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Supreme Court of Justice of Nicaragua and the Central American University Sign GLIN Collaborative Agreement

Managua, Nicaragua. January 31, 2008, Dr. Manuel Martínez Sevilla, Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Justice (CSJ—in Spanish) and Dr. Mayra Luz Pérez Díaz, Rector Magnificent of the Central American University (UCA in Spanish) came together to sign an agreement that would foment the growth of the Global Legal Information Network of Nicaragua, administered in Nicaragua by the CSJ.

Dr. Pérez Díaz said that the agreement would “reinforce the strategic ties that [were formalized] in ... 2006 with the signing of a collaborative ... agreement between the Supreme Court of Justice and the Central American University.” She spoke on how this agreement would promote the information derived from GLIN and the vital role the Central American University would play by supplying the information for the database.

She also said that she “believes that both institutions [CSJ and UCA] are firmly dedicated to working toward building a new citizenship [vision] for being Nicaraguan, which can only be wrought through the consolidation of an authentic rule of law which will also allow for the redefining of the identity of the Nicaraguan of the 21st century.” She stressed that “this new citizenship reinforced by a solid national identity, should also coalesce with institutional idiosyncrasies, with democratic idiosyncrasies, and with the necessary” institutions for the development of their country.

Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Justice of Nicaragua, Dr. Manuel Martínez Sevilla delivered a motivational speech; he greeted and acknowledged special guests: Dr. Manuel Arauz, Dean of the School of Legal Science of the Central American University; Dr. Margine Calderón, Director of the Department of Law.

Dr. Martínez Sevilla spoke about the commitment and connection that all lawyers have to the Central American University and *his* commitment, as well as the Supreme Court’s, to GLIN. He also touched on the legacy of the Internet and information technologies, which make it possible that courts become “current with the jurisprudence of other countries and for the universities to take a step forward in the development of their students.”

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Technical Update

Submitted by Charles Dove, GLIN Central

On October 1, 2007, the Global Legal Information Network (GLIN) began a new phase of technological development. The work planned for this development phase will create new features, provide enhancements requested by the Network's members, and upgrade the hardware and software to keep pace with the increasing demands upon the system. All of the GLIN development and enhancements are scheduled to take place over the next five years. This technology update however, will focus on the tasks that will be accomplished this year---the base year of October 1, 2007 to September 30, 2008.

New features

Additional languages--During the base year, the GLIN web interface will be translated into simplified Chinese in anticipation of the People's Republic of China becoming a member of GLIN. Additional translations of the interface may be required over the next four years depending upon the languages of new members.

Security--The level of security for GLIN data, from the contribution of new metadata with the related full text, to the delivery of the full text to the end-user, will be completely enhanced. The goal is to ensure users that the full text, as approved, has not been modified or altered in any way. The enhanced security will be implemented by the application of digital signatures to full text documents at the time of approval. Signatures will be applied using a digital certificate provided by a trusted third party. GLIN end-users will be able to verify the digital signature against the actual content received and ensure that the content was not modified since approval.

Data exchange capability--This feature will allow large data sets that can be mapped to the GLIN database to be electronically transferred. Work will include creating a prototype system for extracting metadata that is in XML format and mapping it to the appropriate fields in a GLIN system in the development of this prototype will be the United



Charles Dove, GLIN Central

record. The partner Kingdom's Office of Public Sector Information. Since imported data may not be in the standard format for GLIN at the time that it is transferred, a digital space for non-standard data must also be developed. Although some of the imported data may not meet the GLIN standard it is nevertheless, of value to the users of the GLIN. Therefore, a means for the user to be able to distinguish a record that fully meets GLIN standards from those that do not will be developed.

Enhancements suggested by GLIN members--The GLIN development team evaluates the suggested enhancements that are proposed by GLIN members. These suggestions are prioritized based upon perceived need, development cycle and funding. Here are those items that have received a high priority for development in the base year:

The ability to add an external link with a descriptive label to summary records of all contribution types;

The capability for stemming keywords during searches of the subject term index and;

The removal of scope notes from the default search of the subject term index to enhance search relevancy.

