Technology and Human Rights – Friends or Foes?
Highlighting Innovations Applying to Natural Resources and Medicine

Hans Morten Haugen

Hans Morten Haugen offers a lucid analysis of the intersection of intellectual property with health, traditional knowledge and biodiversity against a backdrop of established and emerging human rights. How those rights interface and who decides are among the most difficult issues in international intellectual property, and there is no doubt that there is room for fresh ideas on how to simultaneously achieve the goals of innovation, development and access.

Daniel Gervais, Ph.D., FedEx Research Professor of Law, Vanderbilt University Law School

Haugen manages to present an interesting, challenging and at the same time well balanced treatment of his ambitious project. Informed by the right to benefit from scientific progress and insisting on the social responsibilities of the UN, of states as well as of private actors, he addresses issues thoroughly, with due respect for detail and in a way that makes his contribution highly relevant in policy-making.

Helge Hveem, Professor (Em) in Political Science at the University of Oslo, previously Director, Centre for Technology, Innovation and Culture, University of Oslo, Coordinator, Jointly Executed Research Project on Technology Innovation and Governance of GARNET (European Network of Excellence)

Realization of the right to enjoy the benefits of scientific progress is a necessary prerequisite for the realization of many other human rights. Yet, not states, nor human rights monitoring mechanisms, nor the scientific community have given focus to this right, its meaning and application. It is in this regard that Haugen’s book is so important.

Jessica Wyndham, Associate Director, Scientific Responsibility, Human Rights and Law Program of the American Association for the Advancement of Science

Hans Morten Haugen takes us on an insightful journey through diverse spheres of human endeavour, in search of the connections between technological breakthroughs and the realization of human rights. He adopts a nuanced approach to pithy topics such as the use of genetic technology for drought-resistant food crops or second generation biofuels, and the impact of patents on the diffusion of medical technology. Haugen demonstrates how a deeper understanding of human rights principles and treaty provisions can help us arrive at innovation policies which are socially more desirable and inclusive. This is essential reading not only for policymakers and activists, but also for scientists and innovators seeking to define their social responsibilities through a closer look at human rights.


Hans Morten Haugen is Associate Professor at Diakonhjemmet University College. His research has centered on intellectual property, human rights, environmental and WTO law, as well as social ethics. In addition to more than 40 articles and book chapters, his publications include The Right to Food and the TRIPS Agreement – With a Particular Emphasis on Developing Countries’ Measures for Food Production and Distribution, Leiden: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 2007.
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