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The introduction of the *Journal of Law, Society and Development* has been timely as it makes its appearance on the academic publishing stage at a time when South Africa and the world at large are in search of enquiry that cuts across disciplinary boundaries. Investigating and analysing the challenges of our times and arriving at both scientific and sustainable solutions requires what the journal advocates as being ‘multi-, inter- and transdisciplinarity’.

In recent times, much emphasis has been placed on the global economic and financial crises, in particular those sparked off in countries such as Greece, Italy, Spain and Portugal. In countries such as South Africa and the rest of the African continent the challenge of basing development on mineral commodities (this is a 19th-century European development strategy that has become antiquated for a modern Africa) and tourism income has left many of the continent’s societies in difficult situations. There is no doubt that the content of research that emanates from these countries requires further interrogation from multidisciplinary, interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary perspectives.

As this journal continues to publish thoroughly researched papers, it contributes to the generation of appropriate knowledge. It also helps to establish the fact that research must have a long-term objective premised on societal development. Joel Netshitenzhe has succinctly articulated this very point:

‘Quite clearly, one of the challenges in our country and further afield is the syndrome of “short-termism” – the tendency in the private sector to focus mainly on quarterly or annual returns, and in the public sector to be consumed by electoral cycles. Research and reflections

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that help raise our gaze beyond the horizon do contribute to defining frameworks within which we can operate in the here and then' (Mapungubwe Institute for Strategic Reflection publication).

Some academics tend to be caught up in research that is not far reaching and, as a result, societies and nations suffer tremendously when in the long run the reality tends to turn out negatively. This is currently obvious in some countries both on the African continent and in the Eurozone. It is in such circumstances that people begin to challenge the relevance of the existence of intellectuals who are supposed to be researchers of significance.

The academies of scholarship such as universities need to regain their credibility as magnets of excellent research. These institutions must by all means resist becoming mere consulting firms, for once scholarship is reduced to consultancy work, a sound approach to thinking and analysis is undermined. This journal places itself at the forefront of the search for new, appropriate and usable knowledge.

It also helps us to better understand the synergies that must exist between the different fields of study. The confusion that exists between social science and the humanities is an excellent example of this. It is also important to look at the debate among 'natural scientists' that 'social science' is not a science at all. In the final analysis, all these fields of study must work in synergy to focus on the betterment of humankind.

At a conference held in South Africa organised by Times Higher Education and the University of Johannesburg, the Africa ranking pilot was launched to the public. One deduced that a conference titled 'Moving Africa's universities forward, Building a shared global legacy' was intended to further advance scholarship within the African continent, scholarship that can be shared with the rest of the world. Gone are the days of Africa being the receptacle of others' research knowledge while not itself generating and contributing to global knowledge. Professor Ihron Rensburg captured this imperative when he asserted:

'Africa's universities sit at the forefront of the continent's revitalization. To realize Africa's rejuvenation, our challenge is to nurture a critical mass of world-class universities with diverse missions that will contribute superbly towards the production of Africa's highly skilled people and research, in order to meet the innovation needs of the continent's expanding societies.'

The outstanding institutions and think tanks must also significantly contribute to this important movement towards research excellence and innovation. Thus, competitive journals like the one in the limelight here are appropriate vehicles for the publication and dissemination of significant research.

The combination of articles that were published in the first issue of this journal, and now the second, confirms the character of the journal as being true to its mandate: multi-, inter- and transdisciplinary. In the current issue the authors write

on topics as diverse and inter-/transdisciplinary as ‘BRICS and sub-Saharan African economic integration and peace’, ‘CISG and regional sales law: Friends or foes?’, ‘Let nuclear energy boil the kettle of indigent people’, ‘Politics–Law convergence and divergence’, ‘Modern freedom of testation in South Africa: Its application by the courts’, ‘The right to remain silent’, ‘The modern travelling merchant: Mobile communication in international contract’, and ‘Regional labour standards in the SADC: Is it possible, given the EU experience?’. These contributions have all been blind peer reviewed by respected individuals.

The articles being published in this issue constitute a significant contribution to African and global scholarship. Accordingly, the journal deserves to circulate widely, be read globally and compete with the best. This is important because the global ranking of institutions of knowledge will continue into the foreseeable future. It is also important because the young generation of scholars, researchers and decision-makers of today and tomorrow contributing to our knowledge and understanding of legal, societal and developmental issues must appreciate that the world is their playing field.