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## PROLOGUE

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I am pleased to write this prologue for the special issue of the *American University International Law Review* featuring the winning papers from the 2011 Human Rights Essay Award, sponsored by the Academy on Human Rights and Humanitarian Law of the Washington College of Law.

Since 2003, the Academy has presented the annual Human Rights Essay Award to support and recognize scholarly research concerning international human rights law. Recipients of the award receive a full scholarship, including tuition, travel, and living expenses, to study at the annual Specialized Human Rights Program. Scholarships are given for the best research papers written in each of two languages, English and Spanish, which are selected from highly competitive pools of submissions. Year after year, lawyers from around the world with extensive experience and knowledge of international human rights law submit works of extraordinary rigor and insight.

This year's submissions addressed the topic of "The Rights of Children and International Human Rights Law." The Academy on Human Rights and Humanitarian Law received a tremendous number of submissions from authors representing countries all over the world. I commend each of the participating scholars for their caliber of research and commitment to studying these vital issues.

The 2011 Award for the best paper in English was presented to Violet Odala of Malawi for her paper entitled *The Spectrum for Child Justice in the International Framework: From 'Reclaiming the Delinquent Child' to Restorative Justice*. Ms. Odala is a doctoral candidate (LL.D.) at the University of Pretoria. She is also the senior program coordinator the Child and the Law Programme at the

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African Child Policy Forum, Ethiopia. Ms. Odala has served as partner at Social Edge Transformative Initiatives Consulting in Malawi. Ms. Odala also served as a Senior State Advocate to the Ministry of Justice and Constitutional Affairs in Malawi preparing legal briefs for the Attorney General and advising agencies. Additionally, Ms. Odala has held a number of legal internships with organizations ranging from the Hague Domestic Violence Project, the Centre for Victims of Torture, and the African Development Bank.

The 2011 Award for the best paper in Spanish was presented to María del Rosario Carmona Luque of Spain for her paper entitled *Incidencia de la Convención sobre los derechos del niño en la precisión del Ius cogens internacional*. Professor Carmona Luque has a distinguished career in international law both in the classroom and in scholarly writing. She has been an Assistant Professor at Universidad Pablo de Olavide de Sevilla for the past six years and an Associate Professor at Universidad de Cádiz the ten years before her current position. Professor Carmona Luque has written expansively on the theme of the rights of children, and we are pleased to provide a forum for her continuing contributions to this important area of international law.

Honorable mentions for papers in English were awarded to Tracey Begley of the United States for her paper *The Extraterritorial Obligation to Prevent the Use of Child Soldiers*, and to James Jarso of Kenya for his paper *Implementing the Children's Rights Agenda in Kenya: Taking Stock of the Progress, Hurdles, and Prospects*. Honorable mentions for papers in Spanish were awarded to Constanza Argentieri of Argentina for her paper *La interpretación del artículo 19 de la Convención Americana sobre Derechos Humanos en la jurisprudencia contenciosa de la Corte Interamericana de Derechos Humanos: ¿Fueron superados los estándares establecidos en la Opinión Consultiva N° 17?*, and to María Cristina Rodríguez de Taborda of Spain for her paper *Consideraciones Jurídicas sobre los derechos de los niños migrantes*. The law school community congratulates each of these scholars for their exceptional articles, and appreciates the contributions of all participants in the Academy's 2011 Human Rights Essay Award Competition.

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I would also like to thank my fellow members of the Honor Jury: Luz Angela Melo, Jo Becker, Mary Beloff, Deborah Benchoam, Sheila Keetharuth, Rosa Maria Ortiz, Claudia Martin, Peter Newell, Diego Rodríguez-Pinzón, Daniela Salazar, Maria Santos Pais, Angels Simon, Julia Sloth-Nielsen, Philippe Texier, and Veronica Yates.

The Academy on Human Rights and Humanitarian Law established the Human Rights Essay Award as part of its broader mission to help address the need for specialized legal training in the practice and theory of international human rights. The Academy, which evolved from the law school's core commitment to promoting human rights and humanitarian law, has emerged as a premier forum for advanced training and analysis concerning the most salient topics in these critical legal fields. Participants acquire valuable knowledge and skills through the examination of issues shaping the world within a context that emphasizes the practical roles and contributions of human rights rules and mechanisms. Such engagement strengthens the professional community that can, in turn, help to better address the pressing needs of people around the world.

The Academy's Specialized Human Rights Program is held each summer in Washington, D.C., at the American University Washington College of Law. The Program's faculty includes the most distinguished scholars and practitioners of human rights and humanitarian law. Courses address a diverse range of key topics including, *inter alia*, impunity and justice, implementation of human rights in domestic law, women and international human rights law, regional approaches to human rights law: Africa, America, Asia, election observation and the right to political participation, the rights of disadvantaged and vulnerable groups, and the United Nations human rights system.

Additionally, numerous activities further enrich the participants' experience in the Program, including panels and discussions on key topics and site visits to important institutions such as the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, the Organization of American States, and the Newseum.

The Academy's activities are an important component of the law school's numerous initiatives reflecting its longstanding commitment to strengthening the rule of law and human rights around the world. Other elements include extensive course offerings and externship

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opportunities, a variety of student-run publications, and law school programs including, *inter alia*, the Center for Human Rights and Humanitarian Law, War Crimes Research Office, United Nations Committee against Torture Project, Clinical Programs, Office of Public Interest, Summer Law Program in the Hague, Impact Litigation Project, and the annual trilingual Inter-American Human Rights Moot Court Competition.

All of these initiatives reaffirm our community's commitment to helping protect and promote human dignity through the rule of law. The law school will continue to foster and support this core value in future generations of lawyers, and to collaborate with institutions, programs and countries around the world. In this spirit, I would also like to express our deep appreciation to the *American University International Law Review* for its dedication and contributions to publishing vital international law scholarship, including this special issue each year that sets forth papers in both English and Spanish concerning key topics in international human rights law.