

ISLP International Senior Lawyers Project



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Note from ISLP Executive Director Sara Lulo

We at ISLP hope that our volunteers, partners, and friends around the world are safe and healthy during these challenging times. We look forward to meeting again in person when circumstances permit. In the meantime, we are heartened to share this update on how ISLP has been serving our clients and adapting to the changing global landscape.

Throughout our 20-year history, a hallmark of ISLP's model has been the ability to mobilize senior-level volunteer lawyers to provide on-the-ground legal support to clients around the world. When international travel came to a halt in March, the ISLP team had already been looking ahead and developing contingency plans to maintain client support without interruption. Our team has been proactive in reaching out to partners -- both new and old -- to offer ISLP's support in navigating thorny legal issues arising from the global and local economic crises relating to the pandemic. Thanks to a committed staff, [incredible volunteers](#), and steadfast [supporters](#), ISLP has been swift, resourceful, and responsive in serving our clients and staying well-connected to the governments, civil society organizations, and other partners with whom we work. Moreover, current global uncertainties underscore the enduring relevance of ISLP's mission to advance just, accountable, and inclusive development. Our resolve is unwavering and our commitment undeterred.

In addition to programmatic highlights below, I am delighted to share ISLP Team updates. Although we were sad to say farewell to colleagues Laura Vega and Danielle Orihuela, who both departed to pursue graduate studies, we enthusiastically welcomed three new staff to our team: Tali Shalaby, Communications and Operations Associate; Talya Lockman-Fine, Bernstein International Human Rights Fellow; and Melissa Eustace, Communications and Operations Manager. See their respective bios [here](#).

Please read on to learn more about our recent activities, and to find out how to [support](#) or [volunteer](#) with ISLP. Thank you for your interest!

Warmly,

Sara

Paradigm Shift: Virtual Support and Training

In addition to our ongoing work providing direct legal assistance on matters such as complex financial transactions, legislative reform, treaty accession, and comparative legal analysis, ISLP has been working with clients and partners to anticipate and respond to emergent needs and COVID-related legal concerns that impact or threaten economic development initiatives. As a result, over the past six months ISLP has developed a robust portfolio of webinars and virtual training programs for a range of stakeholders including government officials, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), civil society organizations (CSOs), and social enterprises. Although of course nothing replaces the value of in-person collaboration and interaction, we know from our partners and clients that ISLP's forward-thinking support has proven impactful and beneficial. Here is a sample of recent ISLP virtual programming developed in partnership with our fantastically capable volunteer legal experts:

- **Webinar series for the Law Society of Zimbabwe** on business insolvency and reorganization, an increasingly salient topic as businesses face strains due to the pandemic.
- **Webinar series for East and Southern African social entrepreneurs** on COVID-19 impacts, particularly with respect to supply chains, contract performance, and loans.
- **Series of online trainings for Colombian NGOs and CSOs** on risk allocation among stakeholders in large-scale transportation and hydroelectric projects.
- **Webinar for Latin American CSOs** on strategic use of the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act to support anti-deforestation efforts in the Amazon.
- **Webinar series for NGOs and CSOs from Brazil, Colombia, and Peru** on legal issues related to green bonds and the criteria for use of proceeds.
- **Negotiation training on Production Sharing Agreements** for Ukrainian government officials.
- **Series of practical training modules, designed by ISLP's Media Law Working Group, to support investigative journalists and media lawyers in Southern Africa** who are responding to restrictive new laws that effectively exploit the COVID crisis to limit access to information, journalistic freedom, and freedom of expression. Presented in partnership with the Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA).

Project Spotlight: Beneficial Returns

Over the last three years, ISLP has been the proud partner of [Beneficial Returns](#), a debt fund that provides capital asset financing to leading social enterprises that reduce poverty and protect the natural environment in the Global South. ISLP has mobilized pro bono legal support from a wide group of

top tier international and local law firms that have represented Beneficial Returns in loan negotiations in many countries, including Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Mexico, Kenya, Thailand, Paraguay, the Philippines, and the UK. By partnering with actors such as Beneficial Returns, ISLP continues its mission to promote more equitable, inclusive development, and helps to cultivate ecosystems in which social enterprises are able to thrive.

See this short video detailing one of Beneficial Returns' projects in Ecuador that we are proud to have supported:



Support for Afghanistan's Energy Independence

In August, ISLP started a new phase of work supporting the Government of Afghanistan in the development of a large-scale renewable energy project: the Baghdara hydropower plant.

Afghanistan currently suffers from insufficient power generating capability: only a small portion of the Afghan population has access to the electrical grid, and those who do suffer frequent blackouts.

This power shortage undermines Afghanistan's self-sufficiency -- it



currently imports approximately 80% of its power from neighboring countries -
- and also negatively impacts economic development, quality of life, and life expectancy.

The planned Baghdara hydropower plant is part of the Government's larger push to remedy the country's energy crisis and enable it to become self-reliant, with significant beneficial impacts for Afghan citizens, businesses, and the public sector. At this early stage in the project's development, ISLP, with support from GIZ Connex, has begun to mobilize a dedicated team of volunteers and technical experts to develop key documents that will prepare the project for international tender.

Ways to Get Involved

ISLP Mission

ISLP provides pro bono legal assistance to governments, civil society organizations, and social enterprises in developing countries, leveraging global legal resources in alignment with client needs to support just, accountable, and inclusive development.

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