Notes from the Chair

By Julia Roig

Dear ACR International Section Members,

As I prepare to end my year as Chair of the International Section, I find myself reflecting on the many years that I have been involved with ACR (and SPIDR before that), and taking stock of all the hard work we have put into this association. Because the organization is going through a period of serious transition and redefinition, I have heard many members question the continued relevance of ACR and ask whether this merged group can serve the growing diversity of interests within the field of conflict resolution. What do we gain as a collective that we are unable to attain as smaller, more focused sub-sections of the conflict resolution field? We in the International Section have been answering this same question on a global level, and have come to the clear conclusion that it is by joining forces with our colleagues across the spectrum of concentrations and across the globe that we will “be the change we want to see in the world.”

This past year, I have found myself in the position of defending the idea of closer coordination and cooperation amongst colleagues and organizations internationally, as the Section seeks to broaden and formalize our relationships with conflict resolution practitioners in other geographic areas of the world. Is it not inherently a good thing to join together as a network? What does a family mediator in South Africa really have in common with an environmental dispute resolution professional in India? And why should the ACR International Section be a conduit for bringing them together? As the Section has

Continued on Page 4
Features

Notes from the Chairs

• Julia Roig

Introducing Circle Processes in Columbia

• Eva Marzewski

Innovations in International Conflict Resolution:

Understanding Genocide at the Gut Level

• Sabrina Dove and Ellen Yamshon

Open Space Technology at ACR’s Latin American Network for Conflict Resolution at Los Andes University in Bogotá Colombia.

• Margarita Canal

The Handbook on Democratic Dialogue

• Maureen Mayne, UNDP

Departments

IDC Communique

International Networking Update

International News

2007-2008 Section Leaders

Cristina Franco Colombia/USA
Section Chair
FrancoMediation@aol.com

Kathleen Coogan Brazil/USA
Chair-Elect
internationaltransitions@gmail.com

Julia Roig Serbia/USA
Immediate Past Chair
juliaroig@hotmail.com

Cristina Cavalli Argentina
At-Large Council Member
criscavalli@infivia.com.ar

Janet Murdock USA
At-Large Council Member
jldock@cox.net

Eva Marzewski Canada
At-Large Council Member
marszewski@aol.com

Gail Ervin USA
Website Coordinator
gail@ervin.com

Kyra Buchko Moldova/USA
Regional Networks
kyrabuchko@gmail.com

Jennifer Brower Malawi/USA
International Development Committee (IDC)
jbrower424@gmail.com

David Plumb USA
Newsletter Editor
dplumb@sfcg.org
Introducing Circle Processes in Colombia

by Eva Marzewski

During ACR’s regional conference in Bogotá, Colombia we sought to provide a series of presentations on a variety of conflict resolution subjects, including specific examples of innovations in Latin America, as well as practical skills-building sessions. My presentation at the conference was intended to provide participants with a brief overview of circle processes and allow for them to experience the process for themselves. I began by describing circle process as a structured group dialogue wherein the participants sit in a circle and use a Talking Piece which is passed from person to person in order, not across the circle, thus providing each participant with an equal opportunity to participate in the dialogue, share their perspective, concerns and interests and to listen to others.

My lecture detailed the fundamentals of a Circle process and its many applications, from dialogue and decision-making to conflict resolution and restorative justice. For example, in Toronto, “Youth Circles” is a restorative justice Project which is aimed at helping youth at risk of joining gangs and dealing with drugs and diverts them from the justice system into a circle process which requires them to take responsibility, make amends and get back to school. The lecture was followed by an experiential workshop which introduced each of the conference participants to the use of the Talking Piece. We broke into groups and used bright fluorescent yellow highlighters which were promptly re-named a TuTu, short for “Tu Turno” or “your turn”!

Upon de-brief, the most frequently noted challenges were that each circle member had to be patient, to remember what they wanted to say, and that the group conversation in the circle was less spontaneous. On the positive side, most participants concurred that everyone had a much better chance at benefiting from an equal share of ‘air space.’ They felt that each had an equal opportunity to speak and to be heard, and acknowledged that group members were respectful and appeared to listen carefully, and that the ensuing dialogue was rewarding.
struggled to define our Regional Networks Initiative, we have had to clarify for ourselves and our global counterparts why we should come together. The answer we reached is that we want to create a mechanism for the field to grow and to create a platform to build relationships and exchange experiences in order to strengthen and support our work. And as we continue to build a stronger network of conflict resolvers, we want to have a louder voice to advocate for new and peaceful processes to resolve problems in the world. This is clearly the same justification for ACR to continue to merit our support and participation. It is by naming and recognizing that we have a common mission that we realize how we are stronger as the sum of our parts.

