

Uppsala 14 December 2009

NEWSLETTER FROM THE NORDIC AFRICA INSTITUTE

Comment by Carin Norberg
Poverty is Politics



The Millennium Development Goals are the best documented development goals ever adopted by the UN. In 2010 only five years will remain until the time frame for achieving the eight goals runs out. The discussion of "Beyond the Millennium Goals" has already started and at the

recent European Development Days in Stockholm this issue was central for several of the panels.

Despite the attention to the goal of reducing poverty in the world by 50 percent until 2015 the results have been limited. The advances made in the past decade are currently threatened by the global financial crisis. An overview shows that per capita incomes in many states are falling and that poverty is increasing (typically for Africa), that some countries have made great advances (China and India in particular), and that inequality of income between and within countries is rising towards what many would call "Latin American" proportions.

Under the leadership of Professor Thandika Mkandawire UNRISD has initiated a research project titled *Social Policy in a Development Context*. Professor Mkandawire wanted to study how countries that had succeeded in reducing poverty had actually worked. The conclusion was that the state had played a decisive role in countries where poverty had been substantially reduced, that general welfare systems aiming at providing the entire population a better life were common and that an active social policy had an important role in strengthening the democratic institutions of these countries.

Richard Wilkinson and Kate Pickett in their book *Why More Equal Societies Almost Always Do Better* have reached similar conclusions. Their main point is that

African Integration and its failings
Lecture by Professor Yash Tandon

The failure of African integration is the focus of this year's Claude Ake Memorial Lecture by Professor Yash Tandon, *Europe and the Challenge of African Integration*.

The lecture will be held on Wednesday 16 December 2009 at 15.15-17.00, in the NAI Lecture Room, Kungsgatan 38 in Uppsala, 2nd floor.

Read more about Yash Tandon [here](#).

Read more about the Claude Ake Chair [here](#).

Building the African Union Institutions
Report from a high-level seminar in Uppsala

The Nordic Africa Institute and the European Centre for Development Policy Management (ECDPM) organised an informal high level seminar on the theme *Building the African Union institutional architecture: Progress achieved, new perspectives and possible support by the European Union* in Uppsala, Sweden on 21 October 2009.

Read a report from the seminar [here](#).

Governance Reform from Below
Lecture by John Githongo

Kenyan civil society luminary John Githongo gave a lecture at NAI on 24 November 2009.

Read more about John Githongo and view a video of his lecture [here](#).

Final Workshop of Documentation Project
NAI conference in Pretoria

A final workshop for the *NAI Documentation Project on the Liberation Struggle in Southern Africa* was held in Pretoria on 26-27 November 2009.

Read more about the workshop [here](#).

NAI Guest Writer 2010

the more unequal a country is the worse will be the status of its people, measured in welfare terms (average life span, infant mortality, obesity, crime rate, ability to read etc.). Rich countries are no exception. Per capita income means less than the gap between the richest and poorest 20 percent of the population.

The Nordic Africa Institute is currently working with the Institute for Future Studies, the Swedish Institute for social Studies and Rhodes University in South Africa on a research project titled *Transformative Social Policy*, to develop the UNRISD proposals into a research agenda for countries in Africa.

The preliminary conclusion is that **Poverty is Politics**. Reducing poverty on a global and national level requires a conscious political program. Fighting poverty is fundamentally a political and not a technical issue.

Carin Norberg

Director of the Nordic Africa Institute

Social Policy in a Development Context

Professor Thandika Mkandawire will hold a lecture on *Social Policy in a Development Context* at the Institute for Future Studies (in cooperation with NAI), Hölländargatan 13, Stockholm on 15 December from 15.00 - 16.30.

Read more about the lecture [here](#).

Recent NAI Publications

Discussion Papers

No 46. Jo-Ansie van Wyk, *Cadres, Capitalists, Elites and Coalitions: The ANC, Business and Development in South Africa*.

Download [here](#)

No 47. Elias Courson, *Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND): Political Marginalization, Repression and Petro-Insurgency in the Niger Delta*.

Download [here](#)

NAI is on Twitter

To "follow" NAI on Twitter go to: twitter.com/NordicAfrica.



Applications and nominations invited

NAI invites applications and nominations for a three-month grant as African Guest Writer at the institute in the latter half of 2010 (September through November). Applications should reach the institute by **31 December 2009**.

Read more about the scholarship [here](#)

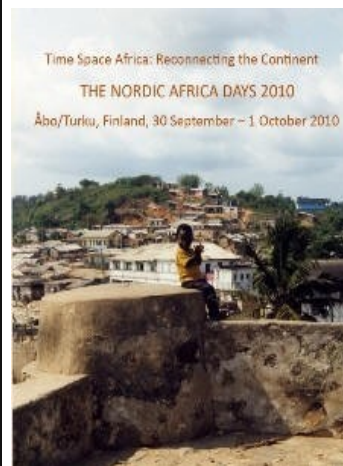
Nordic Africa Days 2009

Stirring lecture by Henning Mankell

The yearly Nordic Africa Days conference in Trondheim, Norway in October featured keynote lectures by fiction writer Henning Mankell, professor Patrick Chabal and UN housing expert Jos Maseland.

Read documentation and lectures [here](#).

Time Space Africa: Reconnecting the Continent



Nordic Africa Days 2010 in Åbo/Turku

The next Nordic Africa Days (NAD) will take place at Åbo Akademi University in Åbo/Turku in Finland on 30 September to 1 October 2010.

The theme chosen for NAD 2010 is *Time Space Africa: Reconnecting the Continent* and the organizers are now inviting proposals for

papers.

The choice of title for the conference refers to a "spatial turn" in thinking in the social sciences and humanities in the last decades. This spatial turn has had a major impact on African Studies and research on Africa.

Read the NAD 2010 Call for Papers [here](#).

Visit the NAD 2010 web site [here](#).

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