Washington -- The Largest Conference Ever Held

The Seventh World Conference on World Peace Through Law was the largest gathering of international jurists ever assembled. The 4,629 registrants from 131 Nations who were in attendance brings to more than 20,000 the number of Judges, lawyers, law professors and law students who have attended the seven World Peace Through Law Conferences held around the World. The great law leaders from so many diverse backgrounds and origins could agree on the substance of 32 Resolutions concerning the major international legal issues of the day clearly demonstrates that universal peace through the rule of law is attainable through a process of rational discussion among the World's legal leaders. There were those present who did not agree to every word in every resolution but the heated debates merely underscored the importance of the issues. And no one could ever expect such a large gathering of law leaders from 131 nations to agree on everything! Law and law principles are not that settled. The debates can help, however, in developing that understanding and consensus which must be developed to produce the "consent" of nations which makes international law. Both for the assembled delegates and for the future of world peace, the Seventh World Law Conference was a resounding success.

White House

Thursday afternoon, October 16, Gerald R. Ford, President of the United States, received the participants of the Conference at the White House. The President, in his address to some 3,000 of the registrants, underscored the importance of the Conference as the largest ever to have taken place in the history of the international legal profession, and he emphasized the mandatory role of the law in building a stable and peaceful world. The President stated to the assembled delegates: "Your efforts to promote human equality under the law, as well as other issues, ranging from the role of multi-national companies to the Law of the Sea, demonstrate very properly and, again, very vividly that you are addressing the major issues that confront people and nations in the globe as a whole. I commend the serious work that you are undertaking."
Declaration of World Interdependence

The awesome problems facing the community of nations, compounded by the process of technological developments, set the stage for a landmark Declaration of World Interdependence proclaimed by the assembled delegates at the Seventh World Conference. A seven-hundred word introduction delineates the reasons why mankind is at an historic crossroad, and culminates in the following seminal statement:

"-Humanity shares this planet Earth in a social system of States and other groups; a social system marked not by exclusive independence, but by interdependence: interdependence in security, in economic development, in management of natural resources — interdependence in all acts taken to secure those values sought by human society.

-In recent decades, governments have begun to recognize this ever increasing interdependence by accelerated development of international law and institutions promoting the common interests of our world community and seeking world peace through law.

-Nevertheless, major problems continue that drastically hinder all peoples in their common goal of ‘life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness’. Although mankind has developed a technology that opens news vistas for all, human society to date has failed sufficiently to recognize the intensity of interdependence and to create the necessary institutions to coordinate cooperation in eradicating its common problem.

THEREFORE, THIS CONFERENCE DECLARES

1. That all peoples and their governments are now and forever inextricably intertwined in their pursuit of human values; in their search through time and space for the meaning, the goal of human existence;

2. That mankind is an indivisible entity — if any person hungers or thirsts or knows any want of well-being, we all know want; if any person suffers deprivation of human rights, we all suffer and are jointly diminished in our human dignity;

3. That the time has come for all peoples and governments to acknowledge fully our global interdependence by crossing that fundamental threshold from national competition to international cooperation, from parochialism to universality;

4. That the members of the world legal profession, having a central role in the enforcement of the rule of law, are under special obligation to enlighten public opinion and to influence decision makers as to the constructive role of law in dealing with international problems, and

5. That we, the members of this Conference, do hereby in the cause of world peace through law pledge our lives, our fortunes, and our sacred honor."

Awards

The central feature at the closing of the Conference Banquet was the presentation by President Charles S. Rhyme of the WORLD LAWYER AWARD to Bernard G. Segal (United States); the WORLD JURIST AWARD to President Manfred Lachs (International Court of Justice); the OUTSTANDING INTERNATIONAL AGENCY AWARD to the International Labour Organization, accepted by its General Counsel, Francis Wolf; the HUMAN RIGHTS AWARD to Vice President Fouad Ammoun (International Court of Justice); and the WORLD LEGAL SCHOLAR AWARD to Professor Joaquin Garrigues Diaz-Canabate (Spain).
Demonstration Trial

The world-wide interest in the two previous international demonstration trials made a similar trial a must event for the Conference. It was held on October 15.

The “Court” was composed of Chief Justice Rolf Ryssdal (Norway) as President; Chief Justice Shimon Agranat (Israel); Chief Justice Issa E. Hiyatli (Trinidad and Tobago); Chief Justice Sayed Abdul Mageed Iman (Sudan); Chief Justice Querube Makalintal (Philippines); Chief Justice Thomas O’Higgins (Ireland); and Chief Justice Voitto V. Saario (Finland).

Persuasive and highly impressive arguments were presented by Chesterfield Smith of the United States and Shehbat Rosem of Israel for the plaintiffs; and Dr. Ahmed Salek el Kosheri of Egypt, Avv. Luigi-Giacomo Scassellati Stotozolini of Italy and R.O.A. Akinjide of Nigeria for the defendants.

The questions presented to the Court of International Justice were: (1) whether, taking into consideration the political strains and resulting armed conflicts between States, said States may take measures economically endangering and damaging to other States, consistent with their obligations under treaties they are parties to and with international law; and (2) if the Court found that they may not, what reparations should be provided by the State or States responsible for such measures.

On Friday, October 17, the opinion of the Court read by its President, Mr. Chief Justice Rolf Ryssdal, during the Plenary Session, stated:

“The Court at the outset stresses that its deliberations, and judgment are based on the special facts set out in the case before it, and that this case is not intended to reflect any past or existing state of facts or any legal dispute between nations.