GLIN Foundation Report

Strategic Objectives - 2008

The Global Legal Information Network Foundation is pleased to present its Board of Directors for 2008:

Chairman: Jaime Nogales Torres

President: George Spina

Vice President for Development: Abdulla Al-Qahtani

Vice President for Organization: Joseph Pelton

Secretary: Mary Alice Baish

Treasurer: Claire Germain

The Board, at a recent meeting, discussed and adopted key strategic objectives for 2008: fundraising, public relations and board development.

It is hoped that a professional firm will be retained to develop a concise action plan to establish an endowment (fundraising) and broaden the visibility (public relations) of the Foundation. The Board has already interviewed one company and hopes to interview a second firm in early March 2008.

The Foundation is planning to capitalize on current connections with the Ambassador to the European Union, the Ambassador to the Arab League and the Ambassador to Australia. The purposes of these overtures are to:

- lay the groundwork for Board membership; explore the possibility of donations to the Foundation;
- broaden GLIN membership to the various areas of the world mentioned above
- establish relationships with the regional bank directors in countries targeted.

The Board has also agreed to a longer-term objective:

“Develop one roundtable discussion with key general counsels for the expressed purpose of developing contacts and for gathering feedback on the GLIN product.”

The method by which this is to be accomplished is by contacting the Association of Corporate Counsel in Washington, DC and exploring the possibilities with their Executive Director.

The Strategic Objectives for 2008 are concise and straightforward. The Board will work diligently to move these forward as the year unfolds and looks forward to providing updates to the GLIN members in this forum.



George Spina and Jaime Nogales Torres



From l to r: Joseph Pelton, Claire Germain and Abdulla Al-Qahtani

Ministry of Justice Officials Participate in GLIN Training

A special GLIN training session was held from December 3-7, 2007 for representatives from the Egyptian Ministry of Justice. The training was provided at the request of Chief Justice Amr Ahmed Gamal Eldine who will serve as the Director of GLIN-Egypt. The other participants in the training were Tamer Hosny Mahmoud Hashad and Khaled Mohamed Hanfi Aly Emam who will serve as GLIN Legal Analysts as well as Mohamed Ebrahim Mohamed Disoky and Sayed Mostafa Ahmed Masoud who will serve as GLIN Technical Specialists. The National Center for State Courts sponsored the visit and provided logistical support, including interpretation services, under the auspices of a U.S.A.I.D project on Administration of Justice.

In addition to the usual training sessions in which the participants learned GLIN standards and procedures, this group was the first to have a brief demonstration of the new online training program. It is anticipated that this computer-based training program will supplement the classroom training and also be used by new staffers if there is any turnover in the original GLIN team.

The training is an important step toward Egypt becoming a full member of the GLIN Network and capped a year in which Mr. Serry Mohamoud Hussein Siam representing the Ministry of Justice of Egypt, Mr. Sultan Borsaly, Deputy Secretary of the Ministry of Justice of Kuwait and Rubens Medina as Chair of the GLIN Executive Council signed a Memorandum of Understanding agreeing to work together to ensure Egypt's participation in GLIN. GLIN Central is pleased to welcome Egypt to the Network.



Back Row: Francisco Macias, Trung Le, Dante Figueroa, Andrew Weber, Patrick Ouellette, Dr. Medina (GLIN Central) and Sayed Mostafa Ahmed Masoud, Tamer Hosny Mahmoud Hashad and Mohamed Ebrahim Mohamed Disolcy (GLIN Egypt)

Front Row: Connie Johnson, Elenia Cole, Janice Hyde (GLIN Central) and Amr Ahmed Gamal Eldine, & Khaled Mohamed Hanfi Aly Emam (GLIN Egypt)

Editor's Note

Today at GLIN Central, the cityscape is covered in a layer of ice. I think of our GLIN stations that are in the midst of their summer season and wish we could visit. Eventhough it is cold outside, all are busy here running the GLIN operation. This issue features updates on our activities, especially the Technical Team and GLIN Foundation. Also, as you can see, I've changed the graphics of the Global Journal. As I stated in our first issue, this is an evolving work. Not only evolving in appearance, but also it will change in content to reflect the submissions and desires of all of you in the GLIN stations across the globe.

