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Response to Plan S

The African Studies Association (US) is the largest scholarly organisation of its kind, representing the interests of over 2,000 university academics based in the United States, Europe and Africa. We wish to associate ourselves with the statement prepared by the International African Institute concerning 'Plan S'. While we are keen to promote open and equitable access to scholarly publications, Plan S would encourage the exclusion of Africa-based scholars from top-quality publishing venues. As our colleagues in the I.A.I. have described, scholars based in African institutions—and colleagues based in less well-resourced institutions in the global North—will find it impossible to raise the funds necessary to publish in 'Gold' Open Access journals. Plan S would therefore bifurcate scholarly publishing, isolating African scholars from the leading journals in their fields while also obliging European scholars to publish in journals where no Africa-based colleague could afford to publish.

We therefore wish to reiterate the central point in the I.A.I. statement: Plan S is damagingly divisive. It discourages scholarly collaboration between European, American and African colleagues, creating new barriers to publication for scholars in the global South while undermining the many 'hybrid' journals which curate the production of academic knowledge in our field.

Endorsed by the Board of Directors of the African Studies Association
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