

## **"Blockchain, a Highway to Deliberative Democracy?"**

### ***A Side Event Proposal for the 55<sup>th</sup> Session of the Social Development Council of ECOSOC***

## **Overview of the World Jurist Association**

### **Our Status**

As a non-governmental organization with DPI NGO Status and Special Consultative status at the UN Economic and Social Council, the WJA provides a unique forum for the international community. We have worked closely with governments, non-governmental organizations and international associations to foster a cooperative dialogue on World Peace, through implementation of the Rule of Law. Through our support, global decision-makers work together as individuals, and not as representatives of a particular country, class or ideology.

### **Our Mission**

The WJA was formed in response to an international outcry for a free and open forum where judges, lawyers, law professors and other professionals from around the world, could work cooperatively to strengthen and expand the Rule of Law and its institutions through the nations of the world.

Since its inception in 1963, The World Jurist Association's main focus has been the implementation, defense of, and education regarding the Rule of Law, as "*A world ruled by law, not force.*"

### **Overview of our Proposal:**

Although primarily focused on Sustainable Development Goal 16 (Promoting Just, Peaceful and Inclusive Societies), the impact of the proposed side event also touches on SDG 1, SDG 5, and SDG 10 as outlined below, by ensuring:

- equal access to justice, [SDG 16]
- developing effective, accountable and transparent institutions at all levels, [SDG 16]
- ensuring responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making [SDG's 10 & 16]
- broadening and strengthening the participation of developing countries in the institutions of global governance, [SDG 16]
- ensuring women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life, [SDG 5]
- enhancing the use of enabling technology, specifically, information and communications technology, to promote the empowerment of women, [SDG's 5 & 16]
- ensuring public access to information and protecting fundamental freedoms, in accordance with national legislation and international agreements; promoting and enforcing non-discriminatory laws and policies for sustainable development.[SDG's 1,5,8, 10 & 16]

With nearly 50 years of accomplishments, the WJA is one of the few organizations working with such a broad range of stakeholders to promote the Rule of Law as the path towards world peace. Our members include sitting and retired Chief Justices, judges, government officials, law professors, lawyers and students from over 140 different countries. We have National Presidents in 85 countries and our Board of Governors represents every continent and activity within the legal profession. As such, we are uniquely qualified to host this side event.

## **Overview of the Proposed Side Event**

The core technology of Bitcoin, the Blockchain, has recently emerged as an innovative technology with multiple potential applications. The implications of blockchain are considerable and could potentially redesign how transactions in government, business, and civil society are conducted.

Although interest in this subject is growing, a comprehensive analysis of blockchain applications from a political perspective is needed. This side-event intends to provide some of the leading experts on these topics and will analyze the key points of blockchain-based decentralized governance - which challenges the traditional mechanisms of state authority, citizenship and democracy.

Because the WJA membership is comprised of judges, attorneys, law students and politicians from Supreme Courts, Law Schools, Governments and Law firms globally, we operate as an arena that connects law making and legal practice with technical innovation. Consequently, we are the optimal choice to present this innovative research and experts to discuss this project

Additionally, election law has been one of our long term projects, carried out in countries like Georgia or Nigeria, in accordance with our commitment to implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals

As we mention above, this topic touches on several of the SDG's including; primarily SDG 16 – but peripherally, SDG 1 SDG 5, SDG 8, and SDG 10 because when governments are legitimized by their citizens, the governing focus shifts to improving the lives of those citizens; thereby increasing the governments' abilities to implement other, crucial, SDG's.

The world is facing a crisis in the effective operation of democratic systems coupled with the goal of implementing transparent and fair elections. Blockchain technology can facilitate legitimacy to existing political systems.

Our proposed round table side event brings experts from different professional disciplines, including: legal, philosophical, IT, technical and financial to explain not only how Blockchain technology can be applied to promote a more direct and transparent democratic process, but how this resource can improve the health of governments, establishing ways to add transparency to government activities and how governments can communicate better with its citizens.

The Rule of Law and the preservation of Human Rights will find new ways of legitimacy throughout a democratic process that corresponds to the evolving technologies and addresses

the requirements of a society that is demanding change and legitimizes reliance on governments and global democratic institutions.

Deliberative Democracy (originally coined by Joseph M. Bessette in his 1980 and expanded by James Fishkin, Joshua Cohen, Amy Gutmann and Dennis F. Thompson) could be a crucial tool to help improve social development, thus enhancing the confidence that citizens have on Governments and Institutions, *broadening and strengthening the participation of developing countries in the institutions of global governance, ensuring public access to information and protect fundamental freedoms, in accordance with national legislation and international agreements and promoting and enforcing non-discriminatory laws and policies for sustainable development (SDG16).*

This topic also supports a goal in the WJA's 10 year plan to conduct research on the legal framework of the Internet and tracking the investigations and conclusions previously completed by the UN; to coordinate other international entities to draft a proposal of global protocol on the law and good practices of the Internet.

The WJA intends to continue this research with another conference in May, 2017 entitled **Internet and Democracy**, that will further build on the issues raised during the side proposed side event Blockchain and Deliberative Democracy.

The question to be discussed by the proposed side event is, *how should a Deliberatively Democratic system be crafted so that it uses Blockchain as a technology to achieve a more participatory and transparent approach to democratic states and organizations? Moreover, what should be the guiding principles to ensure proper functioning?*

The answers to these two fundamental questions will be discussed and debated by our invited speakers. Conclusions will be converted to a legally supported guideline on implementation of Blockchain as a tool to establish or enhance Deliberative Democratic Systems.

## Speakers for this Event

- **Alexander Löw** - President of the World Jurist Association Germany - CEO at Data-Warehouse GmbH – Germany [Confirmed]
- **David Andolfatto** - VP Research at Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis, U.S.A. [Confirmed?]
- **Patrick Murck** - Fellow at the Berkman Center for Internet & Society at Harvard - Special Counsel at Pillsbury Winthrop Shaw Pittman LLP U.S.A. [Confirmed]
- **Sandra Ro** - Digitization, CME Group – Chicago, Illinois U.S.A. [Confirmed]
- **Pia Mancini** - Democracy Earth Foundation (Voice) – San Francisco, California U.S.A.? [Confirmed]
- **Susan Ramonat** - Blockchain Lead || Chief Risk Officer London, [Confirmed]
- **Emily Goodman Binick** - Vice President & Senior Counsel at American Express [Confirmed]
- **Seyla Benhabib** - Eugene Mayer Professor of Political Science and Philosophy at Yale University, director of the program in Ethics, Politics, and Economics [Confirmed]

- **Jose Luís Martí** - Laurance S. Rockefeller Fellow of the University Center for Human Values de la Princeton University, Professor and Researcher of Law Philosophy at University Pompeu Fabra in Barcelona, Spain [Confirmed]
- **Juan Llanos** - Blockchain/Fintech/Compliance Executive & Advisor, New York, New York, U.S.A. [Confirmed]

## ***Proposed Timetables***

### **1. Proposed Timetables Scenario A (10am – 2pm)**

*5 hours Panel Discussion in conference rooms at the United Nations*

### **2. Scenario B (10am – 12.30pm / 1.30pm – 4.30pm)**

*2'30 hours Panel Discussion at the United Nations' designated rooms and continuing for an additional for an additional 3'30 hours in a room or rooms provided by the German Mission*

### **3. Scenario C (10am – 4pm)**

*6 hours Panel Discussion in conference rooms provided by the German Mission.*

## **Miscellaneous:**

- The Organization and Catering of the event will be managed by the WJA.
- WJA requires no further funding to present the side event.
- The WJA will invite members of the collaborating missions to participate to this event.