The next issue will cover the recent mssion trip to Costa Rica. Dr. Medina and Janice Hyde just returned and we will have news and photos from the trip. I would like to hear from you and feature news about your GLIN station and staff.



Best Regards,
LeeAnne Buckley
Editor
Lbuc@loc.gov

Send your story and photos to: Lbuc@loc.gov **Deadline for the April Issue: March 14, 2008**

A message from Dr. Medina...

Growth, a sign of health.

GLIN has been experiencing growth. This experience is viewed by many as a sign of good health.

It is interesting to consider some of the indicators of growth so that we may be even more inspired than we already are and to continue investing our time and effort on those aspects of our work that stimulate growth.

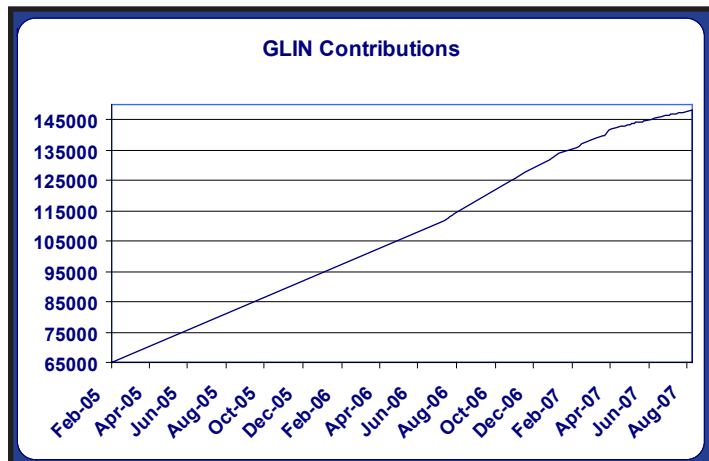
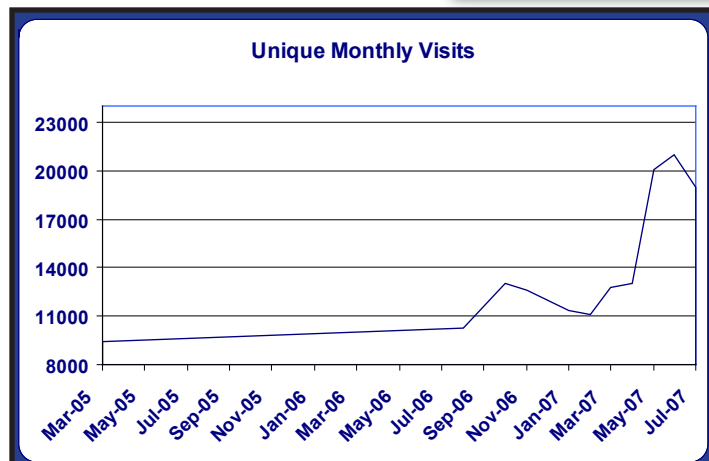
I have frequently spoken to you about the necessity to make the presence of our GLIN stations more recognizable within the organizations we operate. There is a good number of us who are part of the legislature, others are in the executive branch under a ministry or secretary of the government, and still others as a part of the judiciary or educational, research or non governmental organizations.

The first objective of a GLIN station should be to make sure that the authority we depend on becomes fully aware of the role of GLIN as a legal information service that offers its resources in direct support of the parent organization. As we work within the legislature, law makers should be demonstrated the value of the resources in GLIN to enrich their law making activities by including strong comparative legal background as a standard component of their bill drafting. A similar campaign of awareness is recommended for stations that operate under other parent organizations. Some of you have already been successful in doing this.

