

Editorial

The main feature of this issue of the *African Human Rights Law Journal* is the focus on a subject of great global controversy and debate: law, religion and human rights in Africa. Although the *Journal* generally contains contributions of a general nature, it has in the past devoted parts of its contents to specific issues: commemorating the entry into force of the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (2006 Vol 6 No 1) and the entry into force of the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (2006 Vol 6 No 2).

However, the focus in this issue differs in that it presents the first example of collaboration between the *Journal* and outside experts acting as guest editors. These guest editors are Professor Johan van der Vyver and Christian Green from the Center for the Study of Law and Religion (CSLR) at Emory University School of Law, in the United States. Earlier this year, CSLR organised a conference on 'Law, religion and human rights in Africa', which took place in Durban, South Africa, with financial support of the Henry Luce Foundation. The 'focus' feature contains papers delivered during the conference. Reflecting both the debates during the conference and providing an overview of the papers, the guest editors of the 'focus' section prepared a comprehensive Introduction.

We are thankful to the guest editors for the quality and variety of the papers and for their professionalism in ensuring peer review and follow-up with authors. Without a doubt, these papers make a significant contribution to important and ongoing debates. Thus far, the issues under discussion have not been explored sufficiently from an African perspective. The 'focus' section in this issue of the *Journal* succeeds in filling this gap.

This issue of the *Journal* contains a few other contributions, aimed at issues of importance in specific African countries. As in many previous issues, recent developments pertaining to the African Committee of Experts on the Rights of the Child are also reviewed. It is encouraging that the Committee is now starting to examine state reports. Hopefully the consideration of long-pending communications will follow soon. In line with our aim to include more book reviews, this issue sees three reviews of recently published books.

One of the most significant developments in the African human rights landscape since the publication of the last issue of the *Journal* is the adoption of the Protocol and Statute of the African Court of Justice and Human Rights, in July 2008. Once this Protocol has been ratified by 15 AU member states, the African Court of Justice and Human Rights will replace the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights. The African Human Rights Court has also now adopted 'Interim Rules of Procedure', and is ready to entertain cases. So far, no cases are pending before the Court. This state of affairs seems to be as much due to the inertia of the African Human Rights Court, as to that of African civil society and lawyers. As the institution best placed to approach the African Human Rights Court with a first case, the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights should develop a clear strategy in this regard. The editors convey their thanks to the following independent reviewers, who so generously assisted in ensuring the quality of the *Journal*: Danie Brand, Takele Bulto, Christian Green, Sabelo Gumedze, Magnus Killander, Fikremarkos Merso, Ann Skelton and Johan van der Vyver.

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