

Supporting Responsible Economic Development in the Amazon and in Zimbabwe

ISLP Newsletter, April 2021 Edition



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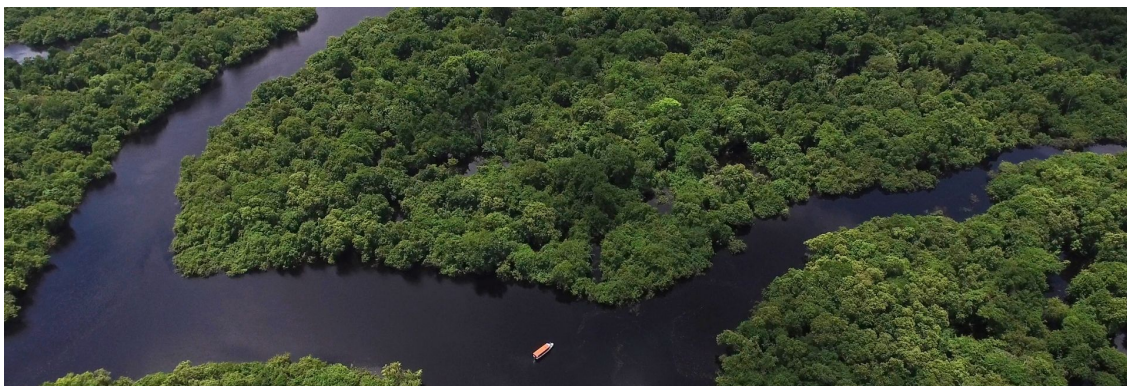
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Forward

In keeping with ISLP's commitment to a principle that civil society advocates have long underscored - that accountability and transparency in the natural resource management and extractives sectors are essential to responsible development - we provide pro bono legal support to civil society organizations throughout the Global South in their advocacy efforts. In this newsletter we are pleased to highlight examples of ISLP's long-standing and ongoing work with civil society organizations in the Amazon region and in Zimbabwe in support of local efforts to ensure economic development that is just, accountable, and inclusive.

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Balancing Conservation and Economic Development in the Amazon

Conservation of the Amazon rainforest is vitally important to all of us. It covers only 4% of the earth's surface, but provides 20% of our fresh water, contains one third of known plant, animal, and insect species, and acts as a vital carbon sink, soaking up large amounts of

the carbon dioxide that is causing the climate crisis. Unfortunately, much recent economic development in the Amazon region has been harmful to local communities and to the natural environment. Local indigenous and civil society groups are leading efforts to mitigate negative impacts of poorly managed and ineffectively regulated development, and ISLP is providing several of them with pro bono legal support to which many of these local groups would otherwise not have access. Our goal is to provide resources and legal information that may empower indigenous and local groups to more effectively participate at the negotiating table with their own governments as well as large-scale foreign investors, and thereby advocate for better environmental and social standards.

To that end, ISLP provides capacity-building support to local civil society groups, including knowledge sharing, legal research and analysis, comparative insights from other countries, and other specially tailored initiatives. In addition, we develop resources on relevant investment frameworks, levers for constructive engagement, and available remedies. For example, in 2020 we delivered a series of five bespoke capacity-building webinars and complementary smaller-group online convenings for leading civil society organizations in Brazil, Colombia, and Peru that are at the forefront of Amazon conservation efforts. Our volunteers continue to provide legal research and pro bono support to strengthen civil society's advocacy for stronger regulatory frameworks, better social and environmental standards, and more effective monitoring and reporting on poor corporate and government behavior.

