

**THE MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS AND HUMAN RIGHTS
&
CORPORATE ACCOUNTABILITY AND HUMAN RIGHTS**

Call for papers:

Deadline: 10 March 2010

The Human Rights University Network - Sur and Amnesty International (AI) invite all interested parties to send in their contributions for the Special Issue of the Sur Journal (Nº 12, first semester of 2010) that will address two issues:

- I - The Millennium Development Goals and Human Rights
- II - Corporate Accountability and Human Rights

Sur - International Journal on Human Rights is published twice a year, distributed free of charge to approximately 2,700 readers in over 100 countries. It is edited in three languages: English, Portuguese and Spanish, and can also be accessed online at www.surjournal.org.

The Journal aims at disseminating a Global Southern perspective on human rights and to facilitate exchange among professors and activists from the Global South without disregarding contributions from other regions.

I. THE MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS AND HUMAN RIGHTS

At a critical juncture in the interrogation of the opportunities and limitations offered by the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) as a framework for tackling poverty, and as human rights are increasingly recognized as inherently critical to any efforts to address poverty and inequality, the **Sur Journal** invites all authors to contribute to debates on the potential for human rights to be placed at the heart of current efforts to meet the MDGs and of any new framework that may follow from the MDGs after 2015.

I. 1. The MDGs and Human Rights: mutually reinforcing but only in part.

Despite their value in attracting political and public support for poverty alleviation, the MDGs have been criticized as 'minimum' development goals and for not fully reflecting the Millennium Declaration and its commitment to "strive for the full protection and promotion in all our countries of civil, political, economic and social and cultural rights for all". This critique suggests that the MDGs fail to take into account the full range of human rights obligations as enshrined in international human rights treaties. As such, the MDGs represent a lower set of commitments than those required under international human rights law, and do not take into account immediate legal obligations that states have in relation to the areas covered by the goals and fail to give adequate priority to the fulfillment of minimum core obligations for all. **Sur Journal** invites authors to analyze the current content and efforts to realize the MDGs in light of existing human rights obligations. It also invites authors to explore the potential for using the normative framework of global and regional human rights standards and mechanisms to achieve and surpass the MDGs, as well as ways in which human rights could form the basis for a new framework to tackle poverty and inequality, after 2015.



I. 2. The MDGs and Human Rights: women's rights and gender equality.

The current narrowness of the MDGs' scope in relation to gender equality and women's empowerment have prompted calls that all MDG efforts must address women's human rights and gender discrimination and should be underpinned by the Beijing Declaration and Platform of Action, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women and other instruments which states are bound by. MDG Goal 3 (promote gender equality and empower women) and Goal 5 (improve maternal health) do not represent a comprehensive agenda for realizing women's rights and gender equality. **Sur Journal** invites authors to analyze the opportunities for the MDGs to be achieved and surpassed by integrating the full range of women's human rights into national and/or global policies and strategies. In particular, authors are invited to analyze the extent to which – in both policy and practice – the current scope of Goals 3 and 5 addresses what is needed in order to promote gender equality and to address women's experience of poverty and discrimination.

I. 3. The MDGs and Human Rights: unmasking and addressing discrimination.

The current MDG framework does not require states to identify and address discrimination in all efforts to reach and surpass the goals and targets. This approach raises questions about how the current quantitative targets measure exclusion of particular groups and deepening inequalities. In addition, despite the attention the MDGs give to issues that particularly affect women and children, other groups which are often systemically discriminated against – such as Indigenous Peoples, the elderly, refugees and migrants, and people living with disabilities – are absent from the current MDG framework. By contrast, human rights standards and law require states to give adequate priority to the most marginalized and vulnerable groups in society, to take all measures to ensure the right of everyone to be free from discrimination and to monitor efforts to tackle discrimination. **Sur Journal** invites authors to consider how efforts towards the MDGs that are underpinned by human rights standards and law can ensure due attention is given to identifying and addressing marginalization and discrimination, including in MDG monitoring and reporting processes. Authors are particularly invited to consider current national MDG strategies and the extent to which they address discrimination, as well as the potential for any future alternative frameworks post 2015.

I. 4. The MDGs and Human Rights: a lack of accountability.

There is often no effective accountability of states' efforts to meet the MDGs, and for the extent to which such efforts are consistent with human rights principles and standards. Therefore, efforts to reach the MDGs may not take into account structural discrimination or underlying human rights violations which go against both the spirit and the letter of the MDGs. States generally do not submit their MDG reports or include detailed information on their efforts to achieve the MDGs to human rights monitoring mechanisms such as treaty bodies and the Universal Periodic Review. Similarly, reports on MDGs rarely contain information or evaluation of human rights concerns and consistency with human rights obligations. As such, there are limited remedies where States' actions or omissions violate human rights as part of their efforts to achieve the MDGs. **Sur Journal** invites authors to analyze how existing accountability mechanisms (both national and international) can be used more effectively to hold states accountable for the ways in which they work towards meeting the MDGs, and the extent to which they do so in ways which are consistent with their human rights obligations.

