



IOJT is an International Organization for Judicial training institutes which aims at providing its members with the opportunity to learn from one another, to share innovative approaches to the education of the judiciary and to build a strong network of people involved in judicial education.

The idea of professional training for Judges is a relatively new one - the first such institutes were established after the Second World War. It was a common conception that Judges already knew everything, and didn't need any training. This changed as the Judge's profession began to be seen as a skill that needs to be learned, up kept and updated. As such, the profession is similar to the practice of medicine or education, where the practitioners must be both idealistic and constantly updated in order to serve in the best possible fashion.

It became clear that despite the many and various judicial systems prevalent in different countries there is a common denominator for the judicial profession as a whole. The need arose, therefore, to promote the exchange of information and ideas between these schools and institutes, as well as to assist countries in their initial steps to establish their own training schools. The initiative for the establishment of an international organization of judicial training institutes was first raised at a conference held in Sao Paulo, Brazil in 1997. A declaration stating the importance of international cooperation between institutes for judicial training, and calling for the establishment of an international organization designated to this issue, was signed. This has become known as the "Sao Paulo Declaration". Signatories to the Sao Paulo Declaration were various representatives from 13 countries around the world

The goals for the organization were set out in the Sao Paulo Declaration:

- 1. To improve the exchange of all useful information in the field of initial and permanent training and schooling of judges;**
- 2. To work on the expansion and creation of a network;**
- 3. To continue the cooperation between each other, started at this conference;**
- 4. To organize a preparatory meeting of representatives of schools of judges and/or persons responsible for training and schooling of judges about this initiative.**

Representatives from 10 countries participated in a preparatory conference for the establishment of an international forum. This conference which was held in

Jerusalem in December 1999 brought together delegates which after several days of discussions signed the "Jerusalem Declaration" in which it was agreed that a conference would be convened with the intention of establishing an international organization for the training of the judiciary. The "Jerusalem Declaration" included the following amongst its goals:

1. To establish an international organization of Judiciary training organizations from around the world.
2. To convene an international congress of judicial organizations in Jerusalem.
3. To establish a preparatory coordinating center in Jerusalem to prepare for the abovementioned congress.

In March 2002, the first international forum convened in Jerusalem with the participation of representatives from 24 countries, including representatives from the Council of Europe and The World Bank. *The International Organization for Judicial Training – IOJT* – was established and its Statutes approved. The General Assembly elected Dr. Shlomo Levin, Director of the Israeli Institute for Advanced Judicial Studies as IOJT President. It also elected five regional vice-presidents, the Secretary-General and Treasurer, an Executive Committee and various additional committees. It was agreed to hold the next conference in Ottawa, Canada.

In February 2003 The Philippine Judicial Academy headed by Chancellor Ameurфина Melancio Herrera, (then IOJT's Regional Vice-President for Asia and the Pacific) hosted the first meeting of the Australasia Judicial Educators Forum (AJEF). Participants were informed about the establishment of IOJT and its objectives. IOJT's Secretary-General, Treasurer and an additional Vice-President attended the conference in Manila. Consequently new members from that region joined the organization.

The second international IOJT conference, under the theme "Judicial Education in a World of Challenge and Change" took place in Ottawa, Canada at the end of October 2004 and was organized by the Canadian *National Judicial Institute*. It was an outstanding success that was unexpected even by its organizers. More than 300 representatives from close to 90 countries took part. During the conference, stimulating symposiums, discussions and seminars were held. The deliberations focused mostly on judicial training and on instruction methods of judicial training schools and institutes. The Statutes of the IOJT were amended and a Board of Governors, comprised of 21 representatives from around the world, was established. Moreover, a special committee aimed at assisting developing countries was formed. During the conference and as a result of it, many new members have joined the IOJT and the organization reached 60 institute-members. A European representative joined the Executive Committee

and it was decided to hold the third international conference in October 2007 in Barcelona, Spain.

Over 200 participants from 50 countries participated in the Third International Conference held in Barcelona, Spain, in October 2007. It was organized by the *Center for Legal Studies and Specialized Training* of Catalonia and under the auspices of the UNESCO Chair in Bioethics. It focused on how to "train the trainers" both in the field of Judicial Ethics and in the area of Skill-Based Education.

The Fourth International Conference was held in Sydney, Australia, in October 2009. In this successful event, under the theme "Justice through Judicial Professional Development", over 200 participants from 48 countries enjoyed a wide range of lectures and workshops. The conference was organized by *The National Judicial College* of Australia. At that stage the organization grew to 87 members from 56 countries.

The Fifth International Conference was organized by The French National School for the Judiciary (ENM) and took place in Bordeaux, France, from October 31 to November 3, 2011. Nearly 250 delegates from 74 countries enjoyed a rich and versatile program on the theme "Judicial Training in a Globalized World: Restoring trust and stability".

The Sixth International Conference took place in Washington D.C. from November 3 to November 7, 2013. The conference was organized by The National Center of State Courts. The delegates enjoyed a rich and diverse program on the theme of "Judicial Excellence through Education".

The Seventh International IOJT Conference took place in Recife, Brazil in November 2015. The conference theme was "Judicial Excellence through Education".

The organization has to date (March 2017) 123 members from 73 countries. Justice (ret.) Professor Eliezer Rivlin was elected in 2011 and re-elected in 2013 and 2015 to be the President of the IOJT. Dr. Mary McQueen, the head of the United States Center of States Courts was elected in 2013 and re-elected in 2015 as the Secretary –General of the organization.

The General Assembly of the IOJT convenes once in two years. Between the GA meetings the IOJT is directed and operated by the Executive Committee and the Board of Governors which consists of members from Africa, Asia, Australia, Europe, the Middle East and the United States.