FOREWORD

Human rights lie at the very heart of a democracy. In South Africa, we are blessed with a Bill of Rights that enshrines the rights of all our people, and affirms the right of every person to human dignity, equality and freedom.

Images of Human Rights is an artistic celebration of those rights. It is a testament to the human spirit that endured years of struggle for democracy and human rights in our beloved country. It is an evocative depiction of the principles on which our new nation is founded. The images powerfully complement the words of the Bill of Rights. Given our history, they serve as an apt reminder that words, however inspiring and lyrical, have been used as much to subvert as to create. It is therefore necessary to portray our commitment to human rights in pictures which are less open to corruption.

The work of the artists represented in this portfolio reflects the complexity, passion and richness of our rainbow nation. It does not belong to any particular artistic style, educational tradition or cultural background. It is a product born of South Africa’s diversity.

I am particularly pleased that the clause depicting the rights of children is represented by the winning entry from a competition organised among school children in KwaZulu-Natal. I believe that through inculcating human rights at an early age, children learn to live, experience and respect their own rights and the rights of others.

It is thus fitting that Amnesty International, which supported and helped us along the long road to freedom will have access to the funds generated from the sale of this portfolio, to embark on a programme of human rights education for the youth of South Africa.

Nation building needs a willingness to bridge the chasms that divide; be it between rich and poor, urban and rural, townships and suburbs. In capturing the essence of our humanity, Images of Human Rights weaves together the dreams and aspirations of us all. It is a dedication to the spirit of hope, and a celebration of South Africa’s place among the nations which respect and uphold human rights.

The Most Rev. Desmond M. Tutu
Archbishop Emeritus