II. CORPORATE ACCOUNTABILITY AND HUMAN RIGHTS

II. 1. Corporate Accountability and Human Rights: Home state responsibility: Although states have a duty under international human rights law to protect individuals and communities from human rights abuses by non-state actors, including corporations - and to ensure access to an effective remedy when abuses occur - many states fail to comply with this duty. States are frequently either unwilling or unable to take measures to hold corporations to account for their adverse human rights impact and to provide an effective remedy to the victims. The failure to hold companies to account appears to be particularly prevalent in poor, developing and conflict-affected countries. There are a number of reasons for this, including the fear that acting to protect human rights will lead to expensive international arbitration or, more generally, scare off potential foreign investment. Weak regulatory systems, the political influence of powerful multi-national companies and their home states (i.e., where the companies is head-quartered), corruption, and legal and jurisdictional obstacles also contribute to the problem. **Sur Journal** invites authors to analyse the role of the home states (ie, the states where the corporations are headquartered) in this context. In particular, we invite analyses and suggestions on what measures a home state could or should take in order to hold corporations to account for abuses they have committed, or contributed to, in developing countries, and what measures they could take to ensure effective remedy for the individuals or communities that have been victims of those abuses.

II. 2. Corporate Accountability and Human Rights: Adequate Remedies for Human Rights Violations: Individuals and communities whose human rights are adversely affected by the activities of corporations often struggle or fail to receive an adequate remedy. This is due to the many obstacles they often face in accessing mechanisms of redress or in obtaining adequate reparation. One such obstacle is the lack or inadequacy of available causes of action or legal grounds to claim reparation for human rights abuses. Many victims of human rights abuses have resorted to tort or civil liability rules to ground their claims against corporations, yet it is not clear to what extent tort/civil liability based claims afford a proper and effective means by which to obtain remedy for abuses of human rights. **Sur Journal** invites an analysis of the adequacy or inadequacy of tort/civil liability rules as a means to achieve effective remedy for human rights abuses by, or involving, corporate actors and invites authors to suggest other existing or new areas of law and/or procedural mechanisms that could prove better suited to provide an effective remedy to victims of corporate human rights abuses.

II. 3. Corporate Accountability and Human Rights: Voluntary Commitments: Experts, activists and government officials have attempted to elaborate voluntary commitments in order to advance corporate accountability. Several voluntary commitments, elaborated recently, have attracted widespread criticism. **Sur Journal** invites analyses on the efficiency of voluntary commitments as well as whether they respect the international human rights standards already legally binding.



II. 4. Corporate Accountability and Human Rights: Ruggie's Normative Framework: In his 2008 report, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Business and Human Rights, Professor John Ruggie, has proposed a three-part conceptual framework to address human rights violations by companies: (i) States have the duty to protect against human rights abuses by third parties, including business, through appropriate policies, regulation and adjudication; (ii) companies have the responsibility to respect human rights; and (iii) victims require greater access to effective remedies. **Sur Journal** invites authors to critically analyze this framework, using concrete examples to discuss its applicability and to identify areas of concern.

The topics above were chosen as examples; articles that analyze other topics related to the main theme of this issue will also be welcome.

Selected articles in English and Spanish that are not published in the special issue due to lack of space may be published, at the discretion of Amnesty International, on Amnesty International websites.

The articles, studies and papers proposed will be published with the following phrase: "The opinions expressed in this document belong to the author and do not necessarily reflect those of Amnesty International".

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FORMAT

Contributions should be sent in electronic form (MS Word format) to artigo.sur@conectas.org and should follow these guidelines:

- Between 7,000 and 10,000 words or up to 70,000 characters.
- Concise endnotes. The Rules for Citation can be found at: <http://www.surjournal.org/rules/rulen.pdf>
- Short biography of author (maximum of 50 words).
- Abstract (no more than 150 words), including keywords for the required bibliographical classification.
- Date when the paper was written.

Only submissions received by **10 March 2010** will be considered for issue No. 12 (first semester 2010). Articles received after that date will be considered for subsequent issues.

IMPORTANT: The guidelines for authors have changed and will be in force from the Sur Journal issue 10 on. If you have any doubt, do not hesitate to contact the editorial board at contato.sur@conectas.org.