The second objective should focus on expansion. There are two components of this concept: 1) expansion of content, and 2) promotion of association with other local government agencies that may help to expand the content.

Content has been organized in GLIN in four categories known as "modules". Stations are trained and asked to start with primary sources. These include all instruments issued by competent authorities carrying force of law. Once the station is current and in the process of completing its records in this category, it is time to seek partnerships with other organizations that may be interested in sharing the work to expand the content by adding contributions to the next module or modules. There are very good examples of success in this regard among our members. The experiences show that the stations' Directors were more likely to succeed when moved by a conviction that the objectives of GLIN were indeed not only just and fair to commit to but also beneficial to their governments and citizens.

When the network started in 1992, the content of its database and technical infrastructure consisted of a relatively humble prototype. It was put in production to test the concept of a truly global cooperative of contributors based on the then rudimentary elements of the Internet. As



communication capabilities developed, GLIN took the necessary steps to expand its membership, data content and technical infrastructure.

GLIN Central has invested considerable resources in providing technical and administrative capabilities in support of these expansions, implementing detailed recommendations from the members. The new capabilities have elicited comments such as: robust, friendly, stable, trustworthy, stable and other complimentary words.

Members are encouraged to participate in the growth of GLIN as actively as possible. Indeed, our network is in good health.



GLIN and the Rule of Law

Prepared by Constance A. Johnson
Law Library of Congress
February 2008

*The rule of law
is “crucial to the
cause of peace.”*

Advancing the rule of law around the world is an important, international goal. It is recognized as such by international leaders. On November 20, 2007, U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon stated that upholding the rule of law is “crucial to the cause of peace.” He was speaking to parliamentarians from many nations at the Annual Parliamentary Hearing, sponsored by the United Nations in cooperation with the Inter-Parliamentary Union. The speech stressed the importance of four aspects of the international legal system, human rights, humanitarian provisions, criminal law, and refugee law. Describing how the rule of law benefits the world, the Secretary-General said, “It can help prevent or resolve conflicts and check weapons proliferation. ... It can protect people from genocide and other crimes against humanity. And it can aid the fight against terrorists and support efforts to limit the spread of communicable diseases.” (*Advancing the Rule of Law Is Vital Work, Says Ban Ki-Moon*, UN News, Nov. 20, 2007, UNNews@un.org.)

Ban went on to discuss in detail the U.N.’s rule of law initiatives, including work on international treaties, support for efforts to reform the justice sectors of post-conflict states, and aid to poor nations to help them move to sustained economic development. His speech also touched on climate change and on the situation in Lebanon, which he said has a “Parliament in crisis” and for which he urged international support of the lawmakers.

In his speech, Ban was elaborating on one of the basic principles of the Global Legal Information Network (GLIN), the need to promote the rule of law. GLIN is designed to further that goal by making law accessible to all, including the citizens of countries in which published sources of their own laws are hard to locate and those needing a broader understanding of a foreign country’s legal culture. By making comparative law research easier, GLIN is a tool for greater knowledge of other nations. It is also a tool for legislators. Models of legislation from other countries can be retrieved easily, in their original, official forms, by researchers using one of thirteen different language interfaces.

The U.N. General Assembly President, Srgjan Kerim, has talked about the importance of cooperation between the U.N. and legislators from around the world. He stated that parliamentarians are important as opinion-formers in their nations, and added, “[y]our support is essential to promote more effective international relations based on the rule of law.” Kerim added that he will be inviting parliamentarians to participate in important debates in the General Assembly, including discussions on climate change and anti-poverty programs. (*Id.*) Kerim’s stress on the key role played by legislators underscores the need for an international, easily searched, and reliable database of authentic texts of legal documents. That is exactly what GLIN aspires to be.

