

### **Featured News**

#### [Northern Africa Regional Seminar on International Commercial Law, Tunis, 24-26 January 2012](#)

PALU will hold a Northern Africa Regional capacity-building Seminar for government and commercial lawyers in Tunis, Tunisia from Tuesday 24 –Thursday 26 January 2012. The Northern Africa Regional Seminar will be the third round of a joint continent-wide capacity-building project between PALU and the African Legal Support Facility (ALSF) to develop the experience and expertise of African lawyers in the areas of international commercial law and litigation.

PALU and ALSF have opted to enter into this partnership to strengthen international commercial legal practice on the African continent. The project involves, among other things, building the capacity of both public and private sector legal counsel in complex international commercial negotiations and also complex international commercial litigation. This will be done through, among other things, five regional seminars in Central, Eastern, Northern, Southern and Western Africa. This is a unique proposition, unprecedented in Africa, where the private legal Bar and governments (through an intergovernmental organization) are partnering to strengthen our economies by building legal capacity to engage in international commerce.

The objective of the Regional Seminar is to bring together seasoned government lawyers, bar leaders, legal practitioners and academics with a view to;

1. Taking stock of international commercial negotiations and dispute resolution in the sub-region;
2. Deepening the understanding of the scope of international commercial legal practice;
3. Facilitating increased and improved financing of infrastructure projects;
4. Sharpening international arbitration skills;
5. Developing the capacity of African lawyers to tackle vulture funds and better manage public debt;
6. Promoting the activities of the African Legal Support Facility; and
7. Marketing PALU and motivating lawyers to join as fee-paying members.

In partnership with the African Legal Support Facility, PALU is helping to increase the capacity of African lawyers to better engage in complex international commercial transactions. The joint capacity building project will train over 150 lawyers from across the Continent. Successful regional training seminars have been held for the Eastern and Southern Africa Regions in Kigali (February 2011) and Cape Town (May 2011). Upcoming training seminars will be held in for Northern Africa in Tunis on 24-26 January 2012 and for Central and Western Africa in Yaoundé on 12- 14 March 2012.

## **Events**

### [Triennial General Assembly, July 2012](#)

PALU would like to inform all members that it will hold its triennial General Assembly in July 2012. The General Assembly will bring together the five Regional and fifty four National Lawyers Associations as well as well as individual members. The General Assembly will provide an opportunity for the membership to assess the development of the legal profession on the Continent, lay out the organisations' strategic orientation and provide a networking platform for members. This year will see the General Assembly elect an Executive Committee to lead and represent the organization, formulate its policies and strategies, and supervise the secretariat.

The General Assembly will be preceded by a Council meeting. The PALU Council is composed of the Presidents of the Regional and National Lawyers Associations.

A formal notice of the General Assembly will be sent out to members in due course.

### [Other Events](#)

- Joint Regional Seminar for Central and Western Africa on International Commercial Law, Yaoundé, Cameroon, 12- 14 March 2012. PALU will convene a joint Regional Seminar for Central and Western Africa on International Commercial Law in Yaoundé, Cameroon, on 12-14 March 2012. The Regional Seminar will form the fourth round of the joint capacity building initiative between PALU and the Africa Legal Support Facility (ALSF).

Other upcoming events include:

- Southern Africa Seminar on Regional Human Rights Systems in Lusaka, Zambia in April 2012.
- Eastern Africa Seminar on Regional Human Rights Systems in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia in April 2012.
- Western Africa Seminar on Regional Human Rights Systems in Dakar, Senegal in May 2012.

## **Spotlight on PALU Projects**

### [AUC Consultancy on International Criminal Justice in Africa](#)

PALU is currently serving as a Consultant to the African Union Commission in the preparation of a detailed study including a draft legal instrument amending the Protocol to the African Court of Justice and Human Rights to confer it with international criminal jurisdiction.

