Is an International Convention on the Rights of Older Persons Needed?

Sponsored by the ABA Commission on Law and Aging
In conjunction with the Section on International Law’s U.N and International Institutions Coordinating Committee

A growing number of international non-governmental organizations (NGOs) under a “Global Alliance for the Rights of Older Persons” have been pressing the need for a United Nations Convention on the Rights of Older Persons. The UN is now taking this issue seriously. The UN General Assembly, by resolution in December 2010, created The Open-Ended Working Group on Aging that is charged with considering the existing international framework of the human rights of older persons and identifying possible gaps and how best to address such gaps. This panel will provide a variety of perspectives and insights on the question of whether an international convention on the rights of older persons is needed.

Moderator:
- Kristin Booth Glen, New York County Surrogates Court, New York, NY

Speakers:
- Luz Marie Melon, Permanent Mission of Argentina to the U.N., New York, NY
- Craig Mokhiber, U.N. Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) in Geneva, Switzerland
- Susanne S. Paul, Executive Director, Global Action on Aging, New York, NY

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SPEAKER BIOGRAPHIES

Honorable Judge Kristin Booth Glen
Judge Glen is a graduate of Stanford and Columbia Law School, She clerked for the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit, and was in private practice for 10 years, doing civil rights, women and prisoners' rights, and mental health litigation until she was elected a judge in New York in 1980. She also taught at NYU, Hofstra and New York Law Schools, and in 1995, after service on both trial and appellate courts, left the bench to be the third Dean at the City University of New York School of Law. In 2005 she stepped down from the deanship and was elected Surrogate Judge in New York County. She has been active in aging issues for two decades, both domestically, including service, first as a member, then as Chair of the ABA Commission on Law and Aging, as a Board member of the Brookdale Center on Aging of Hunter College, and internationally, through her work with Global Action on Aging. Her special area of expertise is guardianship, and she currently has jurisdiction over guardianship of people with intellectual disabilities which has led her to efforts to reform applicable laws in New York and nationally. She has written and lectured widely and is the recipient of many awards including Columbia Law School's Lawrence Wien Prize for Social Responsibility, and the New York State Bar Association's Ruth Schapiro Award for Service to Women.
Craig Mokhiber heads the Development and Economic and Social Issues Branch at the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) in Geneva. A lawyer and specialist in international human rights law, policy and methodology, he has served the UN since January of 1992. As chief of the Human Rights and Development Team in the 1990s, Mokhiber developed OHCHR's early work on human rights-based approaches to development and human rights-sensitive definitions of poverty. He then represented OHCHR in mainstreaming efforts at UN Headquarters in New York through most of the 2000's, serving as both Officer-in-Charge and Deputy Director of the New York throughout the UN's human rights reform process, including in the lead up to the World Summit, and in the process leading to the establishment of the Human Rights Council. His fieldwork includes dozens of human rights missions. He was for five years the Chairman of the UN Task Force for Action Two (a global initiative to advance rights-based approaches and the building of national protection systems), and later Chaired the UN Democracy Fund consultative group. Craig Mokhiber has lectured and taught human rights, has authored several publications on human rights themes, and has served on the Secretariats of the World Conference on Human Rights (1993), the Commission on Human Rights (1995), the Working Group on the Right to Development (2001), and the World Summit (2005).

M. Luz Melon is currently the Deputy Coordinator for Group of 77 Affairs, Permanent Mission of Argentina, and Vice-Chair of the Commission on the Status of Women for its 55th session, 2010/2011. Ms. Melon joined the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 1999, and after graduating the National Institute for the Foreign Service covered issues such as democracy, human rights, social development and labor, and terrorism both in the UN and OAS at the Division of International Organization (2001-05). Her past positions include:
- (2005-2006) Represented Argentina in all levels of the negotiation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disability until its finalization: at the Working Group that negotiated the text, the Drafting Committee afterwards and the resolutions that adopted it
- (2006) Acting Legal Officer, Permanent Mission of Argentina
- (2007) Vice-Chair of the Third Meeting of State Parties to the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families
- (2010) Vice-Chair, Third Committee of the UN General Assembly, 65th session
- Legal Adviser officer, Office of the UN High Commissioner on Refugees in Buenos Aires – (Volunteer, 1998)
- Assistant Professor at the University of Buenos Aires, Law School, 1999-2004

She has translated the following titles into Spanish, published by GEDISA:
- Liberalism and the Limits of Justice by Michael J. Sandel
- Ethics in the Public Domain: Essays in the Morality of Law and Politics, by Joseph Raz
- Introduction to discourse studies, by Jan Renkema

Ms. Melon graduated in Linguistics and Law from the Universidad de Buenos Aires.
Susanne S. Paul has been working on aging policy at the UN for more than thirty years. She is President of Global Acton on Aging, an NGO founded in 1994, that works on aging policy worldwide. Global Action on Aging has advocated and mobilized NGOs since 2006 to work for a Human Rights Convention on Aging. She has served on several UN expert panels and participated in UN conferences in Cairo, Beijing, Copenhagen and Madrid. She chaired the NGO Committee on Aging for two terms and more recently serves as Co-Chair of the Subcommittee to Promote a Human Rights Convention. Susanne has spoken at many public events and written numerous articles as well as the book *Humanity Comes of Age*. She is a graduate of Northwestern University (BA) and Indiana University (MA).