

GLIN GLOBAL JOURNAL

February 2009

<http://www.glin.gov>

Volume 6

NEWS from GLIN CENTRAL...

Representatives from twenty different nations assembled at the Library from September 23-25 for the 15th Annual Meeting of Directors of the Global Legal Information Network (GLIN). In addition to Directors from GLIN member countries who gather to discuss initiatives launched since the last meeting and to plan for the year ahead, the meeting is attended by observers from supporting institutions and potential GLIN member nations. This year's new and pending members included Dominican Republic, Qatar, Uganda, and the United Kingdom. Congratulating the GLIN Directors on the fifteenth anniversary of the meeting, Librarian of Congress Dr. James Billington said in opening remarks, "As you well know, developing an international, multi-lingual database involves much more than computer hardware and software. You are the human ingredients that make the system work. You should be very proud of what you have collectively accomplished."

The annual meeting provides GLIN members with the opportunity to offer information about the activities they have undertaken over the past

year and to share experiences and advice. This year, members highlighted the value of the information available through GLIN. The Director of GLIN Paraguay stated that "GLIN is an important tool in our country" and noted that both chambers of their legislature are primary users of the database. GLIN serves as a "reliable reference source" for the President's office, both houses of the legislature, and the courts in the Democratic Republic of Congo according to its GLIN Director. Moreover, he reported that GLIN had served as a critical information source at conference convened to reform the penal code of that country. Costa Rica mentioned that supplemental legal information related to the Dominican Republic-Central American Free Trade Agreement (DR-CAFTA) is not published in the official gazette, but they have included these materials in the GLIN database making GLIN the only



Dr. James Billington speaks at the GLIN Director's meeting.



Dr. Azizah al-Hibri shares information about the Karamah website.

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If you wish to have an article published, please submit via email to LeeAnne Buckley (Lbuc@LOC.gov).

Deadline: 3-31-2009



Publication of Legal Information in the UK

The United Kingdom formally signed the GLIN Charter at the Director's Meeting in Washington in September. It was an important moment for Carol Tullo, who, as holder of the title, Queen's Printer of Acts of Parliament, is responsible for publishing legislation in the UK.

Carol is the Queen's Printer, Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office, and latterly, Director of the Office of Public Sector Information (OPSI). She is also the Director of Information Policy and Services at The National Archives, since the two organisations merged in 2006 together to bring a broad range of information management and policy responsibilities across the UK. Over this time Carol has promoted international co-operation between those responsible for legislation publishing around the world. Indeed, whilst Carol was in Washington, her colleagues were attending a Conference of the European Forum of Official Gazettes in Madrid. The Forum encourages greater working relationships between official gazettes of the European Union, to develop common approaches and share best practice. Next year's event will be hosted in London by OPSI.

It was as an official publisher of the statute book that Carol attended the GLIN Directors' Meeting in Washington on 23-26 September and formally signed the Charter. The OPSI website (<http://www.opsi.gov.uk>) provides the home for legislation in the UK. OPSI has been working with GLIN over the last year to integrate UK legislation into the GLIN database.

How legislation is published is paramount. The content itself is hugely important, as it sets out to define the rules for a system of government, establishing the basis for the system of justice, the scope of judicial powers and the role of the courts, granting the authority to the state for the raising of revenue through the collection of taxes and authorising the use of those revenues for public expenditure. It is because of the role of legislation in society that how it is made available matters so much. Citizens expect quick and easy access to the laws that govern them.

Transforming legislation

In her address at the GLIN meeting Carol spoke of a decade of transformation in how legal information is created, managed, disseminated and shared.

Characteristically, the UK has embraced the new whilst maintaining its traditions – so legislation is printed on vellum, as it has been for hundreds of years, alongside paper and online. There is likely to be an ongoing requirement for a printed rendition of new legislation although, the volumes have declined sharply over the last ten years. The fall in revenues from the sale for printed legislation has put pressure on the 'no cost to government' publishing model that has been in place over the last 12 years.

Carol said, "There is no doubt, the web is now the primary medium for publishing legislation. In the UK, 1.5 million people access the official legislation website each month. This has meant a transformation in services to meet the needs of users who are using these new technologies. The UK government's aim is to deliver world-class online legislation services."

Legislation in an e-world

Today, most people now find the legislation they seek using Google – the source of 80% of those 1.5 million visitors. A system called "page ranking" determines how far up the list of search results any particular web page will be. To ensure the official version of legislation in the UK is easy to find, OPSI has encouraged linking by third parties and has been careful to maintain those links. There are half a million of these so-called "back links" pointing to the OPSI website. This gives the official version of a piece of legislation a high Google page rank, which consequently helps make it easy to find. So important is quick and easy access to the official version of UK legislation from a search engine, that OPSI has made it a Key Performance Indicators. The proportion of that statute book available in "two clicks" gives an unambiguous assessment of how easy it is to find UK legislation.

