

11 December 2012

## **Leading jurists gather at ICJ World Congress to work on international legal remedies to human rights violations**

*Geneva/Switzerland* – The 17th World Congress of the International Commission of Jurists (ICJ) opened here today, bringing together approximately 120 leading judges, lawyers and human rights defenders from five continents. They will work on a final Declaration aiming to develop and strengthen international justice systems and mechanisms to remedy human rights violations.

The Congress, which marks the 60th anniversary of the founding of ICJ, aims to make a significant impact on international justice systems through the elaboration of principles and objectives, which will contribute to the advancement of the Rule of Law and human rights.

“Throughout its 60-year history, the ICJ has consistently sought to mobilize jurists in support of the Rule of Law and to advance human rights,” said Wilder Tayler, ICJ Secretary General. “Several ICJ declarations or resolutions made at our congresses are still frequently referenced and carry continued authority to this day. They have inspired inter-governmental bodies, including the United Nations, as well as bar associations, lawyers, academic centres and other human rights NGOs around the world.”

The first ICJ World Congress took place in 1955 in Athens, while the most recent was held in Geneva four years ago.

The theme of this year event will address the need to develop international mechanisms, including judicial mechanisms, for accountability and remedy where such mechanisms are non-existent or dysfunctional and to defend strengthen such systems and mechanisms where they are under attack or only partly effective.

The Congress will produce a Declaration containing:

- Affirmations at the level of general principle on the requisite elements of access to justice and effective remedy for international human rights violations; and
- Six sub-sections, one for the universal/UN human rights system and one for each of the five regions – Africa, Americas, Asia & Pacific, Europe and Middle East/North Africa. Under each section, several points will be elaborated on laying out objectives for the respective regions and universal system.

The Congress will also mark a change at the helm of the International Commission of Jurists, with Sir Nigel Rodley (UK) assuming the role of ICJ President as the current President, Prof. Pedro Nikken (Venezuela) arrives at the end of his two-year term.

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**The ICJ 17<sup>th</sup> World Congress is supported by the City of Geneva.**

