

FOREWORD

The Inter-American Court of Human Rights, the Institute for Juridical Investigations of the National Autonomous University of Mexico, the Konrad Adenauer Foundation and the Inter-American Institute of Human Rights have agreed to publish a journal that provides a panoramic view of the reception that international human rights law, and specifically the jurisprudence of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights, has had among the highest judicial bodies in American States. Thus, *Diálogo Jurisprudencial* was born; its first edition corresponds to the July-December 2006 semester.

One of the most relevant trends in the present development of international human rights law, concerning the necessary incorporation of international human rights law into national practice and regulation, is the judicial reception observed through pronouncements of various kinds by Supreme Courts, Constitutional Courts and Constitutional Court rooms in an increasing number of countries.

Accordingly, the Inter-American Court's jurisprudence acquires true transcendence in the jurisdictional sphere, which is of the utmost importance. This international or supranational Tribunal does not constitute an appellate court to decisions made by national courts. As interpreter and applier of the American Convention on Human Rights and other international texts that confer upon it material jurisdiction, the Court is called to examine the rights and freedoms stipulated within those instruments and to establish their meaning and reach. Once the international judicial body has developed said interpretation, national courts must adopt it as an authoritative interpretation that binds countries that have ratified those instruments, and thus creates obligations for those States and defines individual rights. Another effect of the jurisprudential dialogue between courts is the reference that in some decisions the Inter-American Court of Human Rights has made to national law to give content and interpret international human rights, particularly in the American Convention on Human Rights. To do so, the Court has made use of various decisions mainly from high national courts, as supreme courts or constitutional courts and, taking into account such judicial criteria, the Inter-American Court has developed human rights XIV standards that have served for the analysis of cases submitted to it. This demonstrates both the dynamic character that has

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acquired the dialogue between the Inter-American Court and the high local courts, as well as the importance of this convergence of efforts towards building regional standards involving the most guarantor possible interpretation of treaties governing the OAS States Members.

The publication of the journal *Diálogo Jurisprudencial* serves to provide an understanding of the developments in this field in an array of America's jurisdictions, in order that judicial authorities, professors, investigators and law students may draw knowledge and reflection from this source. Such diffusion may encourage new developments in other countries as well. The final objective is, clearly, to encourage the integration of international human rights law and to strengthen and improve the "contemporaneous status of the human being" as a beneficiary of national and international norms that recognize these rights and liberties and assure their effective exercise.

Six decisions appear in the twenty-first edition of the journal —discussed through an appropriate selection of paragraphs— from Colombia, Mexico, Ecuador and Guatemala. Text that is unrelated to the application of human rights provisions or is not necessary for understanding the issue being examined has been replaced by ellipses. In addition, footnotes that lack such content have been deleted, while retaining the original numeration in the body of the decision.