

Gents Afrika Platform (GAP) announces its second annual symposium

GAPSYM2 (16/12/2008)

Mobilities in Africa - Africa in mobility

Gents Afrika Platform (Ghent Africa Platform - GAP) was founded in January 2007 with the objective of bringing together researchers and other actors (research groups, academic associations, administrative units, etc.) from Ghent University Association (AUGent) who focus on the African continent and/or the African diaspora. GAP offers its members a forum which can intensify mutual contacts, where they can get to know and discuss their shared, interdisciplinary interests and possibly turn these into joint research projects, publications or other ventures. Apart from this 'internal' empowering objective, GAP also has an external, 'promotional' aim. It seeks to make the Africa expertise at AUGent known to a larger academic and non-academic public. For accomplishing this double task GAP (a) runs a website (www.gap.ugent.be), (b) co-publishes the internationally peer-reviewed journal Afrika Focus (www.gap.ugent.be/Journal_Afrika_Focus), and (c) organizes an annual symposium (GAPSYM)

GAPSYM2 'Mobilities in Africa - Africa in mobility' is a one-day symposium held on Tuesday 16 December 2008 at the Koninklijke Academie voor Nederlandse Taal- en Letterkunde (KANTL) in the city centre of Ghent. It is directed at scholars with an interest in Africa, both students and staff, from within and without the AUGent. Undergraduates are particularly encouraged to attend the symposium in order to broaden their knowledge of Africa and build peer networks.

GAPSYM2 envisages an in-depth examination of phenomena of mobility in Africa from different angles. Together with exploring aspects of mobility within a large number of empirical domains, the symposium also offers a platform where theoretical and methodological issues concerning the study of mobility can be discussed.

After the success of GAPSYM1 last year, GAPSYM2 retains the same format but with an even stronger accent on African and international participation. Among this year's poster presentations, many provide from African students at AUGent. As for international partnerships GAPSYM2 welcomes the Africa Studies Centre (ASC, Leiden, The Netherlands) as a special guest institution. Apart from ASC senior researcher Rijk van Dijk who will present his institution, his colleague Jan-Bart Gewald will hold a keynote speech on the theme of the symposium. A second keynote will be delivered by Gordon Pirie of the University of the Western Cape (South Africa) – an institution with which Ghent University has a firm institutional bond. Furthermore, two events will sustain the international character of GAP and GAPSYM2: (a) the full-text online publication of Afrika Focus, and (b) the 10th edition of the Annual Distinguished Lecture on Africa.

Afrika Focus Online. Afrika Focus is an interdisciplinary journal dealing with Africa. It is an open access journal which is published biannually and subject to international peer-review. Since January 2008 Afrika Focus is co-published by GAP and Afrika Brug vzw, the organisation which has been publishing the journal for twenty years. Afrika Focus was first published in 1985 and replaced the *AVRUG-bulletin* (1978-1985) which in its turn replaced the *Nieuwsbulletin van de Afrika-Vereniging van de Rijksuniversiteit Gent* (1972-1978). As from 16th December 2008 an important part of the archive of Afrika Focus will be available online. This is a crucial step towards its forthcoming inclusion in the Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ) as well as in the ELIN digital library of Ghent University.

10th Annual Distinguished Lecture on Africa (ADLA). Nine years after Cambridge anthropologist Jack Goody delivered the first ADLA, Janet Roitman has the honour of giving a lecture on its 10th edition. The Annual Distinguished Lecture on Africa is a lecture series which is based at Ghent University since 1999 and has had the pleasure of receiving some of the most prominent Africa scholars worldwide. Until 2006 the ADLA was organised by the Interdisciplinary Research Group on Africa (IDOGA). When in 2007 the Ghent Africa Platform (GAP) was created, it took over the organisation of the ADLA and embedded it in its annual symposium. ADLA lecturers are asked to follow the theme of the conference. In this year's ADLA 'The pluralisation of economic regulation in the Chad Basin', Janet Roitman will present both her earlier research on the economic citizenship in the Chad Basin as well as some of her most recent research into the discourse of 'crisis in Africa'.

Janet Roitman

Janet Roitman is Associate Professor of Anthropology and International Affairs at The New School for Social Research (New York) and member of the Institut Marcel-Mauss (Paris). She is also a research fellow with the Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique (CNRS).

Roitman has conducted extensive research in Central Africa, focusing specifically on the borders of Cameroon, Nigeria, the Central African Republic and Chad, more specifically on human mobility and economic transactions in this area. Much of her research inquires into emergent forms of economic regulation in the region of the Chad Basin and considers transformations in the nature of fiscal relations and citizenship. More generally, she covers topics of political economy, the anthropology of value, and emergent forms of the political.

During her trip to Belgium (15-19 December), Janet Roitman will not only deliver the ADLA but will also make an appearance at the conference 'Governance without Government in Africa's Protracted Crises' held on the 17th December at the *Fondation Universitaire* in Brussels and co-organized by the Conflict Research Group and Egmont (the Royal Institute for International Affairs).

More information & press contacts

Date: 16 December 2008

Venue: Koninklijke Academie voor Nederlandse Taal- en Letterkunde, Koningstraat 18, 9000 Gent

Registering: Badge, lunch and reception: 10 €; Students 5 €

Symposium secretariat: Dominique Godfroid (+32 9 264 45 54, Gap@UGent.be)

Press contacts for Janet Roitman:

- Karel Arnaut (GAP): Karel.Arnaut@UGent.be
- Timothy Raeymaekers (Conflict Research Group): Timothy.Raeymaekers@UGent.be