

April 3, 2020

Dr. Godwin R. Murunga
Executive Secretary
Council for the Development of
Social Science Research in Africa (CODESRIA)
Avenue Cheikh Anta Diop X Canal IV

BP 3304, CP 18524, Dakar, Senegal

Dear Dr. Murunga,

On behalf of the staff and Board of Directors of the Social Science Research Council (SSRC), I send condolences on the loss of Professor Thandika Mkandawire. It was with great sadness that we learned of his passing. His death is a loss for the entire global social science community, including the Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa (CODESRIA) and several generations of African scholars. He will be remembered for his outstanding scholarship, particularly in the fields of African political economy, economics, governance, development and social science, to which he devoted his considerable skills and energy over five decades.

Thandika was an organic intellectual and leader recognized the world over for his ideas, wit, unique insights and commitment to social transformation and nurturing of future generations of social scientists. One of his unique qualities, out of many, was his ability to combine a deep sense of humanism with radical political economy, backed by intellectual clarity and rigorous research which reflected in his iconic think-pieces. Never one to shy away from engaging in robust debates and confronting the challenges of institution building. Thandika played key roles in the various places he worked, starting from his early career as a journalist to his outstanding contributions to CODESRIA, United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD), Centre for Development Research, and the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE).

He played a key role in providing much-needed leadership that supported the global visibility of radical African scholarship during the challenging period of economic crisis and structural adjustment. Thandika will continue to serve as a role model to present and future generations of scholars, thinkers and activists. We mourn the loss of a former member of the Board of Directors of the SSRC, whose vision for scholarship, and the future of African unity and development left an indelible mark on CODESRIA and expanded the basis for its partnership with numerous international organizations, including the SSRC. His vision for and immense contributions to African development, higher education and knowledge production, academic freedom, including his reflections on developmental democratic states—and the relevance of the Scandinavian model to social policy, are legacies that will be remembered for a long time to come.

In remembering Prof. Mkandawire, his life, work and Pan Africanist vision, I recall an interview he gave to Kate Meagher, his colleague at the LSE, and published in *Development and Change*, under the title, "Reflections of an Engaged Economist: An Interview with Thandika Mkandawire," in which he is quoted as follows:

Yes, life experiences matter a lot for one's way of thinking... I'm essentially very upbeat about Africa, I have always been. But Africa must be given space, or capture space, to think its way out of its predicament.

Today, we celebrate the life of Thandika Mkandawire and his numerous accomplishments. He will always be remembered for his lifelong commitment to scholarly excellence in service to social progress and freedom.

With sincere sympathy,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Alondra Nelson". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Alondra Nelson, Ph.D.
President
Social Science Research Council

cc: Dr. Mamadou Diouf, Chair of the Board of Directors, SSRC
Dr. Ron Kassimir, Vice President of Programs, SSRC
Dr. Cyril Obi, Program Director, African Peacebuilding Network, SSRC
Dr. Tatiana Carayannis, Program Director, Conflict Prevention and Peace Forum, SSRC