

## FOREWORD

### GLOBALIZATION AND CHANGES IN CULTURES OF SURVIVAL AND CARE

This volume of the Research Review contains the eight of the papers presented at a workshop jointly organized by the Institute of African Studies, University of Ghana in Collaboration with scholars from Bergen University. The rest of the essays will appear in volume 2 of this issue. The apt title for the workshop – **Globalization and Changes in Cultures of Survival and Care** – was suggested by Professor Kari Waerness, Director of the Bergen University Centre for Women's and Gender Studies. She herself has pioneered scholarship on care and caring in the North and the theme proved to be a fitting umbrella to encompass the various papers presented and the far reaching discussions which ensued.

Globalization has no doubt brought about diverse transformations in African Societies and their cultures. Associated with the process have been changes in living conditions both positive and negative. Threats to sustainable livelihood practices have also increased, as gaps between the rich and poor have widened.

In Ghana as in some other developing countries, sustainable human development has become an illusion as policies and programs and new categorizations, such as the Structural Adjustment program (SAP) and the designation Heavily Indebted Poor Country (HIPC) have been put in place, and as the condition of many citizens appears to be worsening. Real wages of many have fallen below the level accounted necessary for survival. Longer working hours and consequent stress and role conflicts characterize the daily life of women. Such conditions affect their child care activities and the survival of their infants and children. Among the youth and adults survival in the midst of such changes has included migration for work and risk-taking reproductive behaviours that make them more vulnerable to infections from HIV and STDs.

High rates of malnutrition, morbidity, mortality and fertility still prevail, in spite of the recent lowering of family size. Rates of incidence of HIV/AIDS are rising rapidly and imperceptibly. Improved understanding of these problems and processes is vital, if governmental and non governmental agencies are to design and put in place the required policies and programs.

In view of its comparative advantage in documenting and explaining cultural phenomena and processes, the Institute of African Studies is currently strengthening its capacity and resource base and improving its links of communication and collaboration with partner organizations inside and outside Ghana, so that it can better develop and carry out the applied research and graduate training needed in this endeavor in Ghana and in the region. This seminar was one more step in this direction. The publication of papers presented at the seminar goes yet further along this road.

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