The question of “why” we should come together as a field has perhaps not been as difficult as the “how.” The ACR International Section is but one actor on the global stage of other networks and groupings of conflict resolution practitioners, so how do we establish legitimacy to convene or promote a larger, cohesive network? What is the best, most respectful and equitable structure for a regional networks initiative? How do we ensure that this is a vibrant, active network with ongoing meaningful interaction? These are all challenges that we continue to face and the answers are still being debated amongst ourselves and with our colleagues around the world. But the International Section is committed to figuring it out. We believe - I believe - that it is worth our time and effort both as professionals and citizens of the global community to continue to struggle to find the best way to organize ourselves as mediators, peace-makers, arbitrators, facilitators, teachers, managers, or program directors to support each other, learn from each other, and jointly promote the use of alternative processes for resolving conflict at the local, national and international level.

As ACR has faced challenges this past year regarding how to refine its structure to best meet the needs of its members and to remain relevant to the field, the International Section has been a source of energized leadership, remaining committed to the fundamental principles of collaboration, inclusion and innovation within the organization. This year we launched an e-membership pilot program to invite our colleagues from Latin America to join ACR virtually. Over 50 new members signed up at our first ever co-sponsored international conference in Bogotá, Colombia in June 2007. The Regional Networks Initiative is slowly taking shape, with vibrant networks in Southern Africa, India and Eastern Europe amongst others. As a Section, we continue to promote quality international programming at the Annual Conference with the third annual International Day this year in Phoenix. We also actively support ACR’s commitment to diversity by organizing the Spanish Track during the conference to allow for Spanish-speaking practitioners from both abroad and the U.S. to actively participate in our meetings. The Section’s International Development Committee has spent the entire year finalizing a comprehensive directory of professionals and organizations working in conflict resolution and development, and will sponsor the second annual award for leadership in the development field. It has been a spectacular year.

For over 10 years I have been volunteering my time for this association, either through the local Chapters or Sections, and I remain committed to the idea of a broad coalition of conflict resolution professionals coming together.

PLEASE JOIN THE INTERNATIONAL SECTION NOW!!

If you are not already a member of the International Section, please contact the International Section Chair above. Section dues are $15 US, and support the many ongoing activities of the Section. Please join your colleagues in supporting a culture of conflict resolution throughout the world!

Continued on Page 12
Innovations in International Conflict Resolution: Understanding Genocide at the Gut Level

by Sabrina Dove and Ellen Yamshon

We tend to avoid or over-intellectualize genocide, a concept which is too horrific to consider on a deep personal level. The Rwanda Deck ©2007, a set of “playing cards” depicting main themes from the 1994 Rwandan genocide, is designed to engage “players” on a visceral rather than a distant intellectual level by simulating the profound loss associated with genocide.

Powerful visual prompts help genocideteachers and facilitators motivate audiences to consider topics associated with genocide, which historically engender sympathy but inaction. During a facilitated exercise, with the deck of cards used as prompts, participants reflect upon and write down the most important people, property, activities, and rights they have in their lives. Next, these people and things are “taken away” and participants are asked to consider the consequences of their “losses” and their emotions. Facilitators encourage participants to see parallels between their imagined losses and the reality of what survivors of genocide have lost.

Co-creators Ellen Yamshon and Sabrina Dove, member of the ACR International Section’s International Development Committee, collaborated on the Rwanda Deck earlier this year. Yamshon, who provided the intellectual content and concepts for the Rwanda Deck, was a recent Fulbright scholar in Rwanda. Dove, a visual artist, graphically interpreted Yamshon’s concepts into a series of linoleum carvings and oil prints. Each card in the deck illustrates different themes from genocide such as trauma, losing the ability to speak in one’s mother tongue, loss of family, loss of trust in one’s government, and loss of reliable media.

