

From the Editors' Desk

This issue of *Africa Spectrum* (no. 1/2009) marks a transition which merits a separate acknowledgement in honour of a colleague. Dirk Kohnert has been the managing editor of the journal since 1991. For 18 years he has committed a considerable amount of time and energy as deputy director of the Institute of African Affairs to establishing and consolidating an internationally respected German-based African Studies periodical. He has managed to bring together an efficient group of editors and a highly reputable international editorial board and has thereby significantly improved the quality and profile of this journal. He has also found the time to occasionally contribute to its contents, as his review article in this issue demonstrates.

Thanks to his relentless efforts, *Africa Spectrum* has gained increasing recognition and has established itself among the internationally acknowledged and accredited peer-reviewed African Studies journals. As a result it is now included in internationally recognized abstracting and indexing lists.

With this issue, Dirk Kohnert is retiring from his duties as managing editor, which he has fulfilled so successfully. He has many reasons to look back with pride, and we, who now take over from him as managing editors, have a challenge to meet.

On behalf of the editorial team we gratefully acknowledge Dirk's achievements. We see our ongoing work as an obligation to maintain the high quality of his efforts. This guest-edited issue is still marked by Dirk's involvement and represents the link between past and future. We will seek to honour his work by doing our best to maintain and build on the standards he set.

With the new sharing of responsibilities, we trust we can secure a good blend of continuity and change, which will benefit the journal's readers as much as its makers. The Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation is joining the Institute of African Affairs to build on the already existing alliance with the African Studies Association in Germany and to thereby further consolidate the reputation of *Africa Spectrum* as a leading international interdisciplinary journal in contemporary African Studies.

■ Andreas Mehler/Henning Melber

As of 2009 *Africa Spectrum* is now an Open Access journal. For further details on this important innovation and its contribution towards reducing the existing asymmetric relations in the global academic world, please see the editorial by Bert Hoffmann in our previous issue (no. 3/2008). As of the next issue (no. 2/2009) *Africa Spectrum* will be published exclusively in English.

The editors