



FOUNDATION FOR SUSTAINABLE
RULE OF LAW INITIATIVES

FSRI NEW YEAR UPDATE 2023

Dear Friends/Supporters:

The beginning of a new year is a good time to update you on our work during 2022, and discuss plans for 2023, which your generosity has made possible. Before doing so, I would like to acknowledge that FSRI in 2022 celebrated its 10th year anniversary, thanks to all of you and your wonderful support, and despite the many recent pandemic challenges. A big CONGRATULATIONS and THANK YOU are in order!

Program Update. In addition to our ongoing counseling of mediators and mediation centers around the globe, we completed our ambitious 10 month "signature" projects on Reflective Mediation Sessions in Brazil and India. Most significantly, I am happy to report that each of the host country sponsors have independently continued their own reflective mediation programs and thereby strengthened existing mediation centers, while building quality services, mediator communities and institutional stability. This past year, we facilitated some of these sessions, and made special presentations on mediation topics requested by the mediators, upon invitation of the host country. Once again, special thanks are due to our volunteer Board Member/Mediators Dana Curtis and Howard Herman, and volunteer Mediator Claudia Bernard, for their outstanding facilitation and coordination of these high quality and well-received sessions. As before, I also want to extend our appreciation to our colleagues in Brazil from ICFML- Liana Gorberg Valdetoro, Monica de Salles Lima, Renata Coehlo, Ana Maria Goncalves, and Mariana De Souza; and our colleagues in India- Laila and Tara Ollapally, -- for their invaluable assistance in making these programs possible.

In large part as a result of these programs, we have also been able to extend individual coaching to mediators on request, which continues to be an ongoing FSRI service to enhance quality delivery of services. One good example of this has been our direct counseling w Prof. Nudrat Piracha on building her mediation program in Pakistan. She is a truly amazing woman who is trailblazing mediation

in a very challenging environment. Similarly, our collaboration with Laila and Tara Ollapally at CAMP in India continues to be very productive.

Lastly, our work has resulted in some very interesting keynote speaking opportunities (virtually) for FSRI. For example, in August I gave a keynote presentation at the national mediation conference in Brazil, and then in September I spoke with lawyers/mediators in Pakistan about building mediation practices/services within their law firms. These audiences were quite sizable, enthusiastic and very engaged, providing a special opportunity to build quality mediation programs and services.

Quite amazingly, this work has proceeded smoothly on-line. Everyone has been admirably patient, understanding and supportive of these on-line programs, which have also enabled us to continue to develop our personal relationships in quite a wonderful way.

Mediation Curriculum Development

One major, new focus that has emerged over the past year has been the encouragement of mediation education and training in law schools, so that new generations of lawyers come into their profession with an understanding and some skills in alternative dispute resolution as a client service, not just traditional litigation. Last year, and again this month, FSRI sponsored a mediation competition at the MAIMS Law School. Board member Jennifer Brandt is again supporting that effort with counseling and serving as a Judge at the competition. Very significantly, we are encouraging the development of a specific mediation course curriculum in law and business schools. MAIMS has now set up a mediation “boot camp” program for its law students, and FSRI will be making 2 dedicated presentations (the art of “soft” mediation skills, and how to effectively overcome impasse in mediations to reach a successful resolution).

This new year we hope to work with several foreign law firms to help them build successful mediation practices as a client service, and to promote their greater utilization of mediation as a method of pre-litigation and post-litigation disputes. This is a major challenge, but a very important next step to institutionalize mediation in our host countries.

Travel Outlook – As you can imagine, we are very desirous of resuming our in-person delegations, and several invitations have been extended for 2023. We are

tentatively scheduling visits to India, Eastern Europe and Brazil, subject, of course, to what develops with covid. We will proceed with these plans, while monitoring pandemic developments as we go along.

Special thanks- All of this continuing work would not be possible without the support and guidance of our wonderful Board. Dana Curtis, Jay Folberg, Howard Herman, Pamela Merchant, Jennifer Brand, Hiro Aragaki, and Jan Schachter(!) have been a joy to collaborate with, and I especially want to thank them for their ongoing commitment to our mission, valuable advice and time.

As always, please feel free to contact me directly should you have any questions about our work or future plans. Thank you for your continued interest and support, and best wishes for a healthy and safe New Year..... Vic