

INTRODUCTION

As the world concluded its first full year of the COVID-19 pandemic, we wanted to ensure that this year's Annual Meeting spoke to the uniqueness of the current moment. We selected the theme "Reconceiving International Law: Creativity in Times of Crisis" as an acknowledgement that the United States and the world find themselves at an inflection point. We have been confronting a once-in-a-century global pandemic, an economic crisis, a racial justice crisis, as well as a climate crisis; and most recently in the United States, a crisis involving our democratic institutions. This year's theme also reflected the reality that times of crisis provide the opportunity for creative solutions. International lawyers and members of the Society are skilled at finding solutions to difficult problems. This year's Annual Meeting was an excellent forum for our members and partners around the world to discuss the creative use and reconception of international law as a positive tool to help address the multiple crises that humanity continues to confront at this critical moment.

This year, we launched a new "Global Engagement Series" with a special series of four late-breaking virtual sessions held in advance of the Annual Meeting on "Reconceiving America's Global Role in the Biden Era: International Perspectives." The discussions focused on regionally specific issues of international law and policy that will be impacted by the new Biden-Harris administration and highlighted regional perspectives and diversified audiences. This new series was developed in close partnership with international law societies across Africa, Asia, Europe, and Latin America.

In addition to the Global Engagement Series, the Annual Meeting included a late-breaking panel on "Democracy Under Threat" which, in response to the January 6, 2021 attack on the U.S. Capitol, examined the longstanding vulnerabilities and emerging threats to democratic systems globally. Using the U.S. crisis as a case study for the themes of election disruption, political polarization, and the spread of misinformation on social media, former ASIL President Sean Murphy engaged in a conversation with Georgetown University School of Law Professor Rosa Brooks about current and historical efforts to destabilize democracies around the world, and the ways in which democratic institutions can resist these threats.

As always, the ASIL Annual Meeting contained keynote addresses and lectures from luminaries in the international community. This year's Annual Meeting included keynote remarks from Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, Director-General of the World Health Organization, and David Miliband, the President of the International Rescue Committee. Lucy Reed delivered the Charles N. Brower Lecture, Yves Daudet delivered the Grotius Lecture, and Hannah Buxbaum served as the Grotius Distinguished Discussant. Remarks were also delivered by several distinguished award recipients including Judge Abdulqawi Ahmed Yusef, the 2021 Honorary Member recipient, Judge Gabrielle Kirk McDonald, the 2021 Prominent Women in International Law awardee, Louise Arbour, the 2021 Goler T. Butcher Medalist, and Bernard Oxman, the 2021 Manley O. Hudson Medalist.

The ASIL Annual Meeting is not just a crucial forum to learn and exchange about international law. It is also a unique setting for reconnecting with old friends and meeting new colleagues. This year, we tried to maintain this essential function of the Annual Meeting despite the virtual format. Working closely with the wonderful ASIL staff, we took what could appear as a limitation and turned it into an opportunity to extend ASIL's reach around the globe. This year's format permitted

greater flexibility in securing the participation of speakers from all parts of the world, who may not have been able to travel to Washington, DC. This allowed us to feature non-traditional voices and to advance ASIL’s commitment to promoting diversity. The Annual Meeting platform was also enhanced in an effort to recreate some of the social components of in-person conferences that are so valuable. Among other innovations, a new feature called “Continue the Conversation” allowed the audience to engage with speakers after the sessions. The Annual Meeting was highly successful by many metrics, including a record number of attendees, the most sessions ever held at an ASIL Annual Meeting (over 110), more than 50 percent female speakers, and in addition to our valued members of the academic community, also included more than 60 percent of speakers with a non-academic affiliation. Speakers from diverse backgrounds, nationalities, and organizational affiliations were also well represented across our panels. We were delighted to host the first ASIL panel consisting entirely of Indigenous panelists from around the globe, which explored the topic of Indigenous participation in international organizations. The 2021 Annual Meeting therefore succeeded in its goal of bringing the international law community closer together.

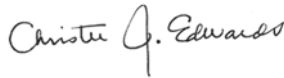
Over the last year, the world has faced unprecedented challenges, but we in the international legal community have always risen to the occasion to find creative solutions and new ways of solving crises through a commitment to strong international norms, implementation of human rights, and creating a community of global lawyers dedicated to developing international laws to bring us ever closer together. The 2021 Annual Meeting was a unique opportunity to discuss creative solutions to the global pandemic, an economic crisis, a racial justice crisis, the climate crisis, and even recent democratic crises. Attendees were inspired, motivated, and better connected to expert colleagues they will partner with and implement these creative approaches as we reconceive our legal frameworks together to solve these challenges. We hope to continue to see new solutions, partnerships, thought leadership, and approaches to legal issues that we all create together as the world reopens and we begin to reconnect in person, leading to a better and brighter future.

Thank you for joining us,

Co-Chairs
2021 ASIL Annual Meeting Committee



Simon Batifort



Christie Edwards



Darin Johnson