The deck has been used to facilitate discussions with Holocaust survivors, mediators, social workers, and lawyers. The companion Rwanda Deck Workbook will be published soon. Yamshon and Dove will present a workshop on how to use the Rwanda Deck to facilitate understanding about genocide and how it effects us all at the international Rwanda conference, “Post Genocide Rwanda: Achievements and Challenges,” at California State University, Sacramento, November 2-3, 2007. Yamshon and Dove are available to present on how to use the cards and to adapt the cards for other topics involving profound loss including other genocides, mass violence and aging (elder issues).

For more information on the Rwanda Deck and to see the images, go to:
http://web.mac.com/sabrinadove1

For more information on the Rwanda conference go to:
My name is Jennifer Brower and it is with great pleasure and enthusiasm that I introduce myself to all of you as the new International Development Committee (IDC) Chair, taking over from Kathleen Coogan at the end of October, 2007. I have been an active member of ACR and the IDC for over a year, and I have enjoyed providing support to this initiative to bring together conflict resolution professionals in the development field.

I am currently living in Lilongwe, Malawi, as I recently accepted an International Development fellowship. Originally, I intended to work in the HIV/AIDS department, but am thrilled that I was able to move to the Justice and Peace Commission department. Before moving to Lilongwe, I resided in Washington DC for 9 years, where I worked in a variety of capacities ranging from social justice/service non-profit work to federal government contracting with Housing and Urban Development. I also mediated part-time for the DC Superior Court.

I look forward to getting to know all of you, and your potential interests in the IDC. I have learned a lot about many IDC members through the creation of the IDC Networking Directory for 2007, which will be released this month. The directory will offer a great opportunity to bring IDC members closer, and develop ideas on how to engage one another in conflict resolution work and opportunities.

Please feel free to contact me at jbrower424@gmail.com or one of our IDC Leadership Co-Chairs David Plumb (dplumb@sfcg.org) and Merrick Hoben (mhoben@cbuilding.org).

The IDC is pleased to announce that Partners for Democratic Change (Partners) has been selected as the recipient of its 2007 Outstanding Leadership Award. The award honors exceptional work promoting conflict resolution in development projects around the world. The award aims to celebrate leadership in the field and draw attention to the importance of conflict resolution and conflict management in creating stronger democracies and economies. Judge Gladys Alvarez of Argentina received the award in 2006 for her successful efforts to spread mediation throughout Latin America.

Partners is an international organization committed to building sustainable local capacity to advance civil society and a culture of change and conflict management worldwide. Since 1989 Partners has conducted trainings, intervened in disputes, developed academic materials, or provided other services to representatives from more than 50 countries and provinces throughout the world. Partners has helped establish independent and locally staffed, managed and registered Centers for Change & Conflict Management in Albania, Argentina, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Georgia, Hungary, Jordan, Kosovo, Lithuania, Mexico, Peru, Poland, Romania and Slovakia.

Ray Shonholtz, the Founder and President of Partners, will accept the award on behalf of Partners during the International Section meeting at the ACR Annual Conference in Phoenix.
International Networking Update

The International Section’s Regional Networks Initiative continues to expand and evolve, with ACR Network Coordinators (NCs) working to facilitate linkages among practitioners and conflict resolution organizations across the globe. Networks are active in eight countries/regions, including the Caribbean, Central America, Eastern Europe, India, Mexico, Middle East, South America, and Southern Africa. For the benefit of ACR members and our colleagues worldwide, NCs are compiling information about the development and practice of conflict resolution in their regions, focusing on four main categories: organizations and individuals; legislation and texts; links to resources; and upcoming events. Coming soon, the Section website will feature individual ACR Network web pages which will offer visitors regularly updated information and useful resources for each region.

While the concept of building networks of conflict resolution organizations is not novel, the idea is gathering some fresh momentum. In Europe, for example, a new “network of networks” has recently emerged. The European Mediation Network Initiative (EMNI) (www.europemediation.eu/en/European-Mediation-Initiative) was launched last month at a mediation conference in Vienna sponsored by the European Institute for Business Mediation. EMNI’s goal is to provide a network for organizations interested in the use of mediation in Europe. Seeking to complement, not compete, with existing groups, EMNI intends to be a clearinghouse for pan-European information on mediation, and to host cross-disciplinary European mediation conferences.

In other parts of the world, conflict resolution networking groups have organized themselves in a variety of ways. The aim of the Asia Pacific Mediation Forum (www.unisa.edu.au/cmrg/apmf) is to facilitate the exchange and development of knowledge, values and skills of mediation among the diverse countries and cultures in the Asia Pacific Region. The African Initiative for Mediation (www.mediate.org.za) provides training, research and community involvement in order to promote mediation as a primary mode of dispute resolution in Africa.

