



# Oromo Studies Association

## Oromo Studies Association OSA

**November, 2007**

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### [A Message from the President](#)

*Greetings,*

*Since the October issue of our newsletter, I have received several emails commenting about the conduct of the annual conference as well as suggestions on increasing OSA visibility back home. Most of the notes I received in this regard came from recent Oromo university graduates who have completed graduate school and are engaged in teaching and conducting research in their specific disciplines. Some of these colleagues have expressed interest in working closely with OSA and it is encouraging to see OSA gaining ground at home. It is therefore, incumbent on those of us in academia working overseas who presumably have access to better research facilities and rich reference materials to collaborate and partner with our compatriots back home in the*

*areas of research skills enhancement through mentoring programs as well as in expanding opportunities for teamwork in producing scientific papers for publications in reputable journals. If you are interested in serving as a mentor and/or partner in research and publications within the area of your expertise, please email me and we will identify together how best we can coordinate these initiatives. The support we provide in this regard would be very helpful in strengthening the emerging scientific community in Oromia.*

*On a separate note, you might have come across the book titled "The Oromo", a translation by Ayalew Kanno from the original French edition published in 1901 by Martin DeSalviac. Dr. Ayalew has donated the proceeds from the sale of the book to OSA and we have recently designated Oromo Publishing House to serve as the distributor. There are limited copies and I encourage you to place an order for yourself and / or friends. The original work is a French Academy Prize winner and is an excellent addition to the growing body of Oromo literature.*

Happy Holidays!

Melaku Mekonnen, Ph.D.

OSA President

## Mid Year Conference

Last month, I shared with you that OSA is planning to conduct a mid-year conference to take place sometime in mid-March. The conference will focus on the unity and diversity of Oromo political thoughts and realities. The OSA Executive Officers have identified the specific theme of the conference as *“Differences among Oromo Political Groups: Opportunities and Challenges for the Struggle of the Oromo People”*. Our desire is to invite prominent Oromo intellectuals to shed some light on the

issues surrounding Oromo unity and share their vision for the way forward. In order to provide ample time for presentation and discussion, we are limiting the number of speakers to six – three each in the morning and afternoon sessions. At this point, we are in the process of contacting potential speakers and we will announce the participants as well as the program details in the December issue of our newsletter.

## Conference Keynote Speaker Identified.

Last month, the Executive Committee extended invitation to Professor Ali Mazrui to deliver the keynote address at the 2008 OSA Annual Conference. I am pleased to inform you that Dr. Mazrui has tentatively accepted our invitation. As you know Dr. Mazrui is not new to OSA members as he is one of the pillars of African Studies. Here is a brief background about Professor Mazrui.

Ali Mazrui was born in Mombasa, Kenya and is currently the Albert Schweitzer Professor in the Humanities and the Director of the Institute of Global Cultural Studies at Binghamton University, State University of New York. He is also the Albert Luthuli Professor-at-Large at the University of Jos in Nigeria. He serves as the Andrew D. White Professor-at-Large Emeritus and

Senior Scholar in Africana Studies at Cornell University.

Professor Mazrui obtained his B.A. with Distinction from Manchester University in England, M.A. from Columbia University in New York, and a doctorate from Oxford University in England. For ten years, he was at Makerere University, Kampala, Uganda, where he served as the head of the Department of Political Science and the Dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences. He once served as Vice-President of the International Political Science Association and has lectured on five continents.

In 2005 the American journal, Foreign Policy (Washington, DC), and the British Journal Prospect (London), nominated Dr. Mazrui among the top 100 public

intellectuals alive in the world as a whole. Foreign Policy is published by the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, New York. He was earlier elected an Icon of the Twentieth Century by Lincoln University in Pennsylvania, U.S.A.

Dr. Mazrui's television work includes the widely discussed 1986 series *The*

*Africans: A Triple Heritage* (BBC and PBS). He is the author of over twenty books and several scholarly articles.

It is indeed an honor and a great privilege for OSA to have Dr. Mazrui deliver the keynote address. I will keep you apprised as the schedule is finalized.

**OSA Members at the 50th African Studies Association Anniversary: A message from Dr. Mohammed Hassen**

The African Studies Association (ASA) was formed in the city of New York in 1957. The ASA celebrated its 50th anniversary at the Sheraton Hotel & Towers, New York, October 18-21, 2007. There were 212 roundtables and panels at which 731 papers were presented during the three day conference. There was no Oromo Studies in 1957, when the ASA was established. However, since the 1980s Oromo issues have been discussed consistently at ASA annual meetings. It is fair to say that dedicated OSA members have put Oromo Studies on the intellectual map of the world. I am delighted to report that, as in the past, this year Oromo issues were also discussed at a number of panels. Among scholars who participated in the 2007 ASA Conference were:  
Admasu Tucho  
Asafa Jalata  
Charles Schaefer

Daniel Ayana  
Mario Aguilar  
Mohammed Hassen  
Seifudin Adem  
Taddesse Berisso  
Oromo issues were discussed in the following four panels.  
1. " Ethnography, Policy and law: Countering Human Rights in the Horn of Africa"  
2. " Roundtable: Terror and Proxy Wars in the Horn of Africa"  
3. " Beyond Conflict and War in the Horn of Africa: Possible solutions for peace and Development"  
4. " Traveling Models in Conflict Management-Perspectives from Africa"

Sincerely,

Mohammed Hassen