

Ann Skelton's vision

I support a child rights approach that balances protection and autonomy, and views child rights within a broader human rights approach. I believe that sensitivity to context is important, but that minimum standards for rights protection must be maintained, especially for the poorest and most marginalised children. I have a particular interest in the building of systems to ensure the fulfilment of children's rights in developing country situations. In my view, urgent and sustainable efforts need to be made to narrow the gap between the promises of international and regional law, and the realities on the ground.

The contribution that Prof. Skelton can make

Prof. Skelton's work demonstrates that she is a distinguished expert in her field. She is an advocate who is passionate about and committed to the development of a world that respects and protects children and their rights. We are confident that she will bring a wealth of knowledge and an understanding of emerging economy contexts to the committee's important work. We call on your support for her election to the Committee on the Rights of the Child.

Educational background

Ann Skelton has a Doctorate in Law (LLD) from the University of Pretoria. The thesis' topic was *Child Justice*. She also holds a Bachelor of Arts (BA) and a Bachelor of Laws (LLB) from the University of KwaZulu-Natal.

List of selected recent publications in the field:

Ann Skelton also holds credentials as an internationally recognised researcher in the field of children's rights. She has published 23 journal articles and 21 chapters in books, as well as numerous reports and monographs.

A selection of her most recent publications:

- Skelton A "South Africa" in T Liefwaard and J Doek (eds) *Litigating Children's Rights: The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child in Domestic and International Jurisprudence* 1-13 Springer: Netherlands 978-94-017-9444-2
- Skelton A "S v Williams: A springboard for further debate about corporal punishment" 2015 *Acta Juridica* 263
- Skelton A "Proposals for the review of the minimum age of criminal responsibility" 2013 (3) *South African Journal of Criminal Justice* 257-275
- Skelton A "The role of the courts in ensuring the right to a basic education in a democratic South Africa: a critical evaluation of recent education case law" 2013 46(1) *De Jure* 1-23
- Skelton A "Kinship care and cash grants: In search of sustainable solutions for children living with members of their extended families in South Africa" 2012 *International Survey of Family Law Journal* 333-345
- Skelton A "The development of a fledgling child rights jurisprudence in Eastern and Southern Africa based on international and regional instruments" 2009 9(2) *African Human Rights Law Journal* 482-501.

Professor
Ann Skelton



Candidate of the Republic of South Africa
for election to the United Nations (UN)
Committee on the Rights of the Child

2016



Professor Ann Skelton

It is a great pleasure to present **Professor Ann Skelton** as South Africa's candidate for election to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child.

Current position

Ann Skelton is currently a Professor of Law at the University of Pretoria, where she holds the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation Chair in Education Law in Africa. She is also the Director of the Centre for Child Law which promotes children's rights in South Africa through advocacy, law reform, research and litigation. She is a practising lawyer who often appears in South African courts, arguing landmark children's rights cases. She has made a major contribution to child rights jurisprudence.

Main professional achievements

Prof. Skelton is recognised in South Africa and internationally as a foremost expert and a skillful advocate for the promotion, protection and fulfilment of children's rights. She has been a child rights lawyer for over 25 years and has spent her career using law as a means to advance children's rights.

Prof. Skelton has been instrumental in law reform in South Africa: She chaired the committee that drafted the Child Justice Act (2008) at the South African Law Reform Commission, and was a member of the committee that drafted the Children's Act (2005). She was at the forefront of innovative projects to develop costing models and budgets for the implementation of these laws. The South African Government continues to invite her to draft amendments to child-related legislation, and she frequently makes submissions to Parliament in this regard. Prof. Skelton was recently appointed by the South African Government as a member of a Ministerial Advisory Committee to review the *Social Welfare White Paper*. She is also a member of the South African Human Rights Commission's Advisory Committee on Basic Education and Children's Rights.

Work in Africa on children's rights

- Ann Skelton has presented regional training on children's rights for the UN International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) in the eastern and southern African region.
- In 2008, she was invited by the Southern African Chief Justices Forum to present a paper on child rights jurisprudence at the Judges Summer Colloquium in Malawi.
- In 2011, she led the research team that produced *Achieving Child Friendly Justice in Africa*, a multiple-country study published by the African Child Policy Forum and Defence for Children International.
- In 2014, she was a member of the civil-society delegation that presented the complementary report to the Expert Committee on the Rights and Welfare of the Child in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

- She has co-authored several studies on migrant children, focusing on Zimbabwe, Mozambique and South Africa.
- In 2015, she participated in an expert group developing a model law to end child marriage.
- In 2015, she led a study for the UN Population Fund on laws and policies that affect adolescent sexual and reproductive rights in the east and southern African regions. The 360-page study report details the relevant laws and policies of 23 countries in these regions.

Work with the United Nations

From 1999 to 2004, Ann Skelton worked for the UN Development Programme in South Africa. She ran a technical assistance project on child justice, and was based at the Department of Justice, Pretoria.

Participation in United Nations expert events

Professor Skelton is recognised within the UN system as an expert on child rights and child law and as such has been invited by, among others, UNICEF, the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), to provide expert technical input, for example:

- March 2014: Participated in the expert meeting to discuss access to justice in the International Development Law Organisation (IDLO) region (Eastern Europe) in Geneva, at the request of UNICEF.
- January 2012: Prepared the concept document for and participated in an expert consultation on *Violence against Children in the Juvenile Justice System* in Vienna, at the request of the UNODC, OHCHR and the Special Representative of the UN Secretary General on Violence Against Children. This culminated in a thematic report, which was presented to the General Assembly on 27 June 2012 (A/HRC/21/25).
- September 2011: Participated as a plenary panel speaker at the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child *Day of General Discussion: Children of Incarcerated Parents*.

- July 2011: Participated in the expert group meeting to discuss *The Legal Framework Required to Prohibit, Prevent and Respond to all Forms of Violence against Children* in Geneva, at the request of the OHCHR and the Inter-Parliamentary Union.
- March 2011: Participated in the expert group meeting to review a first draft of a *Model Law on Juvenile Justice* in Vienna, at the request of the UNODC.
- June 2010: Participated in the expert group meeting to discuss the third optional protocol to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child on a communication procedure, at the request of the OHCHR.

Prof. Skelton's expertise in child rights and child law resulted in her being invited to give expert input in training and missions in many developing countries, including China, Thailand, Nepal, Vietnam, Fiji and Albania. She has also spoken at numerous international conferences and presented training on child justice to international groups at Innocenti, Florence, and at the UN Asia and Far East Institute for the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders, Tokyo.

Her knowledge of education law led to her being recently commissioned by the Open Society Justice Initiative to undertake a comparative study of strategic litigation for equal access to quality education in Brazil, India and South Africa.

Ann Skelton has also seen "the other side" of presenting country reports to the Committee on the Rights of the Child: In February 2016, she was a member of the civil-society delegation that presented South Africa's complementary shadow report.

International award

Prof. Skelton has received several awards of which the Honourary World's Children's Prize, presented to her by Queen Sylvia of Sweden in 2012, is significant as it is decided through a children's vote. Former World's Children's Prize winners include Nelson Mandela and Malala Yousafzai.