

INTERNATIONAL UPDATE

Report on the First World Congress on Mixed Jurisdictions

Vernon Valentine Palmer*

Approximately 150 persons from more than twenty countries gathered for the first World Congress on Mixed Jurisdictions in New Orleans, Louisiana on November 6-9, 2002. The event was hosted by the Tulane School of Law and the Eason Weinmann Center for Comparative Law. The Congress was attended by delegates from some twenty-one co-sponsoring law faculties in South Africa, Scotland, Quebec, Israel, Puerto Rico, The Philippines and Louisiana, as well as delegates sent by co-sponsoring organizations such as the International Association of Legal Science, the International Academy of Comparative Law at the Hague and the American Society of Comparative Law.

The theme of the Congress was “Salience and Unity in the Mixed Jurisdiction Experience” and eight panels of speakers and commentators addressed a wide variety of themes thought to be characteristic of that experience. Programme planning was under the guidance of an international committee composed of Professors Vernon Palmer of Tulane (chair), J.E. du Plessis of Stellenbosch, Patrick Glenn of McGill, Kenneth Reid of Edinburgh, Dean Symeon Symeonides of Willamette, Daniel Visser of Cape Town, A.N. Yiannopoulos of Tulane, and Reinhard Zimmermann of Regensburg.

The opening address was by Professor Kenneth Reid of Edinburgh who traced “the idea” of mixed legal systems back to its beginnings in the early twentieth century. Aharon Barak, a world-renowned figure and currently President of the Israel Supreme Court, spoke on the impact of public Anglo-American values and institutions on the private civil law in these jurisdictions. The value of mixed systems, their costs and benefits, was the topic of the Right Honorable Lord Rodger of Earlsferry, one of two Scottish judges sitting in the House of Lords. Daniel Visser, Dean and Professor of law at Cape Town, dealt with the distinctive cultural voices of judges and jurists, and numerous papers were delivered on the subjects of legal methodology, linguistic factors, interaction between

* Thomas Pickles Professor of Law, Tulane University Law School, Director of European Legal Studies and the Paris Institute of Comparative Law, and President of the World Society of Mixed Jurisdiction Jurists.

common and civil law doctrines and the formation of autonomous law. More than twenty five papers in all were presented and are scheduled for publication in the fall of 2003 in the *Tulane Law Review*.

At the Congress, the delegates approved the statutes of a new international organization, the World Society of Mixed Jurisdiction Jurists. At the first meeting they elected officers and decided to hold the next Congress in Scotland in 2004, under the joint auspices of the law faculties of Aberdeen, Edinburgh and Glasgow. Vernon Palmer of Tulane was elected President, and Francois du Bois (Cape Town), Celia Fassberg (Hebrew Univ.), Efren Rivera (Univ. Puerto Rico), Hector MacQueen (Edinburgh) and Esin Orücü (Glasgow) were elected Vice Presidents. The organization's General Secretary is Professor Jacques du Plessis (Stellenbosch). Those interested in becoming individual members of the Society should contact Ms Janice Sayas: jsayas@law.tulane.edu.