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For the last time from these editors

With this issue (1/2018), our time collaborating as co–editors-in-chief of *Africa Spectrum* comes to an end after almost a decade. We look back on a fruitful period of cooperation with the editorial group, advisory board, and two colleagues in particular who supported us so professionally: Ellen Baumann retired as the journal’s managing editor just before this issue was finalised. She had been a rock-solid administrative stalwart since the beginning, and without her our lives would have been much more difficult. We owe her more than simply the flowers we sent her before she left and hold fond memories of her, not only in the context of her dedicated, conscientious work and great team spirit, but also in terms of the lighter exchanges for which we had the time once in a while. We would also like to thank copyeditor Meenakshi Preisser, who always added value through her meticulous language editing. The rising quality of the journal over the years can be credited to a team effort, resulting not least from the contributions of these two colleagues, who worked diligently in the background.

While Meenakshi will remain on board, Ellen has handed over her duties to Petra Brandt, another steadfast GIGA team member working behind the scenes. Given her many years as managing editor of the *Journal of Current Chinese Affairs*, we are confident that *Africa Spectrum* is in good hands. The same applies to our (temporary) successor as editor-in-chief, Julia Grauvogel: we have no doubt that she will take up the reins with considerable competence, and we welcome her selection by the GIGA’s management. While a few members of the editorial group have decided to end their affiliation coinciding with our departure, others will stay on, ensuring some degree of continuity. We have done our best to provide for a proper handover and wish our successors and the journal the very best for the future.

Looking back at the nearly 30 issues we were jointly responsible for, we hope and trust that the results of our efforts have gone beyond meeting our own satisfaction to find the approval of a wider African Studies community. *Africa Spectrum* has become an internationally recognised open access journal, and its ranking among area studies periodicals is a cause for celebration. We are grateful to all the scholars and reviewers whose contributions played an important role in this achievement. We are also glad to see that our efforts to provide more space to younger and, especially, African scholars have borne fruit. In this issue, we are thrilled to be able to publish two articles by authors who submitted their texts in the framework of the Young African Scholars Award, a joint

initiative with the Centre for Africa Studies (now the Centre for Gender and Africa Studies) at the University of the Free State in Bloemfontein, South Africa.

As we move on, we will continue to treasure our rewarding personal collaboration based on mutual respect and trust. It was a privilege for both of us to work for such a long time so closely with each other without any fundamental clashes. Thanks once again to all of you who accompanied us along the way.

- Andreas Mehler and Henning Melber