

International Law Seminar

Pursuant to General Assembly resolution 69/118, the fifty-first session of the International Law Seminar was held at the Palais des Nations from 6 to 24 July 2015, during the present session of the Commission. The Seminar is intended for young jurists specializing in international law, young professors or government officials pursuing an academic or diplomatic career in posts in the civil service of their country.

Twenty-four participants of different nationalities, from all regional groups took part in the session¹. The participants attended plenary meetings of the Commission, specially arranged lectures, and participated in working groups on specific topics.

Mr. Narinder Singh, Chairman of the Commission, opened the Seminar. Mr. Markus Schmidt, Senior Legal Adviser to the United Nations Office at Geneva (UNOG), was responsible for the administration, organization and conduct of the Seminar. The University of Geneva ensured the scientific coordination of the Seminar. Mr. Vittorio Mainetti, international law expert from the University of Geneva, acted as coordinator, assisted by Mr. Cédric Apercé, Ms. Yusra Suedi, legal assistants, and Ms. Cami Schwab, intern in the Legal Liaison Office of UNOG.

The following members of the Commission gave lectures: Mr. Ernest Petrič: “*The Work of the International Law Commission*”; Mr. Dire Tladi: “*Jus cogens*”; Mr. Pavel Šturma: “*State succession in relation to State responsibility*”; Ms. Concepción Escobar Hernández: “*Immunity of State officials from foreign criminal jurisdiction*”; Mr. Shinya Murase: “*Protection of the atmosphere*”; Mr. Georg Nolte: “*Subsequent agreements and subsequent practice in relation to the interpretation of treaties*”; Mr. Michael Wood: “*Identification of customary international law*”; Ms. Marie Jacobsson: “*Protection of the environment in relation to armed conflicts*”; and Mr. Sean D. Murphy: “*Crimes against humanity*”.

¹ The following persons participated in the Seminar: Ms. Kakanang Amaranand (Thailand), Mr. Hamed Camara (Mauritania), Ms. Eleen A. Cañas Vargas (Costa Rica), Mr. Francis W. Changara (Zimbabwe), Mr. Namgay Dorji (Bhutan), Ms. Fatoumata P. Doumbouya (Guinea), Ms. Pilar Eugenio (Argentina), Ms. Soaad Hossam (Egypt), Mr. Gedeon Jean (Haiti), Ms. Akino Kowashi (Japan), Ms. Gift Kweka (Tanzania), Ms. Lucia Leontiev (Moldova), Ms. Matilda Mendy (Gambia), Mr. Momchil Milanov (Bulgaria), Ms. Quyen T.H. Nguyen (Viet Nam), Ms. Elinathan Ohiomoba (United States of America), Mr. Francisco J. Pascual Vives (Spain), Ms. Ye Joon Rim (Republic of Korea), Mr. Matteo Sarzo (Italy), Mr. Cornelius V.N. Scholtz (South Africa), Ms. Darcel G. Smith-Williamson (Bahamas), Mr. Luka M. Tomazic (Slovenia), Mr. Shuxi Yin (China), Mr. Franz J. Zubieta (Bolivia (Plurinational State of)). The Selection Committee, chaired by Mr. Makane Moïse Mbengue, Professor of International Law at the University of Geneva, met on 7 April 2015 and selected 25 candidates out of 102 applications. One selected candidate could not attend the Seminar.

Seminar participants attended six external sessions. They attended a workshop organized by the University of Geneva in collaboration with the Geneva Water Hub, on the topic: “*International Water Law: Issues of Implementations*”. The following speakers made statements: Ms. Danae Azaria (Lecturer, University College of London), Prof. Laurence Boisson de Chazournes (University of Geneva), Mr. Lucius Caflisch (member of the International Law Commission), Mr. Maurice Kamto (member of the International Law Commission), Prof. Attila Tanzi (University of Bologna, Italy), Ms. Christina Leb (World Bank), Prof. Marco Sassòli (University of Geneva) and Ms. Mara Tignino (University of Geneva). The workshop was followed by a reception offered by the Geneva Water Hub. A special session on “*International Administrative Tribunals*” was held at the International Labour Organization (ILO), led by Mr. Drazen Petrovic, Registrar of the ILO Administrative Tribunal. Seminar participants also took part in a presentation on “*International Refugee Law*” given by Mr. Cornelis Wouters, Senior Legal Adviser of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. They also attended the annual Lalive Lecture at the invitation of the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies. The lecture was given by Mr. Sean D. Murphy, on “*A Rising Tide: Dispute Settlement under the Law of the Sea*”. A briefing at the International Telecommunications Union (ITU) was also given by Mr. Nikos Volanis, Legal Officer of the ITU, followed by a visit of the ITU Museum. Finally, a special session was organized at the World Health Organization, where presentations on “*International Law and Health*” were given by Steven A. Solomon, Principal Legal Officer, and Mr. Jakob Quirin, Associate Legal Officer.

Two Seminar working groups on “*Jus cogens*” and “*State succession in relation to State responsibility*” were organized. Each Seminar participant was assigned to one of them. Two members of the Commission, Mr. Dire Tladi and Mr. Pavel Šturma, supervised and provided guidance to the working groups. Each group prepared a report and presented its findings during the last working session of the Seminar. The reports were compiled and distributed to all participants as well as to the members of the Commission.

The Republic and Canton of Geneva offered its traditional hospitality at the Geneva Town Hall where the Seminar participants visited the Alabama room and attended a cocktail reception.

The Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom to the United Nations and other International organizations in Geneva invited the Seminar participants for a reception at the residence.

Mr. Narinder Singh, Chairman of the International Law Commission, Mr. Markus Schmidt, Director of the International Law Seminar, and Mr. Momchil Milanov, on behalf of the Seminar participants, addressed the Commission during the closing ceremony of the Seminar. Each participant was presented with a certificate of attendance.

The Commission noted with particular appreciation that since 2013 the Governments of Argentina, Austria, China, Finland, India, Ireland, Mexico, Sweden, Switzerland, and of the United Kingdom had made voluntary contributions to the United Nations Trust Fund for the International Law Seminar. The *Circolo di diritto internazionale* (CIDIR), a private association for the promotion of international law based in Rome (Italy), also contributed to the Seminar. Even though the financial crisis of recent years had seriously affected the finances of the Seminar, a sufficient number of fellowships to deserving candidates especially from developing countries in order to achieve adequate geographical distribution of participants were awarded from the trust fund. This year, fourteen fellowships (nine for travel and living expenses, three for living expenses only and two for travel expenses only) were granted.

Since 1965, year of the Seminar inception, 1163 participants, representing 171 nationalities, have taken part in the Seminar. 713 have received a fellowship.

The Commission stresses the importance it attaches to the Seminar, which enables young lawyers, especially from developing countries, to familiarize themselves with the work of the Commission and the activities of the many International Organizations based in Geneva. The Commission recommends that the General Assembly should again appeal to States to make voluntary contributions in order to secure the organization of the Seminar in 2016 with as broad participation as possible.