

IBA Diversity and inclusion policy

Purpose

Attracting the most able and committed lawyers from all backgrounds across the globe is essential for the International Bar Association (IBA) to maintain and strengthen its status as the world's leading organisation of legal practitioners, bar associations and law societies.

In recognition of this, the IBA is committed to promoting diversity, equality, respect and inclusion consistent with not only the wealth of studies that demonstrate the advantages of diversity within organisations, but also the fulfilment of human rights and the principles of justice, integrity, equity and the pursuit of excellence upon which the profession is founded.

Dignity equally attached to all persons is the cornerstone upon which the rule of law is built. The IBA's commitment to the independence of the legal profession in the pursuit of the rule of law is directed ultimately to the constant support of dignity equally shared by all.

The IBA will strive to promote diversity, equality and inclusion within IBA operations, across its membership and more broadly within the legal profession. The intention is to preserve and bolster its position as the world's pre-eminent organisation of lawyers, to create a fair and just organisation, and to establish a culture of inclusion and support for the benefit of all members and their clients.

The IBA is concerned to eliminate discrimination and bias – including discrimination on the grounds of gender, age, culture, race, ethnicity, religion, disability, socioeconomic standing, gender identity or sexual orientation – and to support and promote the full and equal participation of all persons within the IBA and its membership.

Rationale

Research has shown that diversity improves decision making, problem solving, creativity, innovation and productivity. Members of the IBA are from the most diverse backgrounds, and are entitled by its Charter to equal access to resources and opportunity unfettered by express or implicit bias.

Programmes supporting diversity improve the credibility and sustainability of an organisation, reflect community expectations of fairness in all aspects of the administration of the law, and serve to enhance the credibility of the IBA by making it more representative of the community it serves.

Programmes designed to improve diversity and inclusion have a positive effect on individual members, by encouraging their full participation and eliminating bias and discrimination.

This Policy builds upon steps taken to advance equality on the grounds of gender with respect to the recruitment, retention and promotion of women lawyers. The IBA will continue to support and progress that work, and to expand its reach to include the other grounds about which the IBA is concerned to eliminate discrimination and bias.

The IBA is mindful that many of its members recognise the value of diversity and inclusion, and have taken steps to enhance diversity within their own organisations, bar associations and law societies and to implement diversity and inclusion measures. Other members may be only beginning to explore ways to move towards a more diverse and inclusive working environment, and will be assisted by IBA initiatives and best practice tools and templates.



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Commitment

The IBA will:

- Develop a broad set of principles consistent with this Policy, promoting equality, diversity and inclusion within the IBA and its committees, sections, fora and membership.
- Support the work of the Diversity and Inclusion Council.
- Undertake positive measures in the recruitment of the IBA Executive, Management Committee, sections and committees, conscious of the need for diversity of members.
- Establish diversity officers across the organisation.
- Strive for diversity of representation at all IBA conference sessions and public events, and establish a Speakers Bureau to support this aim.
- Promote the use of tools that reveal and address persistent discriminatory biases.
- Establish an online hub for diversity and inclusion, including current research on diversity and inclusion measures and best practice tools and templates on such matters as bullying and harassment, flexible workplace structures and tools, networks and mentoring.
- Develop codes and practices that address sexual and other forms of unlawful harassment and discrimination, noting that such conduct will not be tolerated within the legal profession.
- Consider opportunities for research projects and the collation of statistics to establish benchmarks, and measure progress.
- Establish a President's award or scholarship, acknowledging the diversity and inclusion work or potential of individuals.
- Create video and social media tools to promote diversity and inclusion.