

Editorial

*Alexander B. Makulilo**

This is my first issue as the editor of *the African Review*, a scholarly journal within the Department of Political Science and Public Administration at the University of Dar es Salaam. Last year, when I was approached by the Head of the Department, Dr. Mohammed Bakari, to serve as the editor of this journal I really hesitated. I had three major grounds. First and foremost, it was almost at the same time that the Principal of the College of Arts and Social Sciences had appointed me as the Coordinator of Research and Publications of the College with a very long list of terms of reference. Moreover, I was aware of the status of the journal. For quite some time it was not published regularly. This would mean that more effort was needed to revitalise it. Finally, I have to teach and research. Therefore, I thought that being an editor would be more challenging. However, after a lengthy discussion with the Head and his assurance of maximum support in running the journal, I finally accepted to take this task.

I am inheriting a journal which is about 40 years old since its first publication in March, 1971. For many years, *the African Review* has established itself as an academic journal of repute in Africa and beyond. I have to say that over that span of time, a journal of this nature has its own record of successes and challenges. I take this opportunity to appreciate the contribution of my predecessor, Dr. Bruce Heilman, in making sure that the journal, though published irregularly for some time, it did not die. I hope to learn more from him in executing my responsibilities as the editor.

Let me now point to the challenges ahead of us as we assume this new task. First, as I briefly introduced earlier, is the problem of irregular publications. The period between 2000 and 2012 was historical and a test to our journal. In addressing this problem, we have first worked to release all backlogs, while at the same time move forward with the new issues of 2013. The April issue

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is coming timely. The second challenge is visibility of the journal. Despite its international repute, *the African Review* has not circulated widely. This is partly due to the fact that in the past when the *Internet* was still not available to Africa, the journal was only published as print with ISSN 0856-0056. To address this mischief, we have now secured the online ISSN 1821-889X and the designing of a website specific for the journal is underway. This development will increase its abstracting and indexing. In turn, it will allow us receive manuscripts easily as well as boost the number of subscribers. Thirdly, the journal is experiencing the problem of unreliable and inadequate financial resources. While this can be minimised if a good number of subscribers is taped, other sources should be discovered. Fourth is the fact that for quite some time, the journal has not been doing well in publishing book reviews. I know that academics are reluctant to write reviews simply because they earn no recognition from their universities for they do not reflect original research. However, reviews are important to give feedback to authors on their works. They also provide opportunities especially to graduate students to learn how to engage with scholarships. As editors, we plan to extend the scope of the journal to cover not only articles and book reviews but also research reports, conference papers, important addresses, critical comments, and other genres of academic writing. Fifthly, for many years, *the African Review* has been published as a combined volume with few articles. We have strategized to solicit more papers to allow us publish two issues separately, one in April and the other in November. This April issue is an attempt to implement this goal. As can be seen, it has eight articles and two book reviews. While they cover different subjects, their scope is broadly Africa and on specific country cases. Our authors normally come from Africa and beyond. Again, we need to establish a very strong system of tracking manuscripts from submissions by authors to the decision stage by the editorial board meetings. The process should be timely but without compromising the standards of the journal.

Finally, let me take this opportunity to recognise the contribution of my colleagues whom we have been entrusted with the responsibility of taking *the African Review* to the next heights. I appreciate the involvement of Dr. Rasul Minja and Prof. Ernest Mallya. I am also grateful to the support we get from the entire editorial board, authors, and reviewers. *The African Review* has come a long way. It has its unique history, that is, a history of vibrancy and quality. I hope that in the next few years, our journal will be the best avenue for scholars to publish their manuscripts.