



Ministry for Foreign Affairs
Director-General for Legal Affairs
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International law week: 28th meeting of Legal Advisors

Dear Colleagues,

Welcome to the informal legal advisors' dialogue on 23 – 24 October! On behalf of the coordinating countries, I very much look forward to this year's discussions on topical issues of international law:

International humanitarian law. This year marks the 40th anniversary of the Additional Protocols to the Geneva Conventions. It seems appropriate to mark this anniversary in the group of legal advisors, taking the opportunity to discuss the achievements of the Conventions and Protocols and to look ahead at future challenges when it comes to achieving respect for international humanitarian law. As the Secretary-General said in his remarks on taking office, conflicts have become more complex. This trend raises issues of how to best implement existing norms, to look at practical needs and best practices, and to look ahead at what may be the main challenges in the years ahead.

Peaceful dispute settlement mechanisms and their role in conflict prevention. Issues related to the peaceful settlement of disputes have been a recurrent theme in our discussions in the informal dialogue. This year we plan to focus on aspects linking the mechanisms of the peaceful settlement of disputes with the broader aim of conflict prevention. Within the overall priority given by the Secretary-General to the importance of preventing conflicts, the role of international law and the means of settling disputes could be a key dimension.

The role of the legal advisor. In a changing world, the role of the legal advisor in ministries for foreign affairs also faces new challenges and opportunities. The final session of the informal dialogue will be about our own function and perspectives for the coming years on the function of the legal advisor in relation to the substance we deal with, and the institutional relationships and frameworks we are part of.

In the lead up to this year's dialogue, a number of you have expressed the wish that the time for discussion and exchange within the informal dialogue be increased. Several of you have highlighted the value of achieving as great a degree of informality as the format permits. So this year we have structured the panels around somewhat fewer panellists than previous years, with the aim of allowing for more discussion with and between legal advisors. I hope that you will engage actively during our discussions, and look forward to seeing you on 23 – 24 October 2017 in New York. The point of contact for International Law Week at the Swedish Permanent Mission is Ms Cecilia Anderberg: cecilia.anderberg@gov.se.

Best regards,



Elinor Hammarskjöld

Director-General for Legal Affairs