

Focus: Adolescent sexual and reproductive rights in the African region

Guest-edited by

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Editorial

The three articles in this section focus on the sexual and reproductive rights of adolescents in the African region. The articles are products of a colloquium convened at the Centre for Human Rights, University of Pretoria, on 29 and 30 August 2016. The convenors were Professors Charles Ngwena (Centre for Human Rights, University of Pretoria) and Ebenezer Durojaye (Dullah Omar Institute, University of the Western Cape). The convenors also served as co-guest editors for the thematic focus on sexual and reproductive rights in this issue.

The theme of the colloquium, *Unmet adolescent sexual and reproductive needs in the African region: What can human rights do?* served as a pivot for an academic discourse around two main goals: (i) identifying persistent gaps and challenges in the respect, protection, promotion and fulfilment of the sexual and reproductive rights of adolescents in the African region; and (ii) advancing arguments for addressing the gaps and challenges using human rights frameworks.

The article by Savage-Oyekunle and Nienaber focuses on adolescent access to emergency contraception. Whilst addressing the African region, its particular focus is Nigeria. The authors find that adolescents experience discrimination and inequality in access to contraception generally. Among the solutions they propose, the authors suggest that comments of treaty-monitoring bodies, including the African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, are important resources for formulating arguments to support the rights of adolescents to adequate access to emergency contraception at the domestic level. The article by Kangaude is a critique of the criminalisation of consensual sexual conduct between or with children and adolescents. Kangaude argues that the assumptions underpinning such criminalisation are informed more by patriarchal, heterosexist, and gender biases and less by respect for the rights of children and adolescents. He proposes ways in which the law can be reformed in order to recognise consensual sexual conduct between or with children and adolescents.

The last article is by Ofuani, who focuses on the involuntary sterilisation of adolescent girls with intellectual disabilities and focuses on Nigeria. The article uses the human rights standards laid down by the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) to appraise the law and practice in Nigeria. Ofuani concludes that Nigeria falls woefully short of the standards laid down by the CRPD, including article 12 of the CRPD which recognises the rights of girls with intellectual disabilities to legal capacity on an equal basis with others, and suggests remedial measures.