



UNIVERSIDADE EDUARDO MONDLANE
CENTRO DE ESTUDOS AFRICANOS

**AFRICAN INTELLECTUALS AND THE CHALLENGE OF THE 21st
CENTURY**

Call for Papers

(Maputo, 28-29 November 2012)

In their various fields of activity, African social and human science intellectuals have had much rich experience, not only through their academic achievements but also as producers of ideology and as active participants in development projects. Indeed, the relation between the African intellectuals and pan-africanist and nationalist movements is perhaps the most emblematic aspect of this process, considering the role of these movements in the liberation of the continent.

Starting from the marxist vision of the intellectual's involvement in action and the social function of Antonio Gramsci's 'organic intellectual', through debates most recently conducted by Thandika Mkandawire, Archie Mafeje, Ali Mazrui, Ngugi wa Thiongo, Aquino de Bragança or Paulin Hountondji, to cite only a few names, it is possible to follow the evolution of African intellectuals and the transformation of their roles in recent decades.

Today we are confronted with a society marked by the dissolution of 'collective subjects', and the marginalization of public values. Under strong neo-liberal pressure the last few decades have witnessed a new type of intellectuality, oriented toward the individualization of research, with programmes shaped by external agendas, in which the search for truth and justice and the need to construct a new type of society often get sidelined as apparently out-of-date metanarrative.

Yet today's academic culture has become an important force in contemporary society, both as a resource and as a problem, in that it relates with all the domains of social life. Social and human scientists are thus still expected to be socially engaged, with full cognisance of all the processes of global change, if we are not remaining ignorant of the social reality we have constructed.

In proposing the theme *African Intellectuals and the Challenge of the 21st Century*, the Centre of African Studies of Eduardo Mondlane University expects to bring forward for discussion theoretical and methodological questions which characterize the most recent debates in Africa on the role of the intellectual in society (with special reference to southern Africa, Mozambique and Portuguese-speaking African countries). The debate will be a form of rendering homage to Ruth First, on the 30th anniversary of her assassination in the buildings of this institution, in August 1982.

The Conference will be of 2 days duration and international in character; it will give voice to multidisciplinary contributions concerning the role intellectuals and the social and human sciences can have in the interpretation of the world and, particularly, the extent to which their activities can contribute to greater efficacy in political and administrative decision making, considering the social responsibility which belongs to intellectuals, universities and centres of research.

The Conference will be opened by a keynote speaker, with other addresses concerning the main themes as well as discussion in work groups.

Without excluding other relevant questions, proposals for papers should seek to develop problematics around the following themes and sub-themes:

- **Intellectuals in Africa: formation, transformation and their role. From Pan-Africanism and Nationalism to the challenges of the 21st century.**

- The role of intellectuals: from Panafricanism to Nationalism
- African intellectuals and the challenges of the 21st century
- Ruth First and the intellectual generation committed to the liberation of Southern Africa

- **Memory, Language, Literature e History**

- Literature, History and Memory: identity and otherness
- Language, communication and development
- Social Dynamics: rupture or continuity

- **Identity, Religion and Social Movements**

- Social Movements: access to natural resources, participation and social inclusion
- Religious Movements: history and the challenges of world changes
- The configuration of new modes of expression of religiosity in Africa

- **Teaching and research in Africa: the role of universities**

- The University and the training of teachers
- Autonomous and systematic research vs. consultancies
- Academic freedom and institutional development

- Quality of teaching and research and evaluation criteria
- Production and dissemination of knowledge in Africa: urgent problems
- **Globalization and its challenges: Demographic tendencies and public policy in Africa**
 - Economic, demographic and population dynamics
 - Territorial transformation, urbanization and public services
 - Social inequality, poverty and sectoral public policy
 - Natural resource management, environmental risk and natural disasters
- **Government and democracy in Africa**
 - Active citizenship, participation and agency
 - The role of political institutions in the promotion and maintenance of economic and social justice
 - Social policy, inclusive, durable and sustainable economic development
- **Culture, art and social development**
 - Copyright and new consumer practices: from the original to the pirated
 - Cultural practices and social motivation: the dynamics and significance of cultural festivals in Africa
 - Culture, socialization and development
 - Individualism, competition and co-operation in the arts world

Those interested in participating in the conference should send their abstracts, in Portuguese or English, to the address below, in the following format: Title; author, institution and email address; problematic. The abstract should be no longer than 350 words.

All proposals for papers will be evaluated by a selection committee.

Participants will be expected to meet their own travel and living expenses.

Final dates and address:

Receipt of abstracts: 30 June 2012

Information of acceptance of abstracts: 30 July 2012

Receipt of final texts: 30 September 2012

Final acceptance of papers: 30 October 2012

Address for transmission of papers and other information:

conferenciaruthfirst@uem.mz