By tapping the combined experience, commitment and leadership of these organizations and others across the globe, the Section now seeks to enhance and in some regions modify the structure of the Regional Networks Initiative. The International Section leadership seeks your participation as we continue to refine the development and promotion of a global network of networks. If you would like to be connected with one or more Networks, or can assist in facilitating connections with networking organizations in other parts of the world, please contact the Regional Networks Committee Chair, Kyra Buchko, at kyrabuchko@gmail.com or any Network Coordinator:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Coordinator(s)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Caribbean</td>
<td>Kumar Hathiramani (Barbados) <a href="mailto:adr_bgi@yahoo.com">adr_bgi@yahoo.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central America</td>
<td>Ruth Lopez (Costa Rica) <a href="mailto:rlopez@uci.ac.cr">rlopez@uci.ac.cr</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eastern Europe</td>
<td>Kyra Buchko (Moldova) <a href="mailto:kyrabuchko@gmail.com">kyrabuchko@gmail.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>India</td>
<td>Lisa Singh (US) <a href="mailto:l.j.singh@gmail.com">l.j.singh@gmail.com</a></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Usha Devrajan (India) <a href="mailto:usha_dev51@yahoo.com">usha_dev51@yahoo.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mexico</td>
<td>David Lopez (US) <a href="mailto:dtlopez@lopezlawfirm.com">dtlopez@lopezlawfirm.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle East</td>
<td>Lynn Cole (US) <a href="mailto:lhc@lynncole.com">lhc@lynncole.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southern Africa</td>
<td>Gina Barbieri (South Africa) <a href="mailto:gina@mediate.org.za">gina@mediate.org.za</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South America</td>
<td>Margarita Canal (Columbia) <a href="mailto:itacanal@gmail.com">itacanal@gmail.com</a></td>
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Open Space Technology at ACR’s Latin American Network for Conflict Resolution at Los Andes University in Bogotá Colombia.

by Margarita Canal, Coordinator of ACR’s Latin American Regional Network

In June 2007 the International Section of ACR and the University of Los Andes co-hosted the first Latin American Forum for Conflict Resolution in Bogotá, Colombia with support from the German Aid Agency, GTZ. More than 400 people from all over Latin America (Argentina, Guatemala, Ecuador, Bolivia and mainly Colombia) attended this important conference and participated in a day of discussions using the “Open Space Technology” to create ACR’s Latin American Regional Network.

During the first two days of the conference, leading academics and practitioners from the region presented on various subjects, including an inspiring keynote address by Jean Paul Lederach on using networks and “webs” to promote peace and conflict transformation within communities. The third day of the Forum was organized to offer participants a format for an open discussion of how to create the Latin American Network for Conflict Resolution. Facilitators from the University of Los Andes used the Open Space Technology to solicit the input from more than 70 attendees to share experiences and discuss “What do we need to do to create a Latin American Conflict Resolution Network?”

What is Open Space Technology?

Open Space Technology (OST) is, as Harrison Owen says, a self-organized space. It is also chaotic, productive and fun. No one is in control; diversity becomes a resource to be used, and personal empowerment a shared experience. Open space conferences can be done in one day, but the most powerful go on for two or three days, or longer. Participants gather together around an initial question or invitation to share experiences. Open Space Technology is also a delightful, useful tool for any group of people who are really interested in exploring something that they all care deeply about.

A whirlwind of activity is guided by a handful of simple principles that are explained to all participants who sit in a circle that “opens the space for discussion”. The most basic principle is that everyone who comes to an Open Space conference must be passionate about the topic and willing

Continued on Page 9
to take some responsibility for creating things out of that passion. The essence of Open Space is based on four principles and one law:

1) Whoever comes are the right people
2) Whatever happens is the only thing that could have.
3) Whenever it starts is the right time.
4) When it is over it is over.

The Law of Two Feet: “If you find yourself in a situation where you aren’t learning or contributing, go somewhere else.” This law causes some participants to flit from activity to activity. Owen calls them “bumblebees” because they cross-pollinate all the workshops. He also celebrates participants who use The Law of Two Feet to go off and sit by themselves referring to them as “butterflies”, because they create quiet centers of non-action for stillness, beauty, novelty or random conversations to be born.

