

**International conference: “Africa, New Powers, Old Powers”**

**Venue: Bologna (Italy)**

**Date: 4-5 May 2017**

**Organized by: Department of Political and Social Studies, University of Bologna, and EADI Working Group on ‘Transitions in (Southern) Africa’**

The Department of Political and Social Studies of the University of Bologna and the EADI Working Group on ‘Transitions in (Southern) Africa’ organize an international conference on “Africa, New Powers, Old Powers”, that will be held in Bologna (Italy) on 4-5 May 2017.

Since the end of the Cold War African countries have been experiencing deep and rapid transformations. These were further exacerbated by the multi-polarity of the 21<sup>st</sup> century and the growth of so-called emerging economies from the Global South. Economic reforms and rising international demand for natural resources have subsequently resulted in high rates of economic growth. But only in few cases the democratic transitions that followed the demise of the one-party state regimes have met the popular expectations of the early 1990s.

The multiple transformations recorded during the last two decades have had a relevant impact on African countries’ interaction with the rest of the world. If soon after the end of the Cold War scholars predicted a downscaling of Africa’s global strategic relevance, today the continent is again drawing international attention for its political and security problems (e.g. the turmoil in North Africa, armed conflicts, the fight against international terrorism), economic challenges (e.g. jobless growth, widespread poverty, deepening inequalities) and social dynamics (e.g. high population growth, migrant flows). Within this context, the relations between the African countries and the emerging powers are accelerating internal transformations on the continent, with often unpredictable and at times contradictory outcomes, while contributing to a redefinition of Africa’s international relations. Not surprisingly so, some observers have talked of a “new scramble for Africa” to emphasize the increasing competition between the Western countries and the emerging powers in Africa.

The international conference aims at debating the limits and potentialities of the growing political and economic interaction between African countries and the “emerging powers” within a broader historical and political perspective. In particular, the conference will analyze the role of African governments and multilateral institutions in shaping economic, political and security relations with the emerging powers, the political and economic priorities of the latter in Africa, and the reactions of the Western countries to the increasing assertiveness of the emerging powers in Africa. Furthermore, the conference will address how the increasing interaction between the emerging powers and the African countries are influencing the democratization processes, security and economic development on the continent.

The organizers invite paper submissions on:

- bilateral political, military and economic relations between African countries and emerging powers and their impact on political and economic reforms in Africa,
- the multilateral dimension of Africa’s engagement with the emerging powers, with specific attention to Africa’s regional and continental organizations,
- areas of cooperation and competition between “old” and “new” powers in Africa,
- the emerging African security architecture and the role of external actors,
- the limits and strengths of south-south cooperation.

The conference organizers will privilege research-based original contributions in view of a publication drawing on the Conference papers.

The Scientific Committee of the conference is composed by Henning Melber (Nordic Africa Institute, Sweden), Arrigo Pallotti (University of Bologna, Italy), Ian Phimister (University of the Free State, South Africa), Mario Zamponi (University of Bologna, Italy).

Abstracts of maximum 300 words accompanied by a short CV should be submitted to Henning Melber (henning.melber@nai.uu.se) and Arrigo Pallotti (arrigo.pallotti@unibo.it) by 31<sup>st</sup> December 2016. Successful presenters will be notified by 15 January 2017. Papers not exceeding 8,000 words in total (incl. footnotes and references) should be submitted latest by 15<sup>th</sup> April 2017.