

EDITORIAL

The African Activist Association (AAA), *Ufahamu's* sponsoring association, was founded at UCLA some 25 years ago. Over the years AAA has engaged in diverse activities designed to further the African cause. At the peak of the liberation struggles in Lusophone Africa, Zimbabwe, and Namibia, AAA articulated for this side of the planet the philosophies of the liberation movements of those countries and the principles they stood for. And as the march towards majority rule gathered momentum in South Africa, AAA coordinated, and continues to coordinate, support efforts for the people of South Africa struggling for majority rule.

Angola, Mozambique, Zimbabwe, and Namibia have since regained their independence and South Africa is just a heartbeat away from leadership by a popularly elected government. These developments, however, have not rendered AAA's purpose anachronistic. AAA continues to be as dynamic as before, initiating and/or engaging in activities of concern to Africans and Africanists both on the continent and outside the continent. As Africa struggled with the ravages of the Structural Adjustment Programs to which it had been introduced in the early 1980s, AAA voiced its concern over the potential dangers of the programs to African economies. And then came natural and man-made disasters that engulfed most of the continent for the better part of the 1980s and early 1990s. AAA actively participated in and contributed to relief efforts to feed and clothe the needy in countries ravaged by famine resulting from prolonged drought and/or internal strife.

On the academic front, AAA turned its attention to the state of African studies in the United States. There had been growing concern among students of African studies in U. S. universities that the continent was not being covered adequately or properly. Panel discussions on UCLA campus culminated in a student forum at the 1991 African Studies Association (ASA) conference in St. Louis, Missouri, a full student panel at the Seattle, Washington, meeting, and the subsequent founding of the Association of Young African Scholars. The goal of the panel discussions, conference panels, and Association was to coordinate the efforts of African studies students in the U. S. with a view to restructuring and revamping African studies. In 1993 AAA took yet another bold step and launched the annual Young Scholars Conference.

This issue of *Ufahamu* features the proceedings of the first Young Scholars Conference held at the International Student Center, UCLA, on April 16 and 17, 1993. The conference covered diverse subjects of interest to Africanists, including the status of women, health, development, information, and African historiography. We hope that our readers will find these conference proceedings informative and useful.

We at *Ufahamu* would like to congratulate AAA on this great academic achievement and hope that future AAA leaderships will maintain this tradition. We especially would like to commend Muhammad Ali Abbas and Wendy Belcher (1991/92 President and Vice President, respectively) for their magnificent and relentless efforts that ushered in a new era for AAA. They were succeeded by an equally dynamic President, Prosper Godonoo, and Vice President, Lloys Frates, during whose term of office the first Young Scholars Conference was held. The new President, Otieno Okatch, promises to carry AAA to even greater heights. And in this we wish him a lot of success. To all these AAA leaders *Ufahamu* will always be grateful for their support and encouragement.

Angaluki Muaka