In this case, the 70 participants of the OST in Bogotá proposed more than 20 topics to be discussed related to the question: “What do we need to do to create a Latin American Conflict Resolution Network?” These topics were then grouped together in order to be able to have group discussions around them. During the second half of the day the participants discussed the following topics with regards to the Latin American Network for Conflict Resolution:

- Networking and Collaborating
- Managing the Network
- Communication of the Network
- Child & Youth Peace Education
- Values
- Conflict Resolution Tools

Each group had 2 or even more leaders or participants that had proposed the topic and lead the discussions, documented them and registered the commitments of the participants. For instance the group that shared experiences and views regarding the best way to establish an effective channel of communication between
In March of 2007, the UNDP, OAS, CIDA and IDEA International launched their Handbook on Democratic Dialogue. During the Conflict Resolution Forum of the Latin American Network in Bogotá, a brief presentation was made of the manual, highlighting the role and importance of dialogue processes, including the conceptual framework and methodology and why the manual is important in building the field of democratic dialogue.

The Handbook on Democratic Dialogue aims to provide decision-makers, dialogue promoters and practitioners with a practical guide on how to organize, facilitate and assess dialogue processes. This user-friendly guide aims to help countries and societies answer complex social, economic and political challenges through dialogue. It combines conceptual and practical knowledge, while providing practitioners with an extensive repertoire of relevant tools, experiences and approaches adapted to the issue at stake, the local context and the stakeholders involved. More than a compilation of techniques, the Handbook provides the reader with a ‘how to’ guide to organize a tailor-made dialogue from assessment to evaluation.

The first part of the Handbook defines “what” dialogue is and is not. It also clarifies the principles underpinning democratic dialogue and how dialogue can contribute to a strengthened practice of democracy. The second part answers the ‘How to’ of dialogue. It provides the reader with essential knowledge on how to assess whether dialogue is the right approach, how to convene it and with whom. It offers options on how to design and implement dialogue on the ground. It also presents guidance for the monitoring and evaluating of these processes and how to best adapt them to specific contexts. The final chapter offers a variety of case studies, each of them describing and analyzing different types of dialogue experiences and assessing critical lessons learned in these processes.

The Handbook on Democratic Dialogue is the result of a joint effort of four international institutions actively engaged in democratic dialogue: CIDA, International IDEA, OAS and UNDP. These organizations united their effort in systematizing dialogue experiences, distilling best practices and offering new guidelines and options to practitioners. The Handbook was written by dialogue practitioners for dialogue practitioners.

Democratic dialogue processes help strengthen democratic institutions by creating new occasions for interaction between institutions and their citizens, especially citizens that are traditionally not empowered to voice their concern, needs and interests. Dialogue is a participatory, inclusive process to help solve complex social, economic and political issues that existing institutions and formal channels are not adequately addressing. It fosters understanding among participants and seeks to identify new options and develop shared visions while promoting a culture of participation and democracy.

“The Handbook on democratic Dialogue is meant as a living document to be used by practitioners to develop and sustain the practice of dialogue.”

Continued on Page 11
the members of the network suggested the following lines of action:

1. Investigate
2. Explore
3. Gather
4. Promote

After the sub-group meetings ended, the whole group reunited again in a big circle to give a closure to this event and also make some public commitments in regards to the creation of the Latin American Network for Conflict Resolution. The next steps and commitments mentioned by the participants included:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Next Steps</th>
<th>Commitments</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Promote diversity, different cultures and institutions</td>
<td>Avoid any kind of discrimination</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keep in touch</td>
<td>Integrate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Share commitments</td>
<td>Share information and resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Generate a yahoo group for Peace Education sub-group called: <a href="mailto:Reducadores222@yahoogroups.com">Reducadores222@yahoogroups.com</a>, password: araña2007</td>
<td>Make a list of international networks that might contribute to the Latin American Conflict Resolution Network</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The University of Los Andes, ACR, and the Chamber of Commerce were proposed as possible leaders of this process</td>
<td>Define roles and responsibilities</td>
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<tr>
<td>Facilitate spaces of discussion of different types of conflicts</td>
<td>Investigate and multiply knowledge on citizen participation and conflict resolution</td>
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<tr>
<td>Generate shared lessons</td>
<td>Promote the network and motivate future members</td>
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<tr>
<td>Discuss the importance of the network’s communication and who is responsible for it</td>
<td>Think about strategies and mechanisms to work the different aspects of conflict</td>
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<tr>
<td>Acknowledge the contributions of the network’s members and identify the ones needed in order to create the network</td>
<td>Generate strategic alliances to communicate and share experiences</td>
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<tr>
<td>Work on the network’s vision</td>
<td>Analyze other networks and share this information</td>
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<td>Manage a peaceful language and establish some common rules</td>
<td>Collaborate and provide support from Argentina</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Share information about the Forum as a starting point</td>
<td>Contribute by providing infrastructure support to the network</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Put in place ways of communicating within the network</td>
<td>Share this experience with our colleagues that did not participate in the forum</td>
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</table>

