



ADVANCING RESEARCH AND PUBLICATION: SRI LANKA WORKSHOP

TRILA AS A CATALYST

by Professor Antony Anghie

Following the workshop in Cambodia, CIL collaborated with the Faculty of Law, University of Colombo, to hold a TRILA workshop in Sri Lanka from 7 to 8 June 2019. We are indebted to Danushka Medawatte for her tireless work in co-organising this workshop and for her invaluable participation. We also thank Professor Indira Nanayakkara, Dean of the Faculty of Law, and Professor VT Thamilmaran, Head of the Department of Public and International Law, Faculty of Law, University of Colombo.

The workshop in Sri Lanka was distinctive because it demonstrated that TRILA could be a catalyst for a far-reaching exploration by local academics of their own situation on topics such as 'The Relevance of International Law to Sri Lanka'. While Sri Lankan universities had hosted many international law conferences in the country, none had focussed on the teaching and research of international law. Thus, TRILA Sri Lanka was unique in

IN THIS ISSUE:

TRILA as a Catalyst by Professor Antony Anghie

Reflections on the Workshop by

- *Ms Nishara Mendis*
- *Professor Wasantha Seneviratne*

Junior Scholars' Work-in-Progress Forum

Further Initiatives and Way Forward



giving teachers in Sri Lanka the forum in which to engage with these topics. Participants learned from their own colleagues about facing the different challenges in teaching in Sri Lanka. We also discussed how teachers of domestic law could incorporate international law perspectives into their teaching and research. TRILA Sri Lanka emphasised research and writing, and a part of the programme featured presentations by junior scholars of their work-in-progress.

DYNAMIC RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE SENIOR AND JUNIOR SCHOLARS

Ms Nishara Mendis

Lecturer, Faculty of Law, University of Colombo

The sessions at TRILA Sri Lanka were inspiring. They gave us ideas for workshops in the future. Professor Antony Anghie encouraged the young teachers to express themselves. I think that linking the decades of experience of the more mature teachers with the fresh outlook of the younger teachers could create more dynamism and collaboration in teaching. The suggestions that came out of the session included (1) yearly meetings of international law teachers accompanied by experience sharing of teaching methods, and (2) a collaboration on a textbook of public international law in Sri Lanka. Other important suggestions included teaching in the context of the societal contribution and practical or problem-based application, inter-disciplinary approaches, especially geopolitical, historical and cultural knowledge.

In the session on international law research, we discussed the importance of maintaining high standards in research and writing, and the different approaches used by international law teachers who have written books and articles. Amid the practical discussions on honing skills and marketability, one common thread was that international law teachers must have and retain their passion for the subject and continue to find inspiration in their work.

On a more personal note, we are encouraged by our own young scholars not to limit ourselves, but to dream big and reach high. Continued hard work is needed on both the teaching and researching fronts. Sri Lankan international legal experts have contributed immensely to the development of international law, and we should not forget this heritage as we move forward with new generations.



'...we are encouraged by our own young scholars not to limit ourselves, but to dream big and reach high.'



AN EXPERIENCE TO REMEMBER AND NURTURE

*Professor Wasantha Seneviratne
Faculty of Law, University of Colombo*



The workshop was a unique experience to all academics in Sri Lankan law schools, which are keen to engage in international law teaching and research from an Asian perspective. Professor Anghie's kind dedication and rich contribution motivated, particularly the young scholars, to begin new research studies in various branches of international law from an Asian approach. I think that this kind of thematic workshops should be held in the future.

'... this kind of thematic workshops should be held in the future.'



JUNIOR SCHOLARS' WORK-IN-PROGRESS FORUM

Our Sri Lankan colleagues were especially interested in a session focussing on research and publication. Thus, a distinctive feature of Sri Lanka workshop was the Work-in-Progress forum wherein junior scholars presented the research papers they were working on. The junior scholars presented on a wide range of topics, such as labour issues, law of the sea, intellectual property, discrimination against women, and foreign investment law. Professors Naazima Kamardeen and Antony Angie commented on each presentation. The forum also served as a platform for the other participants to exchange their views and discuss in a more concrete way the issues presented.

The Sri Lankan scholars' emphasis on advancing research was evident in other sessions. For instance, in the session on researching and writing papers, Professor Kamardeen, Dr Chandrasekaran, Ms Danushka Medawatte and Ms Achalie Kumarage discussed the practical issues in choosing a topic, identifying a suitable forum, the importance of writing technique and style, the question of audience, approaching the writing of a PhD dissertation and transforming it into a book, editorial expectations, and the particular difficulties faced by younger scholars in finding their own voice.



FURTHER INITIATIVES AND WAY FORWARD



Some participants were not strictly international law teachers. They taught a variety of subjects including commercial law and land law but were interested in comparative law, and law and development, which are related to international law. Interesting questions arose as to how these relationships should be presented. Law and development, for instance, is an important field as law reform is ongoing in Sri Lanka. Some areas, such as company law, have a law and development, and comparative perspective.



The development of effective teaching techniques was also a central focus of the workshop. The workshop generated creative suggestions on overcoming the challenges of limited resources, large classes, and language difficulties.

Participants suggested further initiatives in fostering the teaching and research of international law in Sri Lanka. These include writing a history of international law in Sri Lanka, developing a textbook

that draws on Sri Lankan materials, examining the different teaching techniques that emerged from the discussions, including the advantages and disadvantages of the problem-solving approach, and a close study of assessment methods.

CIL TRILA TEAM



Professor Antony Anghie
Head of Programme



Eugenio Gomez-Chico
Research Associate



Amiel Ian Valdez
Research Associate

CONNECT WITH US



[/groups/CIL.TRILA](#)



[@CIL_TRILA](#)



cil.info@nus.edu.sg



cil.nus.edu.sg/teaching/international-law-and-asia/



469A Bukit Timah Road, Tower Block,
#09-01, Singapore 259770