

Centre Directors Launch Leading Human Rights Book in Geneva



Sir Nigel Rodley launches the book in Geneva

Centre director Sarah Joseph and deputy director Melissa Castan have finally published the third edition of *The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights: Cases Materials and Commentary* (Oxford University Press, 2013). The book is widely acknowledged as the leading commentary on one of the world's most important human rights treaties, and is extensively used by members of the UN Human Rights Committee, the body that supervises and monitors the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR).

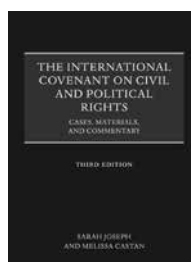
The book was launched at Palais Wilson in Geneva, Switzerland, on 16 October by the chair of the UN Human Rights Committee, Sir Nigel Rodley, at the Committee's 109th session. Palais Wilson, an elegant building on the banks of Lake Geneva, was the original headquarters of the League of Nations and is now home to the UN's Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR). OHCHR staff and most members of the Committee were in attendance at the launch – and indeed many bought the book, with the Oxford University Press (OUP) representative describing the sales as “a stampede”. A number of Geneva-based academics and human rights activists, including former director of the Human Rights Law Centre and current director of the International Service for Human Rights Phil Lynch, were also present.

The launch was held in conjunction with the annual reception of the CCPR Centre, a Geneva-based NGO that monitors implementation of the ICCPR and greatly assists non-governmental organisations in their work of holding States to account under the ICCPR. As well as Sir Nigel and Professor Joseph, the CCPR Centre's president, former Committee member Rafael Rivas Posada, spoke on the night.

The authors must express their gratitude to the Australian Mission to the UN in Geneva for its generous sponsorship of the event, as well as the CCPR Centre, Centre Director Patrick Mutzenberg, OUP, and of course Sir Nigel Rodley for his kind words.

The book was launched locally on 28 November at Clayton Utz in Melbourne by former High Court judge Michael Kirby. A report on that event will be in the next newsletter.

The third edition of *The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights: Cases Materials and Commentary*



Millennium Development Goals in Focus

Monash University's wide-ranging human rights expertise was on display in August when the Castan Centre hosted its first cross-faculty human rights symposium on the UN's Millennium Development Goals. The MDGs, as they are colloquially known, are global targets for improvement in eight key areas, including poverty and hunger, child mortality and sustainable development.

The symposium featured the Castan Centre's Associate Professor Adam McBeth, the Faculty of Business and Economics' Professor Brett Inder and Professor Dave Griggs, who heads the Monash Sustainability Institute.

The speakers showcased very different academic approaches to evaluating the MDGs. While there was a broad agreement that measurable targets were in most cases a positive feature of the MDGs, Professor Inder argued that in some cases such targets could lead to short-term thinking and poorly developed programs. Associate Professor McBeth on the other hand focused on the fact that the targets were largely unenforceable from a legal perspective and therefore dependant on political will for their enforcement.

Each of the presenters argued that the MDGs had succeeded in some areas but not others - and Professor Inder reminded us of how often aid doesn't work. However, all agreed an expanded MDG project was worth continuing beyond the 2015 target date.

As 2015 approaches, the world's nations are meeting to decide on a post-2015 development agenda, which will include a new set of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Professor Griggs has recently published a paper in the journal *Nature* on SDGs, and he presented the many and varied options currently on the table. Although it is too early to say how the final SDGs will look, they will address a number of additional key issues including climate change, biodiversity, freshwater and clean air.

The event attracted a full house of academics and researchers at the Clayton campus. It was the first of what will become a biennial series to encourage collaboration and cooperation between academics working in similar fields across the University's various institutes and faculties.