

Editorial

This is the first issue of the African Human Rights Law Journal to appear as an on-line open-access publication. Looking back at the 12 years since its launch in 2001, we are confident that the Journal has played an important role in providing a forum for scholarship on human rights in Africa, focusing on the African regional human rights system. By publishing the Journal in open-access format, it is anticipated that the visibility of the issues related to the promotion and protection of human rights in Africa will increase. Greater visibility, it may be argued, in turn is likely to enhance the effectiveness of the African regional human rights system. Greater awareness and understanding of the extent to which states fulfil their obligations under African human rights treaties may raise the cost of non-compliance with these obligations, and thus contribute to improving the system's effectiveness.

The adoption of this new format represents an addition rather than a change. A limited number of copies of the Journal will still be printed, for use by subscribers to the hard copy publication, or will be printed on demand. The on-line open-access format therefore does not substitute but supplements the previous dispensation. While the Journal no longer bears the Juta imprint, its 'look and feel' has remained largely intact under the new publisher, Pretoria University Law Press (PULP). As we look back to the 24 issues that appeared between 2001 and 2012, we express our gratitude to Juta for their professionalism and enthusiasm in getting the Journal established.

The context of this issue also confirms the continuity between this and previous issues of the Journal. As in the past, the current issue deals with the African regional system, the emerging role of sub-regional economic communities in human rights promotion and protection in Africa and with the domestic legal frameworks of African states. As far as the regional system is concerned, the pertinent issue of refugee and asylum seekers receives Bekker's attention. Nwauche looks at the horizontal applicability of human rights by the ECOWAS Court and, as has become customary, Ebobrah provides an overview of developments in the sub-regional systems during the past year. Other authors deal with various aspects of human rights protection at the domestic level in Botswana, South Africa and Malawi, and engage in discussion of two prominent court decisions, dealing with coerced sterilisation of HIV-positive women (in Namibia), and gender equality (in Botswana). Oyowe continues the conversation about ubuntu, by responding to an earlier article on this topic by Metz ((2011) 11 AHRLJ 532).

As we prepared this edition, we received the news of the passing of former South African Chief Justice Pius Langa, who served on the South African Constitutional Court from 1994 to 2009. Justice Langa was one of South Africa's most prominent legal minds and a major contributor to the judicial advancement of human rights in South Africa and, indeed, Africa as a whole. Along with many South Africans and well-wishers from beyond its borders, the editors express their sadness at his death. Rare is it to find among lawyers someone so selfless and down-to-

earth, yet so inspirational through principled pragmatism and wisdom. We fondly remember him as a member of the international editorial advisory board of the Journal.

We acknowledge with appreciation and sincerely thank the independent reviewers who gave their time and talents to ensure the consistent quality of this issue of the Journal: Adem Abebe; Atangcho Akonumbo; Jean Allain; Gina Bekker; David Bilchitz; Lilian Chenwi; Danwood Chirwa; Bonolo Dinokopila; Jackie Dugard; Ebenezer Durojaye; Yonatan Fessha; Sean Flynn; Nicole Fritz; Laurence Helfer; Bonita Meyersfeld; Salima Namusobya; Charles Ngwena; Priti Patel; Marius Pieterse; Karen Stefiszyn; Jackie Stewart; Ally Possi; Karin van Marle; and Ernst Wolff.