

The Lex:lead Group

Lawyers for Economic Advancement and Development

December 2010

Happy New Year from the Lex:lead Group!

We are happy to include you on our first newsletter! Lex:lead is both a new group (founded this year) but building on 10 years of work laid down by a group in whose footsteps we follow, the Global Challenge. The group came together with the idea of launching an annual scholarship program open to students in the 49 least developed countries, and, as we write, the first competition is underway. Exciting times!



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(USA/China)

Genesis. Lex:lead came together this year as an organization of international lawyers dedicated to economic development to see what a small group such as ours could achieve. While new this year, we build upon the work over the last 10 years of the International Bar Association-affiliated group, the Global Challenge. One initiative we thought we could achieve was to launch an annual scholarship competition for students in the 49 least developed countries (LDCs) providing both funding for students' educations and simultaneously giving the least developed countries an opportunity to contribute to the debate on law and development. We start with our own question: **How can law reduce poverty in the world's developing nations?**

International Bar Association Support and Partial Funding. The Lex:lead Group is grateful to the International Bar Association (IBA) for its support this year, particularly that of the Academic and Professional Development Committee (APDC) and the International Bar Association Foundation (USA). The APDC has supported Lex:lead from early on, publicized an announcement of the scholarship program in its September newsletter, and even nominated one of our first judges, Associate Professor Kay Maxwell of the University of Wollongong, Australia. The group hopes also to publish the winning student essays through the APDC. Separately, in October this year the International Bar Association Foundation (USA) generously approved US\$1,000 in funding for the group contingent upon its gaining Section 501(c)(3) charitable status which is expected before the end of the year.

Scholarship. With the promise of funding from the IBA this year the scholarship program was launched. The program is essay-based and assessed by a panel of independent judges sitting pro bono in January each year. Students are asked to pre-register with proof of citizenship in an eligible LDC and proof of enrollment in a law faculty in an LDC and are assigned a registration number to be used without other identifying information. Five countries were selected for an initial launch in 2010: **Liberia, Ethiopia, Tanzania, Cambodia, and Timor-Leste.**

AGM 29-30 January 2011. Winning students from this competition will be announced at our (first!) annual general meeting 29-30 January 2011 and award checks dispatched thereafter. Checks will be made out to the schools on the students' accounts and an undertaking is therefore also agreed with the schools for administration of the funding.

Judges. One of the most rewarding aspects in starting up the group has been how readily people have contributed to the cause. Lex:lead was delighted to confirm Iain Morley QC (UK), Hon. Merius Rusumo (Burundi), Hon. Jonathan Moses (New Zealand), Assoc. Prof. Kay Maxwell (Australia), Dr. J. Migai Akech (Kenya), Dr. Ina Anne Frost (Germany), Chief Charles Taku (Cameroon) and Ms Hongxia Liu (USA/China) as judges this year. The judges will independently assess the essays submitted with winning essays determined by an average of points assessed in at least two rounds. Lex:lead is grateful to the judges for giving up their time in this way and looks forward to working with them in January when the first essays are received.

Fundraising. Lex:lead was similarly delighted at the generosity of donors. Special mention goes to **Ms Sabine Midderhoff** of Germany for her personal contribution of US\$500 (sponsoring one full scholarship), and to the **IBA Foundation (USA)** for the funding promised. Individually the contributions of each of the board members, in both time and funding, made launching this program possible. A full listing of this year's donors is available on the website.

Going forward: 2011 and beyond. Lex:lead was founded with the aim of bringing the scholarship program to as many of the least developed countries as possible. In 2011 we hope to raise US\$10,000 in scholarships and to open the competition across the 49 LDCs. The group will reach out to law firms and companies to each sponsor at least one scholarship of US\$500 in that institution's name. Lex:lead plans to host 1-2 events next year to introduce the board and program as a complement to its fundraising and is also looking to launch an advisory board to bring additional leadership opportunities into the group.

Patrons and Benefactors. In addition to any money raised through corporate sponsorships, donations of any size – even US\$20-50 – help us tremendously to launch the program and provide scholarships to students in the LDCs. We would be happy to add your name to our website as a **donor**. Donors contributing US\$100 or more will be acknowledged as **benefactors**. With US\$500 or more you will be considered for **scholarship patronage**.

There are three ways to support Lex:lead:

1. PayPal (credit card payments). By clicking on the link on our website you will be directed to our PayPal account where you can make donations that will be billed to your credit card. For most countries they accept Visa, MasterCard, American Express, and Discover. The link has been tested and found to be safe; that means we can accept donations from all over the world.



2. Old-fashioned checks. Checks payable to **Lex:lead** can be mailed to us as below. Please be sure to include your **full name** and contact details including street address and email so we can send a thank you.

3. Wire transfers. Not very cost-effective on smaller amounts (which is why we set up the PayPal account), but can be done. If you wish to wire a donation please email us at lexlead@yahoo.com for instructions.

Structure. Lex:lead is incorporated as a New York not-for-profit corporation and applying for Section 501(c)(3) tax-exempt charitable status with the US Internal Revenue Service.

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On behalf of students in the least developed countries, thank you and Happy New Year.

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