa to cope with or overcome the more longstanding poverty, inequality, unemployment, and violence crises, and violence crises to cope with or overcome the more longstanding crises of poverty, inequality, unemployment, and violence. The long-term calamities have detained Africa in a crisis management mode. They have buried Africa's dreams and aspirations. They sap the energies of African people in tough and unnecessary struggles for mere survival daily. They rob the continent of its vitality and its creativity.

Much effort has been made to redream a bright African future. Efforts that seek to re-inspire Africa to believe in the possibilities again. Some of this is purely utopian, a sort of escapism, a trance made necessary but the all too ghastly conditions of the present. Some of these are calculated processes of anticipating what human efforts can produce for Africa in a reasonable timeline.

In this edition, the journal platforms work on varied questions of reflection at the centre of discussions about the African condition. This includes poverty, indebtedness, identity politics, reform of states, democratization and so forth. We trust that they stimulate new thinking, new energy to on African renaissance, and richer discussions.

I thank the peer reviewers for their sterling support to the journal and the editorial team for their hard work. We dedicate this edition to the youth on whose agency the task of building a better Africa now rests.

Dedication to POWA

This volume of AJPS is dedicated to POWA.

31 July 2022 marks 60 years since the founding of the Pan-African Women's Organisation (POWA) in Dar es Salaam, then Tanganyika. It became the first continental organisation to be formed in Africa, just a year ahead of the OAU.

The POWA was a brainchild of the All-African Women's Conference - *Conférence des femmes africaines*, held in Guinea-Conakry in July 1961 to consider the interests and roles of women in the pursuit of liberation and unification of Africa. This was an initiative of several liberation movements and 10 independent African countries at the time. In 1962, these organisation decided to establish POWA to "unite women of African descent through the creation of a single platform that promotes an exchange of good practices and initiates joint efforts to support human rights and elimination of all forms of discrimination."

POWA has all this time had the following objectives:

- To mobilize women in countries that were still colonized to fight for their liberation;
- To continue the struggle for recognition and application of the right of African women to participate in decision-making in the field of political, economic, cultural and social life, both at national and international levels and particularly, to be able to express their opinion in laws regarding the welfare of women and children;
- To follow-up the development and to contribute to the improvement of political and socio-cultural aspects, on women and children in member countries and disseminate the results of research undertaken in these fields by PAWO or by member countries through documents and existing media;

- To support action taken at national and international levels aimed at ending serious human rights violation and violence against women;
- To support all the actions of African governments;
- To promote the effective unity among African states through friendship and cooperation for a genuine peace;
- To establish continuous relations of friendship and cooperation between African women and women all over the world;
- To support internal cooperation and participate in all actions for disarmament and consolidation of peace in Africa and worldwide.

POWA was first headquartered in Bamako, Mali, from in 1962 until November 1968 when the government of Modiba Keita was deposed. It moved to Algiers, Algeria, followed by Luanda, Angola; Pretoria, South Africa and now Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

Jeanne Martin Cisse, a renown Guinean womanist and trade unionist, was the first secretary-general serving in this position from 1962 to 1974. In this period, she also served in the United Nations Committee on the Status of Women and the United Nations Commission for Human Rights, becoming a major voice for African women in world affairs. It was under her leadership that the POWA at its 1970 congress decreed 31 July as a Pan-African Women's Day, which to this day is observed. Madame Cisse passed away in 2017, the year when POWA formally became a specialised agency of the African Union.

From the First United Nations World Conference on Women in Mexico City in 1975 to the 1995 World Conference on Women in Beijing, China, POWA played an active role in advancing the interests of women of African descent. It continued after 1995 to ensure the groundbreaking Beijing programme of actions and platforms placed women of African descent at the centre.

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