practitioners with the substantive input of organizations promoting dialogue worldwide. Numerous renowned practitioners also directly contributed to the document. The Handbook on Democratic Dialogue is meant as a living document to be used by practitioners to develop and sustain the practice of dialogue.

The Handbook is available at: [www.democraticdialoguenetwork.org](http://www.democraticdialoguenetwork.org)

Julia Roig and Lewis Dabney (Immediate past Chair) with Luis Sanchez, the President of the National Association of Equity Conciliators of Colombia
Notes from the Chair

Continued from Page 4

together to enhance our work and promote the field both within the U.S. and internationally. The International Section has been an exciting venue for me to work towards this goal, and I have benefited both professionally and personally from my involvement in ACR. I encourage all of you to recommit yourself to the vision that ACR and the International Section holds for us all, and actively support all our efforts to create a vibrant and successful network of colleagues and friends both within ACR and beyond.

The Association for Conflict Resolution (ACR) is a professional organization based in the United States dedicated to enhancing the practice and public understanding of conflict resolution. ACR represents and serves a diverse national and international audience that includes more than 6,000 mediators, arbitrators, facilitators, educators, and others involved in the field of conflict resolution and collaborative decision-making. The International Section is one of 18 of ACR’s professional interest/topical Sections which provide members with a way to meet other professionals in their special areas of interest.

The International Section is made up of ACR members from over 40 countries around the world. The Section is committed to honoring and building understanding of the differences in cultures, language and approaches to effective conflict resolution and building peaceful coexistence. We are actively developing international networks, connecting members and colleagues to resources and member expertise, building global awareness both within ACR and of ACR, and promoting capacity building for the effective resolution of disputes and conflict management in all nations and regions of the world.

NEWS

Asian Mediation Association Forming to Address Commercial Disputes (9/19/07)

Mediation centers in Singapore, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines are joining together to form the Asian Mediation Association (AMA) in response to increasing trade and cross border activity among countries and businesses in the region. The AMA will pool resources and provide a regional infrastructure for conflict management and resolution.

International Reinsurance Protocol Promotes Mediation (7/9/07)

An international reinsurance protocol for resolution of disputes between reinsurers and reinsureds has been launched by the CPR Institute (the International Institute for Conflict Prevention and Resolution), based on work with insurance companies in both the London and American markets. As in the U.S., mediation is emerging as a preferred method of resolution in the London insurance market, with insurers increasingly dissatisfied with the uncertainties, costs and delays of both arbitration and litigation. The International Reinsurance Industry Dispute Resolution Protocol sets out a comprehensive method for identifying reinsurance disputes early in the process and a short timeline for information exchange, quickly followed by negotiation and mediation as needed.

Singapore Settlements No Longer Automatically Enforceable as Judgments (7/9/07)

Singapore’s High Court held that settlement agreements reached through mediation do not have the authority of court judgments, invalidating the court order a claimant’s attorney obtained from a court registrar to enforce a settlement. Singapore’s Subordinate Court promptly ruled that mediated settlements reached through the country’s Primary Dispute Resolution Centre may be endorsed by courts in order to be enforced as judgments. Questions remain about the status of existing judgments resulting from settlements, as nearly 10,000 cases are mediated a year.

Scotland And The UK Negotiate A New Arrangement (6/24/07)

In a joint statement issued on 6/23/2007 by the Leader of the House of Commons at Westminster and the Presiding Officer of the Scottish Parliament it was announced that negotiations had been successfully completed between the two parliaments on the new constitutional arrangement between Scotland and the rest of the United Kingdom. The statement recorded that the guiding principles of co-operation and reciprocity which underscored the historic agreement heralded a new era of prosperity and recognition of mutual interests from which all would benefit.