



# CENTRE FOR INTERNATIONAL LAW CIL

## REMARKS BY ROBERT BECKMAN, DIRECTOR, CENTRE FOR INTERNATIONAL LAW, AT THE OFFICIAL LAUNCH OF THE CENTRE FOR INTERNATIONAL LAW (CIL), FRIDAY 30 OCTOBER 2009, 3.00 – 5.00 PM, NUS BUKIT TIMAH CAMPUS

Professor S. Jayakumar, Senior Minister  
Chief Justice Chan Sek Keong  
Mr. K. Shanmugam, Minister for Law  
Professor Tommy Koh  
Professor Walter Woon  
Judge of Appeal Justice Chao Hick Tin  
Mr. Peter Ho, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs  
Mr. Joseph Mullinix, NUS Deputy President  
Professor Tan Cheng Han, Dean, NUS Faculty of Law  
Colloquium speakers  
Excellencies  
Members of the NUS Board of Trustees and NUS colleagues  
Ladies and gentlemen

Good afternoon,

As the Director of CIL, I would like to briefly explain how we got started, our plans in the short-term, and what we hope to accomplish in the long-term.

As Professor Tan Cheng Han noted, the initiative to establish the Centre came from important persons in government and academia who saw the need for an institution examining the development and teaching of international law.

In late 2008, a Pro-Tem Committee was established consisting of representatives of the NUS Faculty of Law, the Attorney-General's Chambers, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Funding for the Centre was made available in May 2009. In June, Dr Navin Rajagopal joined CIL as its Deputy Director. Until September 2009, we were a "two-man centre" but we managed to get the renovations completed and the office operational. During this "start-up" period we received invaluable support from the Faculty of Law, the Deputy President for Research and Technology and other departments of the NUS central administration. Without their strong support, it would not have been possible to get the Centre established so quickly.

CIL's Governing Board was appointed by the University President in June. At its first meeting, the Board decided that CIL should engage in training as well as research, and that during its initial three years it should focus on ASEAN Law and Policy, Trade Law and Policy, Ocean Law and Policy, Aviation Law and Policy, Intellectual Property Law and Policy, and International Dispute Resolution.

CIL is now up and running with a skeletal administrative staff, supplemented by adjunct research staff and student research assistants. Our first full-time research associate joined us only this week. Notwithstanding this, the Centre organised a 3-day executive training programme on international investment arbitration as well as two seminars in September.

In addition, planning is underway for several major events, including a workshop on Submarine Cables and Law of the Sea in December, a Conference on International Investment Arbitration in January, and a Conference on International Air Law in May. As a general rule, CIL will seek partner organisations for events it organises. This will develop CIL's links with leading institutions in various fields of international law in the region and globally.

One of the major activities of CIL during the first three years will be a research project entitled "Integration through Law: The ASEAN Way in a Comparative Context". The project will examine the role of law and the rule of law in Asian legal integration. The project will be headed by JHH Weiler, Professor of Law at New York University (NYU) and NUS, and Michael Ewing-Chow, Associate Professor of Law at NUS. I am very pleased that Professor Joseph Weiler was able to plan one of his visits to Singapore so that he could be with us today for the launch. Professor Weiler is the Director of The Jean Monnet Centre for International and Regional Economic Law and Justice at NYU.

CIL is also developing an online Research Platform that will enable users to locate and access the text of important ASEAN agreements and other ASEAN instruments by categories, years and keywords. The Research Platform, expected to be ready in January 2010, will also enable users to access the text of major global conventions and to check the status of these conventions in ASEAN countries. In addition to the Research Platform, the CIL web site will contain materials on teaching international law as well as documents and information on issues of international law of interest to the region.

CIL hopes to serve not only Singapore, but the region. We will be examining issues of international law and policy of interest to the region, and many of our activities will have a regional focus. We will examine developments in international law in their economic, political, security and historical context. As a university-wide centre, we hope to undertake multi-disciplinary research in collaboration with other centres and institutes and with scholars in other fields, both within NUS and outside NUS.

Because CIL has been established at the Bukit Timah Campus within the premises of the NUS Faculty of Law, we will be able to leverage on the international expertise in the Law School and the excellent international law collection in the CJ Koh Law Library. In addition, we will be able to involve NUS law students in our activities, and help identify and nurture a new generation of international lawyers in Singapore.

But before we focus on developing a new generation of international lawyers for Singapore, it is only proper that we officially recognize and learn from the achievements and experiences of Singapore's first generation of international lawyers.

I would now like to invite Professor Tan Cheng Han, Professor Tommy Koh, Professor Walter Woon, Minister Shanmugam, the Honourable Chief Justice, and our esteemed Guest-of-Honour Senior Minister S. Jayakumar to the stage for the unveiling of the commemorative official launch plaque.

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