



PRESS RELEASE

Launch of New International Arbitration Advocacy Organization

Geneva, Switzerland – 15 October 2007: Leading international arbitration practitioners and advocacy instructors today announced the launch of a new organization – the Foundation for International Arbitration Advocacy (“FIAA”).

FIAA is the first organization dedicated to providing lawyers with learning-by-doing advocacy training specifically designed for international arbitration. Recognizing the importance of this initiative, a prestigious group of international arbitration practitioners from around the world have enthusiastically committed their support.

International Arbitration Presents Unique Advocacy Challenges for Lawyers

International arbitration is a private and binding method of dispute resolution that parties may choose as an alternative to litigation before national courts. With the growth of cross-border business, international arbitration has become the preferred method of resolving commercial disputes between parties from different countries.

“Advocacy” refers to the skills that lawyers use to present cases in a compelling and persuasive manner. Advocacy skills relate to the questioning of witnesses, as well as the making of oral argument and the preparation of written argument.

Advocacy in the context of international arbitration presents unique challenges. This is because international arbitration often involves parties, arbitrators and lawyers from very different legal traditions. Lawyers from common law jurisdictions such as the U.S.A. and England have a long tradition of questioning witnesses. By contrast, in civil law jurisdictions across Continental Europe, Latin America and many parts of Asia, the questioning of witnesses is usually conducted by the judge.

Whatever the traditions involved, advocacy skills are essential for every lawyer acting as counsel in international arbitration. There are, however, limited opportunities for novice lawyers to develop these skills in practice. Existing training programs are generally designed for domestic court proceedings. As a result, there is a compelling need for high quality advocacy training specifically designed for international arbitration practitioners.

FIAA – Meeting the Need for Specialized Advocacy Training

FIAA’s main purpose is to provide specialized training in advocacy skills and techniques for international arbitration.

Initially, FIAA will focus on providing International Arbitration Advocacy Workshops in Switzerland. These workshops will feature learning-by-doing programs led by experienced advocacy instructors and international arbitration practitioners.



Over time, FIAA will develop a range of workshops and activities designed to promote effective and ethical advocacy skills and techniques in international arbitration. FIAA will also provide a useful forum for arbitrators, counsel and academics to analyze and develop advocacy and international dispute resolution skills.

FIAA’s Founders, Board of Trustees and Executive Committee

FIAA is currently in the process of being formally established as a Swiss foundation with charitable and educational purposes. The seat of FIAA will be in Geneva, Switzerland, which has a long tradition as one of the world’s leading centres for international arbitration.

The Founders of FIAA are Sheila Block (Torys LLP, Toronto, Canada), Gabrielle Kaufmann-Kohler (Schellenberg Wittmer and University of Geneva Faculty of Law, Geneva, Switzerland), David Roney (Schellenberg Wittmer, Geneva, Switzerland) and James Seckinger (University of Notre Dame Law School, Indiana, U.S.A.).

When formally constituted, FIAA’s Board of Trustees and Executive Committee will bring together a prestigious group of leading arbitration practitioners and advocacy instructors representing jurisdictions worldwide and major arbitral institutions. For a complete list of FIAA’s Board of Trustees and Executive Committee, visit our website at www.fiaa.com.

Support for FIAA in the International Arbitration Community

There has been widespread support for FIAA in the international arbitration community. “Launching such a foundation is an important project for the arbitration community. I am very interested in this and naturally pleased to participate” said Emmanuel Gaillard of Shearman & Sterling LLP. Similarly, Albert Jan van den Berg of Hanotiau & van den Berg stated “I fully support the approach and goals of FIAA”. According to Stephen Jagusch of Allen & Overy LLP, “FIAA fills a major need and will be an important vehicle for the development of international arbitration.” Marinn Carlson of Sidley Austin LLP also agreed “FIAA promises to make an important contribution to the practice of international arbitration”.

For more information about FIAA and our International Arbitration Advocacy Workshops, visit our website at www.fiaa.com.

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