The online user experience is important too. The UK government provides different views of legislation in HTML and PDF to meet the needs of different users. Great care is taken to represent the content correctly in HTML, as this is particularly important for people with disabilities, who may be relying on assistive technologies, such as screen readers. Extra metadata (data that describes data) has been added, for example to give the meaning of acronyms and abbreviations. High quality online legislation publishing needs to be supported by robust technology and expressive technical standards. Underpinning the legislation publishing in the UK is the Crown XML Schema for Legislation. This provides comprehensive encoding of all UK primary and secondary legislation and has been made freely available for others to re-use.

Many people need to know when a new piece of legislation has been published. OPSI has added a number of different data feeds to provide a system of alerts for new legislation. These have wide application. Whilst not primarily designed for this purpose, one of the feeds is being used to automatically update the GLIN database with new UK Acts of Parliament.

OPSI is also exploring the use of next generation semantic web technology. This is about creating a web of data that will enable more sophisticated services in future. This is very much work in progress but the aim is establish the role for legislative information on this new semantic web. International co-operation is key and OPSI is working through international standards bodies such as the World Wide Web Consortium and with leading research institutions in the field, such as the University of Southampton, to progress this agenda.

Reflecting on the GLIN Directors Conference, Carol said, "at a time of such rapid and disruptive change, never has the role of networks such as GLIN been more important. My colleagues and I look forward to sharing and learning from the experiences of GLIN members over the years ahead."



Charles Doyle, Acting Law Librarian of Congress, greets Carol Tullo at the Library of Congress.

Costa Rica: Presidents Sign Addendum

Agreement between the Judicial Power and the Legislative Assembly

An addendum to the Cooperation Agreement between the Legislative Assembly and the Supreme Court of Justice of Costa Rica was recently signed. Its objective is to make constitutional opinions compiled by the Jurisprudence Center available to the public through the Global Legal Information Network (GLIN).

GLIN seeks to store and maintain an updated database of primary sources of law as well as judicial decisions, with the purpose of facilitating the access of the public at large at no cost. This network aims at constituting a fundamental element for the exercise of human rights, the promotion of the Rule of Law, and the democratic form of government. It also seeks to improve the efficacy of the world's legal systems through the knowledge and dissemination of the legal materials of each of its 47 jurisdictions.

From this moment, the Constitutional Jurisprudence Center at the Constitutional Chamber compiles and systematizes the jurisprudence of the Constitutional Chamber of the Supreme Court of Justice and incorporates directly to its web site the voting or deciding parts and the full texts of its opinions, once these have been voted and signed by the corresponding Justices, becoming thus an associated Station of the Global Legal Information Network (GLIN) of Costa Rica.

Mission: Indonesia



MP Marzuki Darusman and Kersi Shroff, LoC.



Dome of the Constitutional Court



GLIN Demonstration at the Constitutional Court



Speaker of Parliament and U.S. Embassy representatives.



Launching GLIN Indonesia.

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From the Desk of Charles Doyle...



It was a pleasure for me to meet many of you at the 16th Annual GLIN Directors' Meeting in September. I learned a great deal listening to the reports presented by the Members. I was impressed by the fact that so many Members are entering into agreements with other institutions in their countries that will result in more—and more diversified—content that will increase the value of GLIN to our global community of users. I was also pleased to hear of the many efforts to promote GLIN—within Member institutions, to other organizations within nations, and across national borders as well. As I note below, some of this work has resulted in real possibilities for expanding GLIN membership.

In October with support from the GLIN Foundation, Janice Hyde attended a "Meeting of Experts on Global Co-operation on the Provision of Online Legal Information" at The Hague, The Netherlands. The meeting was convened by the Hague Conference on Private International Law which is considering the development of a new treaty to focus on global access to foreign law, particularly at the litigation stage. Representatives from various online legal information systems, including GLIN, private international law specialists, a few judges, and law library directors attended the meeting. By the end of two days, it appeared that The Secretariat of The Hague Conference was leaning in the direction of proposing a new treaty to facilitate access to foreign law. We will continue to communicate with the Secretariat to underscore the unique aspects of GLIN and the important role it plays in providing access to multinational legal materials.

In December, representatives from GLIN Central visited Indonesia to follow up on Indonesia's formal statement of its intent participate in GLIN. Visits were made to the Parliament of Indonesia, the Supreme Court, the Constitutional Court, and the University of Indonesia Law School among other institutions. The Speaker of the Parliament of Indonesia has designated a non-governmental legal research organization to serve as the GLIN station for the time being, but eventually the Parliament itself will assume responsibility for GLIN. A formal "launch" ceremony was held in the Parliament to officially open GLIN-Indonesia and we are delighted to welcome Indonesia to the Network.

Over the past month, GLIN Central has received two additional letters of intent to participate in GLIN: one from Sudan and the second from Chad. We would like to express our appreciation to GLIN-Kuwait for its efforts to promote GLIN in Sudan and to GLIN-Democratic Republic of Congo for encouraging Chad to join the Network. We have responded to both requests with information about the next steps toward membership and we will continue to follow up to assist in furthering their full participation in GLIN.

