

Address on the occasion of signing the Memorandum of Agreement for the hosting of the 29th edition of the African Human Rights Moot Court Competition between the Centre for Human Rights, the Virtual University of Senegal and the University Cheikh Anta Diop, 18 October 2019, Dakar, Senegal, by Frans Viljoen, Director, Centre for Human Rights, Faculty of Law, University of Pretoria

Dear Coordinator of the Virtual University of Senegal ,Prof. Moussa LO, dear Representative of the Rector of the University Cheikh Anta Diop, Prof Samba THIAM, dear Head of the Pole SEJA, Prof. Jean Louis CORREA; all protocols observed ...

First of all, thank you very much for the hearty welcome. I am mightily impressed with the arrangements, your facilities, and your commitment to make our collaboration a great success. I am confident that in just over 9 months, when more than 200 students and professors will arrive here in Dakar for the 29th African Human Rights Moot Court Competition, they will similarly be swept off their feet with your welcome and professionalism.

The Moot and Senegal

As you know, the African Human Rights Moot Court Competition is the largest gathering of students, academics and judges around the theme of human rights in Africa. This annual event brings together all law faculties in Africa, whose top students argue a hypothetical human rights case as if they were before the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights. The Competition continuously prepares new generations of lawyers to argue cases of alleged human rights violations before the African Court.

The Moot took place in Senegal once before. Twelve years ago, in 2007, the Université Gaston Berger du Saint Louis hosted the event. The Moot has been hosted in 17 countries. Only four countries -- South Africa, Ghana, Mozambique and Zambia – have hosted the moot more than one time. Senegal now joins this elite group, with the 2020 Moot being once more hosted in Senegal, but this time

by l'Université virtuelle du Sénégal and l'Université Cheikh Anta Diop, in collaboration with the Centre for Human Rights, Faculty of Law, University of Pretoria.

Four reasons why 2020 should be special

The 2020 Competition promises to be special for a number of reasons. I list four.

First: This will be the first time that the Center for Human Rights will co-host the event with *two* other universities - the Virtual University of Senegal and the Cheikh University Anta Diop (University of Dakar). We hope it will be a very fruitful collaboration.

Second: We also hope to see the widest possible participation of Francophone and Lusophone universities. Although the African Contest aims to be pan-African in scope, the majority of participating universities come from English-speaking countries. We hope that the organization of the African Contest in a leading French-speaking country - Senegal - will attract the participation of a greater number of French-speaking universities. In particular, close neighbors, such as Burkina Faso, Mali and Mauritania, who have not participated frequently in the past, are particularly thought of. We also think of all the universities in Senegal with a law school. The same applies to Lusophone Universities in the subregion, from Guinea-Bissau and Cape Verde.

Third: As the Centre for Human Rights, Faculty of Law, University of Pretoria, we already have a collaboration with one Senegalese University, Gaston Berger du saint Louis. We are very excited to formalise a partnership with two other universities in Senegal.

Fourth: The Centre has chosen 'technology and human rights' as its theme for the year 2020. We look forward to the Moot serving as an opportunity to further explore this theme, both in the hypothetical problem, and during the academic conference.

To work!

Today marks the end of the beginning. Much hard work has already gone into this joint endeavor. Our two colleagues attended the Moot in Botswana, to familiarise them with aspects of the organization.

After today, the real hard work starts, including drafting the first version of the hypothetical case, and fund raising. We trust that this collaboration will lay the foundation of greater cooperation in the future.

I wish you, or 2020 Moot partners, all the best with the preparations, and look forward to a very productive collaboration. Once again, thank you very much for allowing us to work with you on this important endeavor.