

## PRESENTATION



*Sur – International Journal on Human Rights* is a biannual publication that presents an analytical and balanced standpoint on human rights in Southern Hemisphere countries. With the aim to strengthen the South-South and the South-North dialogue among human rights activists, scholars and UN officials, this journal promotes a critical debate on several issues related to the theme. It breaks away from a pseudo-consensus and opens up spaces to improve the quality of this discussion. It therefore invites dissent, since we believe that a consistent human rights doctrine will only be put into place after a wide-ranging exchange of ideas.

We firmly believe that the information that is being produced must be widely publicized and, for this reason, this journal is issued in three languages (English, Portuguese and Spanish). Approximately 6,000 copies of the first two issues have been distributed free of charge in over 100 countries and, to ensure an extended readership, we have made an unabridged version available at <[www.surjournal.org](http://www.surjournal.org)>, in the three languages.

For this edition, papers have been submitted from thirteen countries (Argentina, Brazil, Cameroon, Chile, India, Ireland, Namibia, Nigeria, Switzerland, Tanzania, Uganda, United Kingdom, and United States). After a selection by an International Editorial Board, whose members are human rights scholars, specialists and UN officials, we are publishing eight contributions, one of which reports on a research project. The subject matters dealt with are: security and human rights; trade and human rights; access to justice on domestic and international levels; and land reform.

Two papers contributed by participants of the Knowledge Development Group, organized by Sur in April 2005, focus on the subject of **trade and human rights**. Caroline Dommen discusses mechanisms that, by protecting human rights, actually favor the trade practices in which they are inserted. Carlos Correa depicts the progresses made in the

process to lend more flexibility to the TRIPS Agreement for medical drugs, and shows how the Doha Declaration and the 2003 Decision of the TRIPS Board are insufficient to ensure a reduction in prices and the negotiation of voluntary licenses.

Tracing a bridge between **security and human rights**, the article of Bernardo Sorj deals with the concept of human security applied to Latin American problems.

Four articles – contributed by Alberto Bovino, Nlerum S. Okogbule, Maria José Guembe and José Roberto Cunha – discuss different aspects concerning **access to justice**, on domestic and international planes. From an international perspective, Bovino dwells on the peculiarities of evidence evaluation conducted by the Inter-American Court of Human Rights, underlining the flexibility shown by this jurisdictional body in dealing with grievous infringements of rights. Okogbule weighs the specific obstacles hampering access to justice in the Nigerian context. Guembe discusses the decision of the Supreme Court of Argentina, which deemed unconstitutional the amnesty laws that benefited military personnel involved in violations of human rights during the dictatorship. Cunha presents the results of his survey among magistrates in the state of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, as to the extent of their familiarity with and their actual use of international law in issues involving human rights.

Land reform in Namibia is the theme of the text by Nico Horn, who considers the implications of the colonizing process and custom-law.

Although very varied in their themes and approaches, all these papers share a common point of departure – the contextualization of human rights – attempting to contribute to the reconstruction of these rights, with a view at their implementation, and to ensure a better coverage of local and regional demands.

We are wrapping up this issue with a summary of the plan of action submitted by the High Commissary for Human Rights, Louise Arbour, who proposes mechanisms to increase the effectiveness of human rights protection in the several UN member countries.