From the Editorial Team

Dear readers, dear friends:

As often seems to be the case in recent times, I write this introduction away from home, in this case from the beautiful city of Uppsala where I have spent a glorious three months at the Nordic Africa Institute and the Department of Peace and Conflict Research as the Claude Ake Chair. Ake was many things: a scholar, an activist, and also a therapeutic intellectual, engendering hope through his work.

We are in times where we need the therapeutic intellectual more than ever. The election of Donald Trump as president of the US in 2024, with the ensuing deprivation of rights, brazen discontinuation of bi- and multi-lateral agreements, the inhumane treatment of the most vulnerable, immigrants, suspected immigrants, and brown and black people was not the beginning of the current polycrises. Along with the march of the far right around the world, the rise of the manosphere, and the unregulated AI field, these are symptoms of the unfettered greed of those wedded to the march of global capitalism.

Ake's intellectual legacy challenges us to ensure that the knowledge we produce, whether directly or indirectly, translates into transformation in people's lives. We must consider: what methodological and epistemological approaches will we employ to instil hope, especially for the most vulnerable?

CJAS 12.2 is a special issue co-edited by Lamine Doumbia and Peter Narh, on African land digitalization and outcomes for vulnerable social groups. In much of Africa the words "land" and "vulnerability" are invariably found cohabiting. Doumbia and Narh's introduction to the collection summarises for us a complex mosaic of digitalization in land administration, and how this is "linked with differential access and control over land for social groups in African countries". Please enjoy the read, that includes the following articles:

"Legitimising public action by digitising urban land: Social perceptions and popular strategies of resistance" by Sigue Moubassiré, at the Norbert Zongo University / University Center of Manga (Burkina Faso);
"Gouverner la terre par les instruments: Une analyse socio-historique du processus de digitalisation des procédures foncières au Cameroun à partir du Réseau Géodésique national (RGC)" (Governing the land through instruments: A socio-historical analysis of the digitization process of land procedures in Cameroon based on the National Geodetic Network (RGC)) by Gely Menguena, Université de Yaoundé I/ CERESC;
"Gender and the trajectories of land digitalization in Kenya: Recounting gains and losses" by Margret Njoki Mwareri, Laikipia University;
"Reformatting the commons: Digital land reforms and grassroots contestation in West Africa" by Lamine Doumbia, Humboldt University, and Peter Narh, University of Ghana; and
"Digitalized participatory land administration and peasant livelihoods; Tools for community empowerment, Western Region-Ghana" by Ebenezer Osei Jones, Akenten Appiah-Menka University of Skills Training and Entrepreneurial Development.

This issue also includes a reflection by Andreas Mehler on a 2024 workshop on "Restitution dynamics from Africa and the German debate", and Edwina Ashie-Nikoi and my introductory comments on his reflections. These reflections and debates remain extremely relevant, and some countries are finally stepping up to be accountable.

As we transition to a new Advisory Board, on behalf of the team of editors I take this opportunity to express our deep gratitude to our long-term Advisory Board members for their support. Members who are stransitioning off the board are:

Professors Kelly Askew (University of Michigan); Kofi Agawu (Princeton University/The Graduate Center, City University of New York); Sabelo Ndlovu-Gatsheni (Bayreuth University); Ray Silverman (University of Michigan); Emmanuel Akyeampong (Harvard University); Robert Addo Fening (rtd. University of Ghana); George P. Hagan (rtd. University of Ghana); Ato Quayson (Stanford University); Akin Ayuba (Pennsylvania State University, USA); John Nabila (rtd. University of Ghana); Adebayo Olukoshi (IDEA); Kari Waerness (rtd. University of Bergen); and Emeritus Professors Kofi Anyidoho (University of Ghana) and Jacob U. Gordon (University of Kansas).

The following Board members will remain on the board: Professor Samuel Ntewusu (Ex-officio, Director of the Institute of African Studies); Professor Dzodzi Tsikata (SOAS, and former Director of the Institute of African Studies); Professor Seth Asumah (rtd. Professor State University of New York Cortland); and Professor Nemata Blyden (University of Virginia).

They are joined by the following new members: Sr. Professor Dominica Dipio (Makarere University); Prof. Albert Wuaku (Florida International University); Professor Serawit Bekele Debele (Bayreuth University); Professor Nic Madika Tembo (Unversity of Malawi); Professor Kate Skinner (Bristol University); Prof. Nakanyike Musisi (University of Toronto); and Dr. Geradine Adiku (Univeristy of Ghana). *Akwaaba* to all of you; welcome!

Finally, in this season of transitions, this is the final issue of CJAS with me as as Editor-in-Chief. It gives me great pleasure to introduce Dr Peter Narh, one of our editors to the CJAS family as the new Editor-in-Chief. I know authors, reviewers, board members and readers will give him the same support I have enjoyed. I have enjoyed my seven years leading an indefatigable editorial team, and I thank them, Fellows of the Institute of African studies, and its immediate past Director Professor Dzodzi Tsikata, and current Director, Professor Samuel Ntewusu, under whom I served, for the opportunity to keep CJAS open access and free to our readers.

Happy Reading.

Akosua Adomako Ampofo
Editor-in-Chief