

# Editorial

This is a year of significant celebration for human rights on the African landscape: It is 30 years since the adoption of the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on 27 June 1981, and 25 years have passed since its entry into force on 21 October 1986. A conference on 'Thirty years of the Charter: Looking forward while looking back' is held on 11 July 2011 in Pretoria, hosted by the Centre for Human Rights, University of Pretoria, and the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (African Commission), as part of the annual African Human Rights Moot Court Competition. It is envisaged that a selection of conference papers will be published in the November 2011 issue of the *Journal*.

Since its first issue in 2001, the *Journal* has focused on the accomplishments and challenges of the African human rights system. Although the system has by no means reached perfection, there is much to celebrate, including the progressive interpretation of the African Charter adopted by the African Commission, the establishment and the accomplishments of various special mechanisms, as well as the procedural improvements in the examination of state reports and in their follow-up, as reflected in the Commission's new Rules of Procedure (adopted in 2010). As well, the potential benefit of the supplementary role of the African Court has recently been illustrated when the Court, responding to a referral by the Commission, ordered provisional measures against Libya.

One of the weaknesses in the system has been the neglect of the African Commission's Secretariat. Over the years the Secretariat has acquired a reputation of inefficiency, due mainly to it being underfunded and understaffed. The Secretariat remains terminally understaffed, with the vacancies of two legal officers remaining unfilled. In the post-celebration period, improvements to the Secretariat should therefore be one of the priorities of the African Union organs, including the AU Commission, and the African Commission.

In this issue, a number of contemporary human rights issues are covered, including HIV, forced migration, the right to primary education and the right to water of indigenous communities. Issues related to broader concerns that may be termed 'democratisation' are also included, such as the importance of local government. As has become customary, this first of the *Journal's* two annual issues provides an overview of developments during 2010 in international criminal justice and human rights at the sub-regional level.

We acknowledge with appreciation and sincerely thank the independent reviewers who gave their time and talents to ensure the consistent quality of the *Journal*: Atangcho Akonumbo, Abiola Ayinla, Bernard Bekink, Christo Botha, Liz Coyne, Lee Anne de la Hunt, John Dugard, Loreta Feris, Idi Gaparayi, Waruguru Kaguongo, Cecilia Nilsson Kleffner, Berita Kopolo, Remember Miamingi, Jamil Mujuzi, Chacha Bhoke Murungu, Chinedu Nwagu, Enyinna Nwauche, Benson Olugbuo, Steve Ouma, Emmanuel Quansah, Werner Scholtz, Ann Skelton, Melodie Slabbert, Olufemi Soyaju, Bret Thiele, Karin van Marle and Dunia Prince Zongwe.