INDEPENDENT INTERNATIONAL LEGAL ADVOCATES

In-House Counsel for Small and Developing Countries
Why International Law is So Important

International law is an invaluable tool in seeking long-term, sustainable and fair solutions to global problems. It is fundamental to a range of issues that directly impact peoples’ lives, including protecting the environment, enforcing human rights, preventing conflict and ensuring sustainable development through fair trade and investment. Its content is in a constant process of being shaped. You can either shape or be shaped by international law.

International laws on trade and investment should reflect your development needs, ensure you can protect your seas and environment, and work to secure the human rights of your peoples. International laws on migration should respect the needs of your peoples. Laws regulating the use of force across the multitude of modern day threats must not be abused or ignore your experiences. These are all challenges of international law that demand your focus and engagement. These are the tangible benefits of international law.

The concrete losses from inadequate international law support are equally clear. Human rights obligations have often not been implemented. Investment and trade opportunities have not been properly managed, and concern for labour rights, human rights and the environment has been lacking. Disputes over land and sea borders have been allowed to fester and cause avoidable conflicts.

The Greatest International Law Challenge That You Face – And How IILA Can Support You

IILA emerged from its founder’s many years working within the United Nations, international courts and civil society organizations. These experiences highlighted that the making and applying of international law is a deeply unfair process. Many States are simply not able to fully engage with international law due to a lack of resources and expertise. Not all voices are heard and not all needs are taken into account. From working directly with the foreign ministry legal advisers from small and developing States the world over, it became clear that what was most starkly lacking – and what could most effectively help law to solve the pressing global issues of today – was local capacity to apply international law to pressing global issues. This is exactly what IILA aims to help build.

IILA works to increase the capacity of small and developing States to utilize international law. IILA’s goal is to assist these States to
participate more actively and effectively in international decisions that affect their lives and futures. In helping to promote greater inclusivity, IILA contributes to more equitable and sustainable solutions to global issues.

What makes IILA distinct is that its advisers act as supplementary “in-house counsel”, offering a strategic approach to legal analysis and advice. Our legal advisers collaborate alongside the existing legal departments of our State partners to supplement and support existing capabilities in international law research and strategy. The overwhelming costs and excessive risk of waiting until things go wrong and then turning to outside lawyers is not where real change can come from. Collaborating with IILA is not outsourcing. Instead, IILA focuses on enhancing the capacity of disadvantaged countries to engage with international law.

IILA uses a common approach to all our projects, an approach structured to the difficulties our State partners may have faced:

i. **Identifying** the relevant and applicable laws, and clarifying the origins of these rules and standards
ii. **Analysing** the advantages and disadvantages of different plans of action
iii. **Counselling** on strategies to implement the chosen plan of action
IILA offers a range of services to meet our mission and match the demands placed upon you.

The invaluable preliminary step for a new State partner is IILA's Needs Assessment Exercise. This enables IILA to undertake a thorough analysis of your existing resources, goals and needs. After discussing these aspects with you, IILA creates a tailor-made work plan, including targeted activities from the selection of available services.

The following provides an introduction to and examples of our range of potential services. IILA's innovative in-house counsel approach enhances your ability to play a more active and engaged role in the international community; to negotiate with greater confidence; to build the capability of your legal departments; and to begin to create positive changes in the international law regime.

I) Increase understanding and use of international law

IILA provides training on your key international law needs and acts as an expert ‘hub’ to the range of international law resources that are currently underused by those who would most benefit from them. Knowing when, how and who to turn to for specialized support is another key function of the international law advisers’ office. IILA also works to help our State partners to transform their use of international law in order to ‘do’ international law better at the national level.

- Conducting intensive and interactive training sessions on areas of international law, such as human rights obligations or bilateral investment treaties, for the relevant legal officers of a State partner
- Collaborating with a State partner to analyse and assess its current treaty obligations, prospective international agreements to become a party to, and the mechanisms by which to do so

II) Support in the creation of international law

IILA supports its State partners in law-making activities and on-going processes of negotiation and reporting. IILA's experienced legal advisors help our State partners strategically navigate the stages of making and interpreting international laws. IILA recognizes the vital importance of a State’s contributions being heard in various multilateral and
regional fora. IILA helps you to effectively participate in these venues to ensure your input will make a substantive impact.

- Providing research and advice on bilateral, regional and multilateral agreements that are under discussion and negotiation, for topics as wide-ranging as investment to the law of the sea to humanitarian law
- Supporting a State partner in meeting its reporting obligations for human rights, environmental law or other important topics

III) Advising on the use of international law

IILA supports an enhanced application of international law at the national level through laws, policies and governmental decisions. As with any international law adviser’s office, IILA continues its support when formal methods to settle disputes are undertaken.

- Collaborating with the international law advisers of a State partner on the provision of legal advice that should fall on their shoulders
- Working with a State partner to improve the implementation of international law obligations at the national level
- Advising on the selection of means for peacefully settling disputes

For more information on the full services offered by IILA, see A Guide to Working with IILA, available at www.independentILA.org.

Our Philosophy

- IILA is independent and impartial.
- IILA is committed to the rule of law, human rights, and democracy. IILA works with State partners who share a similar commitment.
- Ensuring international law is more focused on its capacity to bring about a more just world is central to the work of IILA.
- We do not speak for you, but stand with you in addressing your international law challenges.
Our People

IILA’s team is comprised of international lawyers and other subject matter legal experts. IILA’s legal advisers have experience working in international law institutions as well as in providing legal advice and training to international lawyers from small and developing countries.

IILA also works with law firms and universities who will provide extra assistance on a pro bono basis.

Strong Leadership

IILA is led by individuals from across all regions of the globe, and consists of:

A. Our Board of Directors, drawn from international law, politics, philanthropy and the private sector, to provide oversight and advice on the direction and management of IILA.

B. Our Advisory Council, composed of a globally diverse group of 30 of the world’s leading international law experts, covering a wide range of subjects of international law, providing substantive guidance on topics and issues our State partners seek support on.

Retaining the Services of IILA

Relying on the primary support of donations from foundations, governments and individual donors, IILA will work with you to create a fee structure at discounted rates, tailored to your available resources given levels of development and your specific needs.

For more information and to start collaboration- get in touch with IILA in one of the following ways:

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