

PRESENTATION



The **Human Rights University Network – Sur** was set up in 2002 with the purpose of bringing together Southern Hemisphere academics active in the field of human rights, and of promoting their cooperation with UN agencies. The network currently has over 130 associates, from 36 countries, including scholars and members of international organizations and UN agencies.

The initiative arose from a series of meetings held between academics and UN officials involved in the field. The major motivation stemmed from the realization that, particularly in the Southern Hemisphere, scholars tended to conduct their work in an isolated fashion, with a very meager interchange among researchers of the countries involved.

Sur aims to operate as a network that will deepen and strengthen bonds between scholars concerned with the subject of human rights, magnifying their voices and participation in UN agencies, international organizations and universities. Within this framework, the network now offers a specific journal, *Sur – International Journal on Human Rights*, with the purpose of consolidating a channel that will publicize and promote groundbreaking research.

The journal, which intends to provide a different view of the issues involved in this debate, takes as references other publications in the field, with which it attempts to establish a permanent and ongoing dialogue. Nevertheless, its singularity is a consequence of its scope, plurality and perspective.

Scope. Language will often represent a major barrier for the establishment of long-lasting cooperative bonds among

researchers in the several countries. Although English has become largely universal, it is not as effective as the various mother tongues of organizations and scholars to conduct discussions about complex subjects. For this reason, *Sur – International Journal on Human Rights* is published in three languages (English, Portuguese and Spanish), and is made fully available on the Internet, at <<http://www.surjournal.org>>. In this manner, it attempts to facilitate access by the largest possible number of people.

Plurality. Another distinguishing feature of the journal concerns the institution responsible for its publication. Being a network, *Sur* can count on the collaboration of researchers from several countries, in a sustained effort to identify issues relevant to different realities, and with a consistent aim at exploring new frontiers in the human rights debate. Thus, instead of mirroring the concerns and perspectives of a closed institution, the journal opens up to a plurality of contexts and visions, which will make themselves present in each one of its issues.

Perspective. With the aim of ensuring internal consistency and adopting a political and not only an academic dimension, the journal intends to privilege discussions whose main focus is centered on the countries of the South. The point here is not to wage any ideological opposition to the scientific production of the North, but rather to insert in the global debate an agenda benchmarked by the demands and priorities identified by the South in the discussion on human rights.

This issue purports to present the journal to its readership and introduce some of the debates roused by the III International Colloquium on Human Rights, held in May 2003, in São Paulo, Brazil.

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