This follows the AU Summit's 2010 decision (Assembly/AU/Dec.271 (XIV) requesting the AU Commission to finalise the study on the implications of empowering the African Court to try international crimes.

The first and second draft reports and draft legal instruments were produced in June 2010 and August 2010 respectively, and submitted to the Office of the Legal Counsel of the African Union Commission (OLC, AUC).

Two Validation Workshops were then held in Midrand, South Africa, in August 2010 and October – November 2010, bringing together the AUC and the Legal Counsel/ Advisors of all relevant AU organs and institutions, as well as the Legal Counsel/ Advisors of the Regional Economic Communities (RECs), to consider the draft report and draft legal instrument.

Thereafter, three Meetings of Government Experts were held, at the African Union Commission, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, to formally consider the draft Report and draft legal instrument. These were in March, May and October – November 2011. Both the draft report and draft legal instrument were amended at each stage, incorporating the directives and suggestions of the said Government Experts' meetings.

The Draft Protocol and Statute, and its accompanying report, is now awaiting the approval of the Ministers of Justice/ Attorneys General at a meeting scheduled for February 2012. Thereafter, it will be placed before the Executive Council for consideration before being forwarded to the Assembly of Heads of State and Government for formal adoption and signature.

### [Human Rights Protection and Promotion in Africa](#)

PALU with the generous support of the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA) is engaging in awareness-raising and public legal education on enforcement of human rights in the African System. PALU will convene regional human rights seminars that aim to take stock of human rights developments at the African system with a view to proposing recommendations for enhanced protection and promotion of human rights on the Continent. The first of these seminars was held in Tunis, Tunisia in November 2011. It follows a colloquium of eminent legal scholars held in July 2011 in Arusha, Tanzania.

The project also aims to practically insert into the African institutional landscape a new scope for human rights protection and promotion through high impact strategic litigation at the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights.

### [Complementarity between the African Court and African Commission](#)

In conjunction with the Ford Foundation, PALU is engaging in research that will enhance the capacity of litigants before the African Court and African Commission. The project will examine the relationship between the two institutions under Articles 5(a) and 6(3) of the African Court Protocol which provides for thereferral and transfer of cases between the bodies. The project aims to garner deeper understanding of the complementarity between the two human rights bodies with a view to increasing the frequency and efficiency of cases before the Court and Commission. At the end of the project, PALU will publish a Practical Guide on Complementarity for litigants before the African Court and African Commission.

### **Become a Member**

PALU is the umbrella association of African lawyers and law societies. It brings together the continent's five regional and fifty-three national lawyers' associations, as well as individual lawyer-members. Our mission is to work towards the development of the law and legal profession, the rule of law, human rights and socio-economic

development of the African continent, including through supporting African regional integration. PALU actively engages and works with the African Union (AU) and its various organs and institutions. It has a formal Memorandum of Understanding on Co-operation and Collaboration with the AU. It is a member of the Economic, Social and Cultural Council of the African Union (ECOSOCC-AU), and its President, Akere T. Muna, presides over ECOSOCC-AU. Mr. Muna is also a Member of the Eminent Persons' Panel of the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM). The PALU Chief Executive Officer, Mr. Donald Deya, chairs the Executive Committee of the Centre for Citizens' Participation in the African Union (CCP AU).

Membership of the Pan African Lawyer's Union entitles you to;

- Subscription to our unparalleled online monthly e-newsletter and e-bulletins on topical legal issues pertinent to Africa;
- Access to cutting edge commentary and legal analysis;
- Unprecedented access to a broad, continent-wide network of distinguished African legal scholars and professionals;
- Premier access to our online resource centre;
- Invitation to various seminars, trainings, conferences and networking events; and
- A detailed listing in our directory of members.

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Ms. Evelyn Chijarira

E. [secretariat@lawyersofafrica.org](mailto:secretariat@lawyersofafrica.org)

T. +255 27 2503192/ 4

F. +255 27 2503195