

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Readers will notice some exciting changes in this issue of China Rights Forum. In line with a coordinated redesign of HRIC's materials, we have undertaken a relaunch of CRF that adopts a thematic focus for each issue while retaining regular departments and existing features. CRF's expanded direction also coincides with the departure of Sophia Woodman, whose editorial leadership over the past 10 years has developed CRF into the respected publication it is today. A look at our historical Topic and Author Index, included in this issue, brings home the quality readers have come to expect from CRF. I look forward to participating in CRF's new direction, and thank the contributors in this issue for helping us build on a strong momentum.

CRF's first issue for the year 2003 focuses on China's increasing integration into the world economy through its accession to the World Trade Organization, and in a less direct way, through winning its bid to host the Olympic Games in 2008. Our contributors reflect contrasting views: the hope that increased economic prosperity and contact with the outside world will make China a more open, free and democratic country, and the fear that foreign participants, looking first to their own benefit, are simply reinforcing a repressive regime.

With the twin trophies of WTO membership and the Olympics in hand, China is still adjusting to the human rights implications of both moves. Forced clearance of Beijing's less prosperous neighborhoods and tightened security measures are already planned in preparation for the Olympics. At the same time, labor unrest is swelling across China as state-owned enterprises buckle under the growing demands of capitalism, and private factories owned by or producing for multinational companies exploit workers with little bargaining power or avenue for redress.

It is in this environment that international participants — whether investors in China's economy or sponsors, contractors or athletes in the Olympic Games — need to be aware of their role and impact in China's affairs. Articles in this issue suggest that a serious commitment to good corporate citizenship can make a difference. But concerned citizens, NGOs, and governments must also continue to demand accountability from the Chinese government.

On this note I invite readers to explore this new issue of CRF, and welcome all feedback and support, as well as articles for future issues.

— Stacy Mosher, Editor