With the end of the Cold War, the world seemed to move from a bipolar to a unipolar system, with the neoliberal West globally imposing its laws. However, it has been acknowledged that other actors, such as China, India and Brazil, have become increasingly influential, helping to lead to a new multipolarity at the global level. The question of what this emerging multipolarity means for Africa is an important one. Will Africa become crushed in a mounting struggle over raw materials and political hegemony between superpowers and fall victim to a new scramble for Africa? Or does this new historic conjuncture offer African countries and groups greater room for negotiation and manoeuvring, eventually leading to stronger democracy and enhanced growth? The papers in this volume offer food for thought on how Africa’s engagements with the world are currently being reshaped and revalued, and, importantly—is it on whose terms?

Ton Dietz
is Director of the African Studies Centre and Professor of African Development at Leiden University and Professor of Human Geography at the University of Amsterdam. He recently published 'Silverlining Africa', his inaugural lecture at Leiden University (2011).

Kjell Havnevik
is Senior Researcher at the Nordic Africa Institute, Uppsala, and Professor at the University of Agder, Norway. His most recent book is Biofuels, land grabbing and food security in Africa, edited with Prosper Matondi and Atakilte Beyene (Zed Books 2011).

Mayke Kaag
is Researcher at the African Studies Centre in Leiden and Assistant Professor of International Development Studies at Utrecht University. Her research focuses on African transnational relations, including engagements with the diaspora and transnational Islamic NGOs.

Terje Oestigaard
is Researcher at the Nordic Africa Institute, Uppsala, Sweden. His particular research interests are water studies in the past and present and the archaeology of religion.