

Foreword

to the 2nd edition (2009)

The Preamble of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948 states that freedom, justice and peace in the world are founded on the recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family. Human rights serve to protect and promote the dignity of human beings worldwide; indeed, human rights could be seen as a legal codification of the concept of human dignity.

The primary objective of any State is to protect the dignity of its citizens. The state not only has to provide human rights which belong to all human beings, it also has to protect them. Key to this objective are not only a constitution that enshrines basic human and citizens' rights, but also their enforcement through the principle of the rule of law and relevant institutions. Whilst the effective protection of human rights is the benchmark of any civilised society, the rule of law is an indispensable precondition of a modern state. Both determine the citizen's quality of life and indicate the vitality of a living democracy.

A publication on human rights and the rule of law can, therefore, enhance the understanding of these crucial paradigms. The various articles presented here on their application and implementation in Namibia attempt to expose and analyse the country's numerous achievements and challenges in this regard.

The first edition of this publication, which I had the honour of launching in April 2008, was received extraordinarily positively, and was quickly sold out. And the timing of this second edition – already in high demand – for the 19th anniversary of Namibia's independence is no accident: it will not only continue to contribute to a better understanding of human rights and the rule of law, but will also celebrate Namibia's achievements in these arenas.

The Konrad Adenauer Foundation initiated and funded the first and second editions of this publication as part of the more than 200 programmes it runs in over 100 countries across the globe. Through these programmes the Foundation strives to promote, amongst other things, good governance, the rule of law, and human rights. May this publication nobly serve this purpose as well, by deepen the understanding of human dignity and human rights, and by strengthening the rule of law in Namibia.

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President of the German Federal Parliament

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