

Knowledge to lead

OLA/UNITAR Seminar on International Treaty Law and Practice

Added session on Environmental Treaty Law in the context of Rio+20

United Nations Headquarters, New York
Conference Room E (NLB)
10-11 May 2012

INFORMATION NOTE

Background

Proper understanding and appreciation of international law and the multilateral treaty framework is integral to an effective management of international relations today. The continuous growth of global challenges and concomitant expansion of collective responses have resulted in many developments in the practice of the Secretary-General (as the depositary of multilateral treaties) and in the registration function of the Secretariat under Article 102 of the Charter of the United Nations. Particularly at the 2005 World Summit, Member States recognized the “need for universal adherence to and implementation of the rule of law at both the national and international levels.” The Summit outcome document also drew attention to the importance of States becoming parties to and implementing conventions deposited with the Secretary-General in areas such as terrorism, organized crime and corruption, protection of the environment and human rights. ***In this context conference, this training will feature an expert panel on environmental treaty law that will highlight the issues at stake in the upcoming Rio+20 Conference on Sustainable Development.***

Against this backdrop, countries face new challenges in participating in multilateral treaties, particularly in the area of signature, ratification, accession and domestic implementation of treaty rights and obligations. However, as former Secretary-General noted in his Millennium Report (A/54/2000), many countries “lack the necessary expertise and resources, especially when national legislation is needed to give force to international instruments”. This seminar is intended to bridge the gap between the growing need for global cooperation and the lack of expertise in providing legal effect to such cooperation.

Learning Objectives

This seminar is part of the Secretariat’s training and capacity-building assistance, aimed at facilitating more effective participation by countries in multilateral treaties deposited with the Secretary-General, helping to increase the registration of bilateral and multilateral treaties with the Secretariat as required by Article 102 of the Charter of the United Nations, and raising awareness in the area of the domestic implementation of treaty rights and obligations.

More specifically, by the end of this seminar, participants will be able to:

- Understand the basic concepts in treaty law and the evolution of the treaty law system;
- Distinguish between reservations and declarations and articulate the functions and limits of reservations;
- Explain the concept of “final causes” and their legal effects;
- Explain the mandate of Article 102 of the UN Charter and enumerate the registration procedures for Member States;
- Be able to locate and navigate treaty-related information online.

Content and Structure

Conducted in English, this seminar takes place over one and a half day, from 10:00am to 1:00pm and 3:00pm to 5:30pm on **Thursday 10 May** and from 10:00am to 12:30pm and 3:00pm to 5:30pm on **Friday 11 May**, and discusses the following topics: multilateral treaties deposited with the UN Secretary-General; final clauses of multilateral treaties; reservations, declarations and registration of treaties; a case study on the Optional Protocols to the Convention on the Rights of the Child; and an overview of online resources. It will also feature a panel on Environmental Treaty Law: Understanding what is at Stake in Rio+20.

All participants who successfully complete the seminar will receive a UNITAR Certificate of Participation.

Methodology

The seminar is facilitated by UNITAR with a team of experts and lawyers from the Treaty Section of the United Nations Office of Legal Affairs. The seminar consists of core lectures, case studies and practical exercises to assist countries in undertaking multilateral treaty actions and registering treaties with the Secretariat more effectively. The panel on environmental treaty law will feature a UN expert, an academic and a practitioner to provide a holistic overview of the issues at stake in this body of law.

Target Audience

The seminar is designed primarily for legal advisers and officers in the permanent missions to the United Nations in New York involved with the preparation of treaty actions to multilateral treaties and the registration of treaties. Representatives of governments, international organizations, the United Nations system or civil society with academic or professional interest on the topic are also encouraged to participate.

Contact and Registration

The course participation fee is 375 USD. Diplomats from least developed countries and developing countries can participate free-of-charge. **Important:** Upon completion of online registration, all applicants will receive an automated invoice, which will allow them to make full payment for their UNITAR course(s), unless you are a diplomat from a least developed countries and developing countries. Participants with a fee are required to make payment by wire transfer, check or credit card. UNITAR reserves the right to rescind an applicant's enrolment at any time in case of non-receipt of payment. Participation will be confirmed by e-mail.

For queries regarding the seminar, please contact Ms. H  l  ne Gandois, UNITAR, (212) 963 9684, gandoish@un.org

Registration deadline: Monday 7 May 2012