

Preface

This volume contains the papers delivered at the seventh in a series of judicial colloquia on the domestic application of international human rights norms. The meeting was held in Georgetown, Guyana from 3 to 5 September 1996. The first such meeting was held in Bangalore, India in 1988 and was followed by gatherings in Harare, Zimbabwe in 1989; Banjul, The Gambia in 1990; Abuja, Nigeria in 1991; Oxford, England in 1992; and Bloemfontein, South Africa in 1993.

As with the previous colloquia, the participants at this meeting were primarily judges from Commonwealth countries and from international and regional human rights tribunals. In all, there were 30 participants in the Guyana Colloquium, 20 of whom were from the Commonwealth Caribbean. Others were from Africa, Asia/Pacific, Europe and North America.

Like its predecessors, the Georgetown meeting focused on the domestic application of international human rights norms. The papers in the opening session discussed the ways in which domestic courts have given effect (or have failed to give effect) to the norms established under international human rights treaties. In the second part, two papers look at the particular problem of compliance with international human rights standards and the death penalty in the Commonwealth Caribbean. The following sessions dealt with two substantive topics, the right to freedom of expression and the right to a fair trial. The overall theme of these sessions was the relationship between national and international standards in the protection of specific fundamental rights.

At the end of the meeting, the Georgetown Conclusions on the effective protection of human rights through law were unanimously adopted by the participants. The Georgetown Conclusions are included in the beginning pages of this volume while the closing statements from the previous colloquia are appended as an annex.

The papers in this volume are current as of the date of their writing, though in a few exceptional instances the editors have updated information in the form of a footnote. This volume was edited by Maggie Maloney for INTERIGHTS, who gratefully acknowledge her assistance.

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