For reasons to be given in writing at a later date by members of the Court, the Court has reached the following conclusions on the questions submitted to it:

1. As to the first question, whether the economic measures taken by the States of Gamma, Delta, Pi, Sigma and Tau in connection with the conflict between the States of Alpha and Beta on the one hand and the State of Pi, on the other, were consistent with their obligations under the treaties to which they are parties and with international law, the answer in each case is in the negative.

However, this conclusion is subject to a dissenting opinion by one member of the Court. Another member of the court reserves his judgment in respect of the measures taken against the State of Gamma.

2. As to the second question, with respect to reparations, the Court is of opinion and so orders (a) that the status quo, existing between the parties prior to the application by each party of the measures under consideration, should be restored; (b) that an enquiry be held as to the damage suffered by each of the parties hereto; and (c) that the quantum of damages payable (if any) by each of the parties to the other or other parties, as the case may be, be determined after the enquiry aforesaid having regard to the degree and the extent of the capability of each party in violating its obligations under the treaties to which it was a party and under international law. October 17, 1975; Washington, D.C."

The opinion of the members of the Court will be published when received.
Wider Ratification of Refugee Treaties Urged

The Conference called attention to the urgent need for Nations which presently have not ratified the 1951 Convention and the 1967 Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees to consider the question of ratification as a priority matter. The Center’s Treaty Acceptance Committee are urging ratification of the treaties on a global basis.

World Law Day 1975

President Charles S. Rhyne presided at the special Conference program on WORLD LAW DAY focusing on 1975 as International Women's Year. A proclamation by the President of the United States was presented by William S. Thompson, Secretary-General of WPTLC along with over 100 such proclamations by mayors of cities in the United States. Impressive speeches were given on that subject by Mayor Walter Washington of the District of Columbia; Julia Gibson of Liberia; Erica Daes of Greece; and Patricia S. Lindh, Special Assistant to the President on Women of the United States.

President Gerald R. Ford in his Address to the Conference paid special tribute to women and International Women's Year, saying: “I was ordered to do this by my wife!”

Heads of State Messages

Central to the success of the Conference is the recognition by Heads of State across the world of the importance of the work of the Conference in helping to develop the World's law system. Over 100 leaders sent messages to the assembled delegates, expressing their wishes that the deliberations be successful.

Louise W. Holborn

It is with great sadness that the WPTLC received news of the death of Louise W. Holborn. Her dedication to the problems of refugees will always be remembered. She devoted her life to helping to develop international legal protections for refugees. She spoke at the Abidjan Conference and was scheduled to address the Washington Conference. Sincere condolences were forwarded to her family.
Diplomacy of Consent

The speech delivered by General Carlos P. Romulo, Secretary of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of the Philippines, at the closing of the Conference Banquet, emphasized the need for "consent" between nations as the only law making process for international law. Without that consent the only possible achievement would be declaration of intent or statement of principle, but securing such consent by all nations allows the law to "make this a happier world, with an order that all of us can accept and live with."

General Romulo commended the Conference and the Center for their major role in this law making by "consent" through friendships among law leaders, a dialogue of continuous nature on a world-wide scale as to the values of law and the importance to nations that they "consent" to more and more law thus strengthening the peace process - the law process of the World.

Law and Women

Recognizing the need to improve the status of women and to eliminate discrimination against them, the Conference particularly directed its attention to this problem. A very successful working session was held on Thursday, October 16. The resolutions recommended by this session were adopted at the Plenary Session. They called for the creation of a Standing Committee on the Rights of Women; for the adoption by the United Nations of a Draft Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women; and for the implementation by governments of transnational human rights prescriptions concerning the protection of the rights of women.
Resolutions Approved at Washington

The Washington Conference formulated extremely important resolutions and approved 31 of these on the following subjects: (1) the 1976 Law of the Sea Conference; (2) Expanding the Jurisdiction of the International Court of Justice; (3) Law of the Sea Conference – Use of the International Court of Justice; (4) Treaties Relating to Refugees; (5) Asylum; (6) Family Reunion; (7) Affording Legal Rights to Refugees; (8) International Solidarity in Favor of Refugees; (9) Diplomatic Asylum; (10) International Nuclear Safeguards; (11) National Legislation and Administration to Prevent Terrorism; (12) Prevention and Punishment of Terrorism; (13) Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners; (14) World Health Services for the Poor in Developing Countries; (15) Stratosphere Pollution; (16) Prevention of Pollution of the Seas; (17) International Whaling Commission; (18) Disarmament, Chemical and Bacteriological Weapons; (19) Commendation of the International Labour Organizer’s Promotion of Human Rights; (20) Providing Legal Service to the Poor; (21) Freedom to Leave Country; (22) Implementation of Human Rights Conventions; (23) Food and Population; (24) Law and Reform of the International Monetary System; (25) Programs of Rights of Women; (26) International Measures on Women’s Rights; (27) Prevention of Torture and Inhuman Punishment; (28) Professional Opportunities for Deported Lawyers; (29) Prisoners of Conscience; (30) Government Interference with Lawyers in Pursuance of Their Professional Duties; (31) Attendance at Conferences; and (32) Humanitarian Law in Armed Conflict.

Howard University Confers Honorary Degrees

At the Inaugural Ceremonial Session of the Conference on Monday, October 13, Gerald R. Ford, President of the United States; Warren E. Burger, Chief Justice of the United States; Taslim Olawale Elias, President of the World Association of Judges; Manfred Lachs, President of the International Court of Justice; Charles S. Rhyne, President of WPTLC; and William Sylvester Thompson, Secretary-General of WPTLC; were conferred Honorary Degrees of Doctor of Laws by Howard University. The degrees were presented by Dr. James E. Cheek, President and Chairman of the Board of Trustees of Howard University.