

IOJT provides 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.

Traditionally, it was thought that judges already knew everything by the time they began hearing cases; they knew everything they needed to know. Additional training was thought to be unnecessary. This notion changed as the profession of judging began to be seen as a skill that needed to be learned and updated. As the idea of judicial training became more accepted, it also became clear that despite the many and various judicial systems around the world, there was a common denominator for the judicial profession – a need for adult-centred, effective training. That translated into the idea of creating an international organization to allow the exchange of information and ideas between 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. The participants signed a declaration outlining the importance of international cooperation between institutes for judicial training, and calling for the establishment of an international organization designated to this issue. This has become known as the "Sao Paulo Declaration". Signatories to the Sao Paulo Declaration were representatives from 13 countries from around the world. The goals for the organization were set out in the Sao Paulo Declaration as:

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.

Following the Sao Paulo meetings, representatives from 10 countries participated in a preparatory conference for the establishment of an international forum, held in Jerusalem in December 1999. That resulted in the "Jerusalem Declaration." 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 congress.

The Declaration also proposed that a conference be convened with the goal of establishing an international organization for judicial training.

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. In addition to Dr. Levin, the Statutes provided for three more officers – the Secretary-General, the Deputy Secretary-General and a Treasurer, and executive committee and 5 regional vice-presidents. It was agreed to hold the next conference in Ottawa, Canada.

The second international IOJT conference, under the theme "Judicial Education in a World of Challenge and Change" took place in Ottawa, Canada in October, 2004. It was organized by the Canadian National Judicial Institute. 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. As a result of the conference, many new members joined the IOJT and the organization reached 60 institute-members.

There have been international conferences:

- Barcelona, Spain in October, 2007
- Sydney, Australia in October, 2009
- Bordeaux, France in October, 2011
- Washington, United States in November, 2013
- Recife, Brazil, 2015 in November, 2015
- Manila, Philippines in November, 2017
- Capetown, South Africa in November, 2019
- Ottawa, Canada in November 2022
- Seoul, South Korea in November, 2024

Governance

The leadership model used by IOJT is a joint one. The president has overall responsibility for the organization and represents the organization. The president is a judge and, as such, has leadership of the educational content of programs. The Secretary-General is responsible for the administration and governance of IOJT. The position is an appointed one and is usually an officer in the institute that provides administrative and governance support to IOJT. The members of the Board of Directors are all volunteers and are required to be affiliated with a member institute.

IOJT has always had the support of a member institute for administrative and governance support. That role was played by Institute for Advanced Judicial Studies (Israel), the by the National Center for State Courts (United States) and currently the National Judicial Institute (Canada).