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United Nations



IBA LPRU AND UN ENGAGEMENT IN 2024

IBA engagement at the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) Bonn Climate Change Conference and COP29

In June 2024, the IBA convened an official side event at the UNFCCC Bonn Climate Change Conference, made possible by the IBA's UNFCCC observer status. The event, convened by the IBA, along with the American Bar Association (ABA) and Federal Council of the Brazilian Bar Association (OAB), brought together legal experts to explore the unique and evolving roles of law, lawyers and law associations in implementing the Paris Agreement and advancing the net zero transition. What emerged from the discussion was that the fast-evolving nature of the climate crisis – and the regulations introduced in response by the EU and others – are fundamentally transforming everyday legal practice. Lawyers from across practice areas are being increasingly challenged to advise on regulations outside of their domestic jurisdictions; engage in dialogue with overseas practitioners to understand supply chain risks; and advise on expanding climate-related risks and opportunities that intersect with human rights and biodiversity challenges.

In November 2024, at UNFCCC COP29, the IBA convened an official COP29 side event on ways that lawyers and bar associations can enhance climate ambition beyond national legal frameworks. The session highlighted practical examples of lawyers furthering positive climate action through their legal practice (for example, through strategic litigation seeking to hold



The IBA, American Bar Association (ABA) and Federal Council of the Brazilian Bar Association (OAB) co-host a side event at COP29 in Azerbaijan: *Beyond national frameworks: Lawyers & law associations enhancing ambition through legal approaches.*

governments and corporations accountable for their climate and nature impacts, as well as associated impacts on human rights; working with governments to translate climate protection and sustainability strategies into law; and supporting corporate clients to develop corporate strategies and governance structures that help them stay ahead of fast-changing climate regulation).

Recordings of these side events are available on the IBA website.¹

The IBA will continue to support the legal community to have a strong presence at UNFCCC forums in 2025, including through convening official side events and informal gatherings of legal professionals, as we look to build climate competence and community in this critical space.



Prof Uma Outka, COP29 Delegate, American Bar Association / Professor of Law, University of Kansas School of Law speaking at the IBA co-hosted side event at COP29.

1 Available at: www.ibanet.org/LPRU/IBA-at-UNFCCC



Speakers from the side event co-hosted by the IBA, ABA and OAB at COP29.

IBA engagement at the 13th UN Forum on Business and Human Rights

In November 2024, during the 13th UN Forum on Business and Human Rights, the IBA and its Human Rights Institute, with the American Bar Association Center for Human Rights, Geneva Bar Association and the International Commission of Jurists, convened a side event on the role of lawyers in upholding UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights and advising businesses on their responsibility to respect human rights.

Also during this forum, the IBA Business Human Rights Committee, the Business Human Rights Lawyers Association and

law firm Lalive co-sponsored a breakfast roundtable on the IBA Updated Guidance Note on Business and Human Rights (published in 2023) (**IBA Guidance**).² The roundtable brought together practitioners from several jurisdictions to consider evolving professional standards and implications for the role of lawyers and law firm management.

The IBA Guidance was also raised by IBA Secretary General Deborah Enix-Ross, Senior Advisor for Global Engagement at Debevoise & Plimpton LLP, and Daisuke Takahashi, Partner

at Shinwa Law, and then Co-Chair of the International Bar Association’s Business & Human Rights Committee, at the ‘Litigating Business & Human Rights’ snapshot co-organised by the UN Working Group on Business and Human Rights and Debevoise & Plimpton LLP.³ At this snapshot session, Deborah and Daisuke discussed the role of litigation in the ‘smart mix’ of judicial and non-judicial mechanisms in the enforcement of business and human rights.

² ‘Updated IBA Guidance Note on Business and Human Rights: The role of lawyers in the changing landscape’. Available at: www.ibanet.org/Updated-business-and-human-rights-changing-role-of-lawyers

³ <https://forumbhr2024.sched.com/event/1iIsn/snapshot-series-on-other-relevant-topics-of-the-bhr-agenda-litigating-business-and-human-rights>

UN Secretary General’s Executive Office

The LPRU participated in a virtual consultation on 21 February 2024 to share information on IBA’s AI project with civil society representatives and stakeholders in preparation for the United Nations Summit of the Future 2024 event.

United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD)

The IBA attended UNCTAD’s AI Governance for Public Good online event on 13 December 2024. The discussion highlighted the critical role of governments and organisations in guiding the use of AI for public good, underscoring the need for a global governance approach and the IBA’s AI report was shared.



United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)

In November, the LPRU participated in the UNODC Global Judicial Integrity Network event, part of the mentorship programme for women judges. Sara Carnegie spoke about the work of the IBA and took part in sessions covering integrity, wellbeing and ethics. She referenced specific projects on ethics and

anti-corruption and the 50:50 by 2030 Gender Parity in the Legal Profession project. The Global Judicial Integrity Network aims to assist judges around the globe in strengthening judicial integrity and preventing corruption, which undermines confidence in the judicial system and the rule of law.



Top: Sara Carnegie alongside judges from Sri Lanka, Uganda and the UK at the UNODC event in Vienna.

Left: Sara Carnegie and fellow delegates at the UNODC Global Judicial Integrity Network event in Vienna.

United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) Cybercrime Ad Hoc Committee



The LPRU participated in the virtual Cybercrime Stakeholder Engagement Initiative of the UNODC Civil Society Unit. This was a Pan-Regional Cybercrime Consultation held on 19 June 2024 to discuss matters related to prevention, responses, and policy making around cybercrimes

and the proposed convention negotiations. The consultation provided an opportunity for the LPRU to share IBA's benchmark report on cybersecurity regarding best governance practices for senior executives and boards of directors.

UN Development Programme's Finance, Integrity and Governance Initiative (FIG)

The LPRU, in collaboration with experts from across various IBA committees, continues to engage with the **United Nations Development Programme's Finance, Integrity and Governance Initiative (FIG)**, and its efforts to create and enable an environment for sustainable development. This includes the promotion of transparency, accountability, and good governance within the legal profession, as well as measures to enhance the rule of law, and tackle corruption and other criminal activity.

As part of this work, Nicola Bonucci (Member, IBA Anti-Corruption Committee Advisory Board) attended the 2nd FIG Policy Symposium in New York in October of 2024 as an IBA representative. Following that event, the LPRU and members of various IBA committees had the opportunity to review the Working Paper that emerged from the New York event, as well as the related 'Zero Draft' of the Outcome Document of the Fourth International Conference on Financing for Development, due to be held in Seville in June/July 2025. The LPRU

subsequently led an expert working group of IBA officers in drafting a response to the criticisms and issues raised in both papers, and continues to maintain a dialogue with representatives of the UNDP. As part of these ongoing efforts, there are plans for IBA and LPRU representatives to attend the Seville conference where the Zero Draft will be finalised, in order to ensure proper representation of the IBA's views on these matters.

See more at www.ibanet.org/LPRU