

Foreword

This ABA year brings us to the mid-point of the United Nations Decade of International Law (1990–1999) and marks the 50th anniversary of the United Nations. Now is the time to reflect on goals and achievements, and opportunities missed. It is also a time to rededicate ourselves to supporting the United Nations as it pursues the universal dreams of all people, a time to work to strengthen international institutions, and a time to advance the rule of law in the world.

The American Bar Association promoted the creation of the United Nations in 1945 and in the ensuing years consistently has supported measures to enable the United Nations to progress toward fulfilling the hopes we share. Much remains to be done, as we all know.

The Section of International Law and Practice is committed to initiating and pursuing projects that advance our ideals. In anticipation of the United Nations' anniversary, the Section has developed recommendations to improve the effectiveness of the United Nations, which will enable the ABA to make a substantive contribution. Under Section sponsorship, experts with a broad range of views reached a consensus on the critical subjects of the compulsory jurisdiction of the International Court of Justice, the creation of an International Criminal Court, necessary support for the new office of High Commissioner for Human Rights, extension and enforcement of nonproliferation agreements, and peace-making and peace-keeping measures.

The ABA has provided leadership in other ways to advance the rule of law. These efforts include ABA programs to assist development of new laws and constitutional systems in the countries of Eastern Europe and the newly independent states of the former Soviet Union, in Cambodia, Vietnam, the Middle East, and elsewhere. Programs formulated by the Section enable the ABA to furnish (frequently in cooperation with the legal profession in other countries) practical assistance based on internationally accepted norms and experience.

Advancing the rule of law is not enough, however. Too many problems exist—

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like hunger, disease, lack of opportunity, and war—that need to be addressed. Believing strongly in the essential importance of preventive diplomacy, the ABA continues to urge the United States Government to rejoin UNESCO and to take the lead in developing effective education, science, and cultural programs; to support the efforts of the World Health Organization to improve health standards in the world; to effectively implement the environmental accords achieved in Rio de Janeiro; to promote fair trade and economic development throughout the world; and to focus on the potential of international agencies and regional organizations to deal with continuing problems and items of immediate concern.

The International Lawyer plays a role in all these efforts. By keeping its readers abreast of developments, it helps to prepare us to deal effectively with the challenges we confront.