

## *Notes and News*

### *AFRICA: Journal of the International African Institute*

Dr P. T. W. Baxter, Senior Lecturer in Social Anthropology in the University of Manchester, has kindly agreed to serve as Acting Editor during the Editor's absence on study-leave during 1982–83.

### *The Somali Academy of Sciences and Arts*

Previously a branch of the Ministry of Culture and Higher Education, the Somali Academy of Sciences and Arts (SOMAC; in Somali, *Akadeemiyada Cilmiga, Fanka Iyo Suugaanta*) was officially established in 1979. Located centrally in downtown Mogadishu, SOMAC today employs about 150 people in three major departments: Sciences, Arts and Literature. In addition, a local branch was recently opened in Hargeysa to coordinate research in northern Somalia.

The principal aims of the Academy can be summarized as follows:

- to promote, support and coordinate research undertaken by individuals and institutions
- to upgrade the research standards, capabilities and quality in Somalia
- to promote the application of research findings in the various development sectors
- to help develop scientific attitudes and values among the Somali people

In other words, SOMAC aims to become the coordinating body for all research activities undertaken in Somalia.

At the same time, the Academy hopes to contribute to international research co-operation by creating formal links with scholars and institutes abroad. Co-operation programmes in the natural and social sciences, as well as linguistics and literature, with individuals and institutions in Italy, Sweden, United Kingdom, USA, West Germany and various Arab countries are already being implemented. The major ones include a Somali–Italian dictionary project sponsored by the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and a nine-projects agreement with the Swedish Agency for Research Cooperation (SAREC).

A major task of the Academy is the recording of various aspects of Somali culture as manifested through oral literature and expressive arts such as folklore, dance and traditional drama. The literature section of SOMAC is in part composed of former members of the National Language Commission which was responsible for the introduction of the written Somali language in 1972, and the arts section includes a dancing group which has already become widely known through its performances all over Somalia.

Finally, one should mention the publications section which, despite the technical difficulties involved in printing books in Somalia, already has a list of twenty-one publications. The Academy also expects to publish its own journal in the near future.

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