

ISLP Updates

ISLP Newsletter, May 1st, 2023 Edition



Forward

In-Person Convenings are Back!

The ISLP team was thrilled to collaborate with partners to host three in-person convenings on two continents in March: a training for defenders of freedom of expression in Harare, Zimbabwe; and workshops on international arbitration for government practitioners in Nairobi, Kenya and Georgetown, Guyana. Please read more about these events – and other ISLP happenings – below!

ISLP Trains Government Officials in Guyana and Kenya on International Arbitration

One of the ways ISLP promotes economic development around the world is through support for local efforts to enhance legal systems and frameworks that uphold the rule of law and advance our partners' development aims. Given the prominence of international arbitration as a mechanism for resolving cross-border commercial and investor-state disputes, and the increase in the number of arbitral institutions in the Global South, it is no surprise that there likewise is widespread interest in ensuring that lawyers (both public- and private-sector) are well versed in relevant procedures, enforcement of arbitral awards, and emerging trends.

To that end, ISLP is proud to be able to mobilize international arbitration expertise from leading practitioners to support both arbitral institutions in the Global South and the lawyers and judicial actors who work within these legal systems. Last month, ISLP *pro bono* lawyers from Gibson Dunn and White & Case provided tailored, in-person workshops for government officials in Guyana and Kenya, respectively. ISLP's workshop in Guyana was developed in partnership with the Attorney General's Chambers and the Ministry of Legal Affairs and included 30 participants from various areas of Guyana's government as well as the Guyana Bar Association.



L-R: Rose Naing (Gibson Dunn), Ankita Ritwik (Gibson Dunn), Mohabir Anil Nandlall (Guyana's Attorney General and Minister of Legal Affairs), Charline Yim (Gibson Dunn), Marryum Kahloon (Gibson Dunn), Pedro Villegas (ISLP)

Our program in Kenya was developed in partnership with the Nairobi Center for International Arbitration (NCIA) and included 40 lawyers from the Office of the Attorney General. The workshop in Nairobi complemented additional legal support provided to the Secretariat of the NCIA through ISLP and White & Case. Each workshop was developed to fit the particular needs, interests, and legal contexts of the host country.

The workshops, which received financial and technical support from Advocates for International Development's Rule of Law Expertise UK (ROLE UK) Programme, funded by the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Development Office (FCDO), were designed to help governments navigate the complexities of international commercial and investment arbitration in order to bolster legal frameworks and practices that facilitate and encourage investment.



L-R: Lorna Kerubo (NCIA), Millicent Shitakha (NCIA), Sloan Raquel Martinez (White & Case), Robert Wheal (White & Case), Lawrence Muiruri (NCIA), Glory Kinyua (ISLP), Oscar Gathura (NCIA)

Feedback from workshop participants noted that their learning at these events will enable them to handle international arbitration disputes more effectively, and they also highlighted that international arbitration can play a critical role in advancing a country's legal system. A big thank you to our partners in Guyana and Kenya, ROLE UK, and ISLP's volunteers from Gibson Dunn and White & Case for putting on engaging and informative programs!

ISLP Volunteer Spotlight: Pathbreaking Public Health Laws in Guyana

Public Health is an integral part of global development, encapsulated in the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDG 3). ISLP is honored to have collaborated with the Pan-American Health Organization (PAHO) and Guyana's Ministry of Health to develop new national legislation that will bring greater attention and protection to mental health and suicide prevention as public health concerns.

Our recent efforts in Guyana were guided by the expertise of long-time ISLP volunteer Steven B. Datlof, M.D., J.D., a retired partner with Hogan Lovells. Steve's credentials as both a psychiatrist and a lawyer make him uniquely qualified to support ISLP projects involving legislative drafting for the public health sector – particularly where the subject matter is mental health. Steve was part of a team of ISLP volunteers that advised the government of Guyana on the drafting of new laws on mental health and on suicide prevention. Reflecting the value of this work, PAHO subsequently suggested that the team develop a template suicide prevention law for use by other PAHO Member-States. Please [click here](#) to read more about Steve's experience volunteering for ISLP.



