

Knowledge to lead

## OLA / UNITAR Seminar on Treaty Law and Practice

### The Undertaking of Treaty Actions for Treaties Deposited with the Secretary-General and the Registration of Treaties

UN Headquarters, New York, 11 - 12 November 2009

## Information Note

#### Background

The United Nations has played a significant role in both the development and the codification of public international law and provided an effective global forum for the negotiation of numerous multilateral treaties. The Secretary-General has, with the endorsement of the Member States, committed the organization to consolidating and advancing the international rule of law, a key goal for the United Nations. The appreciation of international law and the multilateral treaty framework is an integral part of the management of international relations today. Treaties have an increasing significance to the lives and livelihood of individuals and communities and in the business activities of corporations. This underscores the ever expanding interconnectedness between international agreements and domestic law.

Member States in the 2005 World Summit outcome document recognized the “need for universal adherence to and implementation of the rule of law at both the national and international levels.” The World Summit outcome document 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. The Secretary-General stated in his report “In Larger Freedom” (A/59/2005), “[s]upport for the rule of law must be strengthened by universal participation in multilateral conventions”.

The continuous expansion of the multilateral treaty framework and the growth of the international community have resulted in many developments in the practice of the Secretary-General, as depositary of multilateral treaties, and in the registration function of the Secretariat under Article 102 of the Charter of the United Nations.

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.

## Knowledge to lead

As the 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”.

The United Nations Secretariat is committed to giving effect to the objectives advanced by the Member States in the 2005 World Summit outcome document and by the Secretary-General. This seminar exemplifies 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 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.

### Objectives

The principal objective of this seminar is to provide an overview of and practical hands-on experience in the undertaking of treaty actions for treaties deposited with the Secretary-General and the registration of treaties pursuant to Article 102 of the Charter of the United Nations. Assistance and guidance will also be provided in the drafting of final clauses of treaties and the domestic aspects of participation in certain multilateral treaties.

### Organization

The seminar will be conducted by a team of lawyers from the Treaty Section of the United Nations Office of Legal Affairs. They will provide participants with practical hands-on experience on the basic aspects of international treaty law and practice as well as the technical aspects of undertaking treaty actions such as signatures, ratifications, accessions, etc. They will consist of core lectures, case studies and practical exercises to assist the participant States in undertaking multilateral treaty actions more effectively and registering treaties with the Secretariat.

The presentations are based on the Summary of Practice of the Secretary-General as Depository of Multilateral Treaties, the Treaty Handbook and the Handbook of Final Clauses of Multilateral Treaties which have been developed and published by the Treaty Section of the United Nations Office of Legal Affairs (see <http://treaties.un.org>). These publications will be made available to the participants in the seminars as tools to assist States in the drafting of and participation in treaties. A demonstration will be given to the participants of the Treaty Section’s website and online databases, including the United Nations Treaty Series, Status of Multilateral Treaties Deposited with the Secretary-General of the United Nations, depositary notifications and certified true copies of treaties.

With the recent opening for signature of the Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights during the 2009 Treaty Event, an expert from the High commissioner for human rights will make a presentation to assist member States on a better understanding of the Optional Protocol in a view of domestic implementation of treaty rights and obligations.

## Knowledge to lead

In connection with the above, this year's Treaty event entitled "2009 Treaty Event: Towards Universal Participation and Implementation", during which two treaties were opened for signature, received the highest participation rate in four years with an increase number of 20 States compared to last year's event. The event provided a distinct opportunity for States to demonstrate their continuing commitment to the central role of the rule of law in international relations.

### Target Audience

The seminar is designed primarily for legal advisers and legal officers involved with the preparation of treaty actions to multilateral treaties and the registration of treaties. Practitioners and members of the secretariats of international organizations interested in these aspects of treaty law are also welcome.

### Schedule and Venue

The seminar will be held on Wednesday, 11 November, from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. and from 3 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. in conference room (To be decided) and on Thursday, 12 November 2009, from 10 p.m. to 1 p.m. and from 3 p.m. to 5:45 p.m. in conference room (To be decided) of United Nations Headquarters in New York.

### Languages

The seminar will be conducted in English. Please note that training materials will also be made available in French. French speakers' legal officers of the Treaty Section will be available during breaks and after presentations for any clarification.

### Application

Members of the Permanent Missions accredited to the United Nations in New York, members of the Secretariat, UN agencies and treaty-based institutions who wish to participate in the seminar are requested to register online at [http://www.unitarny.org/forms/event\\_registration](http://www.unitarny.org/forms/event_registration) or, alternatively, to complete the attached nomination form and return it to the following address:

UNITAR c/o Ms. Victoria Rietig  
victoriarietig@unitarny.org  
One United Nations Plaza, Suite DC1-603  
New York, NY 10017-3515  
Phone: (212) 963-3021 or 9196  
Fax: (212) 963-9686 or 0995