Our work on conservation in the Andean region is supported by the **Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation**, and will continue into 2022. This work would not be possible without the dedication and contributions of ISLP lawyer volunteers from **Beccar Varela, Blake Cassels & Graydon, Brigard Urrutia, Debevoise & Plimpton, Dentons, Hogan Lovells, Latham & Watkins, and Matthos Filho.**

Working with Zimbabwean Civil Society Seeking Mining Sector Transparency



Among our civil society partners in Africa are the members of the Strengthening Transparency and Accountability in Natural Resource Governance Consortium (STA-NRG) in Zimbabwe, which advocates for mining sector reforms to address issues such as limited transparency, lack of citizen participation in development decisions, and inadequate accountability in the management of Zimbabwe's mineral resources. Other partners in the

Consortium include the Zimbabwe Environmental Law Association (ZELA), Pact, Habakkuk Trust, and Silveira House.

Our pro bono volunteers in this project support our local Consortium partners' advocacy by providing detailed review and analysis of laws, policies, and practices in Zimbabwe's extractives sector that affect citizens across the country. For example, our volunteers' work includes advising ZELA on proposed changes to local laws so that they hew more closely with international best practices in the sector - for example, the Extractives Industry Transparency Initiative (EITI) - in the hopes of nudging Zimbabwe's government toward ultimately adopting EITI or comparable standards.

ISLP's support to the STA-NRG Consortium is in its third year. We are grateful to our wonderful volunteers from **Akin Gump, Alston & Bird, Clifford Chance, Hogan Lovells, Hunton Andrews Kurth, and Winston & Strawn** who have provided valuable pro bono legal support to this initiative. This project is supported by the UK's **Foreign, Development**

and Commonwealth Office (formerly DFID) through DAI Europe, and administered by the TRACE Secretariat.

Volunteer Spotlight: Patrick Murray Supports Clean Energy Efforts in Africa



Patrick Murray is a longtime ISLP volunteer and current board member with significant experience in multinational transactions, cross-border investments, and international dispute resolution, all of which he brought to his previous role as coordinator of legal volunteers for ISLP's Haiti Program. Patrick's expertise with M&A and decades of experience in the asset management industry uniquely positioned him to work on a number of recent ISLP matters, including a large-scale infrastructure project in Central Asia, and African clean energy development with ISLP partner [PowerGen](#).

PowerGen is a leader in Africa's clean energy transition, offering smart solar mini-grids that supply power to homes and businesses - particularly in areas that are out of reach of the main power grids. PowerGen's mini-grids are bringing reliable and affordable energy to those who previously lacked it, thus giving users access to educational and economic opportunities that otherwise would be unavailable.

As an ISLP volunteer, Patrick has assisted PowerGen with a variety of corporate and transactional issues. Underscoring the value of the ISLP model and Patrick's legal counsel, PowerGen explained that, "for a growing social enterprise, legal resourcing isn't typically a high priority, but it quickly becomes a necessity when the number of impactful contracts grows. Our needs for support came about rather quickly, and ISLP stepped in without hesitation to provide us with critical support. Without this support, we would have struggled to move through the legal phases of developing our projects." PowerGen noted that with Patrick's legal expertise, it "has been able to develop strong partnerships across the energy access sector, in large part because the support means [its] team can prioritize the development and implementation of projects." Patrick shared that "after having spent many years representing an innovative producer of equipment for the solar industry, and seen in Haiti how access to clean energy is key to community development, I was eager and enthusiastic to make my experience available to PowerGen as it revolutionizes the distribution of energy, in much the same way cell telephones revolutionize communication, throughout Africa."

Patrick is a Retired Partner and former Managing Partner of Winston & Strawn's Paris office. In addition to his role as an ISLP board member, he serves on the advisory board of Partners in Health, a major provider of health care for the world's poor, and works actively with Zanmi Lasanté-Paris, a French NGO supporting education and rural development in Haiti's Central Plateau region.

Ways to Get Involved



About ISLP

The International Senior Lawyers Project (ISLP) is a registered 501(c)(3) non-profit and non-governmental organization founded in 2000. Our mission is to provide pro bono legal assistance to governments, civil society organizations, and social enterprises in the Global South on matters that advance just, accountable, and inclusive economic development.



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