Defending Digital Rights and Freedoms in Southern Africa

Through our Media Law Working Group, ISLP has long defended freedom of expression as a critical underpinning of accountable and inclusive development. Our work in this area also promotes the UN's SDG 16: "to ensure public access to information and protect fundamental freedoms, in accordance with national legislation and international agreements."

ISLP recently convened journalists, lawyers, and other human rights defenders from seven countries for a two-day, in-person event as the capstone to our year-long program of activities promoting freedom of expression in sub-Saharan Africa supported by UNESCO's Global Media Defense Fund. Co-hosted by the Southern Africa Institute for Policy and Research (SAIPAR) and the Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA) and held on March 13th and 14th, the gathering centered on International Law and Practices for Defending Digital Rights and Freedoms and Access to Information. Human rights defenders from Canada, Malawi, Mozambique, Uganda, the U.S., Zambia, and Zimbabwe shared their varied experiences in rich and substantive conversations, which fostered learning from each other as well as from our presenters.

Going beyond theoretical concepts, participants exchanged tactical strategies from their respective country contexts and flagged impending threats to freedom of expression and access to information, such as high license fees that impede journalists' access to data and information. The convening addressed among other concerns internet slow-downs and shut-downs in the run up to elections, discussion of which was particularly timely as there are no less than four national elections scheduled in the region in the next year. Without freedom of the press and for citizens who express their opinions online, voters may not have full access to the information they need to make informed decisions.



At left - Nqaba Matshazi (MISA Zimbabwe), at center - Nkhosikhona Sibanda (MISA)

We are grateful to UNESCO's Southern Africa regional office for providing a welcoming space for this gathering, and to our speakers for the robust knowledge exchange that their presentations enabled.

ISLP's Media Law Working Group supports journalists and citizens around the world in exercising their right to freedom of expression – both in print and on line – in the face of government challenges. Through trainings for journalists, lawyers, and activists, legislative review, and strategic litigation, ISLP has assisted in freeing the wrongly imprisoned and in strengthening the knowledge of local lawyers and journalists in the use of effective and internationally recognized legal tools to fight oppression.



From left - Al Amin Yusuph (UNESCO), Mwami Kabwabwa (SAIPAR), Sellina Nkowane (CIPESA/Nation One Malawi), Sara Lulo (ISLP), and Bridget Mafusire (ISLP)

The 30th Anniversary of World Press Freedom Day is tomorrow - May 2nd!

On [World Press Freedom Day 2023](#), UNESCO will host a special anniversary event at UN headquarters in New York City marking the 30 years since the UN General Assembly's decision proclaiming an international day for press freedom. This anniversary will include a full day of activities at UN Headquarters on May 2nd, and partners from the media, academia, and civil society are invited to organize events in New York and around the world centered on this year's theme. Click [here](#) to learn more!

SAVE THE DATE!

Please join ISLP and our volunteers from Morgan, Lewis & Bockius for the virtual launch of our Private Investment Funds Governance Handbook! Details and registration link below. ISLP developed this project as part of our broader efforts to promote the SDGs through innovative finance. Through the concrete legal tools and guidance provided in this handbook, we aim to support impact investing and social entrepreneurship in frontier markets.



PRIVATE INVESTMENT FUNDS GOVERNANCE

HANDBOOK

In partnership with
Morgan Lewis

April 2023

When: May 4, 2023 08:00 AM Eastern Time (US and Canada)

Register in advance for this webinar:

https://us06web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_OUh89L5sSvq-Du6WMomlw



ISLP Supports the SDGs



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 support to governments, civil society organizations, and social enterprises in the Global South on matters that advance the rule of law and just, accountable, and inclusive economic development.



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For questions about donating, contact Melissa Eustace: meustace@islp.org

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