On February 11, 2009 the GLIN Foundation Board of Trustees will meet at the Law Library. We will ask them to provide a report of their activities that we will share in the next issue of the GLIN Global Journal.

Charles Doyle
Acting Law Librarian of Congress

Democratic Republic of Congo

Our trekkings for the popularization of GLIN
in the interior of the country

The DRC-GLIN station participated in a judicial forum organized at Matadi, capital of the Bas-Congo Province, on the theme "For a distributive justice in the Bas-Congo." The event took place from January 6 to 8, 2009.

Pursuant to an invitation of the Provincial Governor, I had the occasion to provide information to forum participants about the existence of GLIN and its advantages concerning the online availability of Congo's legal resources, as well as of other country members of the Network. The forum gathered civil and military judges, authorities responsible for the police and security services, and members of civil society. The topics analyzed related to freedom-restrictive measures, the scope of civil and military jurisdictions in repressive matters, juvenile justice, and the fight against corruption.

During the forum, participants mentioned again and again that their difficulties in accessing legal information, or simply their lack of knowledge of the texts of laws and regulations, were the cause of the bad administration of justice in the province. One of the solutions proposed to solve this problem of lack of documentation is to make available the resources of the glin.gov website, which contains most of the texts used by justice and police services. Fliers explaining access to the website were distributed during the forum.

Provincial authorities warmly welcomed the possibility that was offered to them by the DRC-GLIN station to publish their provincial edicts and decrees on the glin.gov website, with the aim that the citizens of the province may access easily those resources and thus contribute to a fast application of decentralization efforts.

Kinshasa, 27 January 2009

Maurice NYAMUGABO MPOVA
Director, RDC-GLIN Station



The First President of the Appellate Court of Matadi, the General Prosecutor at the General Prosecutor's Office of the Appellate Court of Matadi, and a female judge.

Mission: Indonesia Continued from Page 4



*University of Indonesia,
Law School.*



*Indonesian Center for Law
and Policy Studies*



Human Rights Commission.



House of Parliament, Indonesia



Constitutional Court



Supreme Court

GLIN the only source of this information for the public. The representative from Canada noted that the skills and knowledge gained through contributing their legal information to the GLIN database is being applied in their daily work of providing research and reference support to their parliament.

Other highlights that surfaced during the meeting include the efforts of some countries to apply the GLIN model at the sub-national level. Uruguay has begun to work with the “Departments” of that country to incorporate their laws into the database as some of these sub-national units produce more legislation annually than their national Legislative Assembly. A wide range of promotional initiatives were described—within specific organizations, to other institutions within nations, and across national boundaries. A user guide was prepared by the GLIN team in Mexico to assist legislators and a presentation about GLIN was given at a national meeting of legal librarians. Paraguay printed 5,000 promotional brochures which they distribute to, among others, all legislative committee staffers who are required to have basic training in searching GLIN. Finally, the Director from Kuwait discussed the work they have done to promote GLIN among the countries of the Arab Gulf region, resulting in Qatar’s presence at the meeting.

The members of GLIN offered a brief tribute to Dr. Rubens Medina, former Law Librarian of Congress and Chair of the GLIN Executive Council, for his role in creating and developing GLIN. The Supreme Court of Nicaragua presented him with a plaque that was inscribed with the text of a Supreme Court resolution in his honor. A book was given by the GLIN-Uruguay delegation with photographs of their legislature and other landmarks of their country. Charles Doyle, Acting Law Librarian of Congress, also presented a plaque on behalf of the members of the GLIN which was offered to honor Dr. Medina “in recognition of his extraordinary vision, inspiration, dedication, and personal leadership.”

A common theme that emerged at the meeting was the importance of offering reliable, trustworthy information. Carol Tullo, Director, Controller and Queen’s Printer, Office of Public Sector Information of the United Kingdom gave a presentation about her office’s work to republish legislation of the United Kingdom to make it more usable in the web environment. This work will enable an automated transmittal of U.K. legal information to GLIN beginning in October 2008. She stressed that a key aspect



of their republication efforts was convincing people that the information would be trustworthy and that the authenticity of the materials could not be impugned. GLIN members are equally committed to providing reliable legal information. Consequently, the next release of GLIN, scheduled for mid-October 2008 will incorporate new security features designed to ensure the authenticity and integrity of the data.



ATSC, the company contracted to design and enhance the GLIN system, gave an overview of these features including the use of digital certificates that will indicate to users that a given legal document has been certified as authentic by its contributor and that has not been altered since it entered the GLIN database. It is a tradition at the annual GLIN Directors’ meeting for new members to sign the GLIN Charter, the document that defines the cooperative working

relationship among GLIN members. The Charter signing is the final step required to become a voting member of the Network. At this year’s meeting, Patricia Portela, GLIN Director from the Dominican Republic, and Carol Tullo, representing the United Kingdom, signed the Charter signaling their formal accession into the Network.