

**SECOND MEETING OF THE INTERNATIONAL JUDICIAL DISPUTE  
RESOLUTION NETWORK (JDRN)**

**MONDAY, 22 MAY 2023 & TUESDAY, 23 MAY 2023**

**UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF  
NEW YORK**

**Welcome & opening remarks by JDRN Co-Chairs on Day 1**

**Speaker: Chief Judge Laura Taylor Swain from the United States District Court for the Southern District of New York**

Good morning and welcome everyone. I am so happy to welcome you here, together with the conference Co-Chair, Chief Justice Menon of Singapore, to the Second Meeting of the International Judicial Dispute Resolution Network. I'll just start with a few words about the Southern District. We are fondly known as the Mother Court because we were the first Federal Court to hold a session under the new Constitution and the Judiciary Act of the United States in 1789, which is a long time ago for America. I realise there are some other countries who claim longer history than that, but for America, that's early history.

Our first session preceded the first session of our supreme court by a few months and our court has sat continuously in the 234 years since. We currently hold trial court sessions of the district court in three courthouses:

- (i) The Daniel Patrick Moynihan Courthouse, in which we sit now, is named for Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan, a distinguished academic, diplomat and politician, who represented New York in the United States Senate for 24 years.
- (ii) Across the street, we occupy the Thurgood Marshall Courthouse, which is named to honour the first African American member of the Supreme Court of the United States. Justice Marshall was a trailblazer in every sense. He led the team of lawyers of the NAACP Legal Defense Fund, who fought racial segregation laws to open up education and public facilities to people of color. He became the first African American member of the United States Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit, which sits in the Marshall Courthouse, and he served as the Solicitor General of the United States before his appointment to the Supreme Court in 1967.
- (iii) Our courthouse in White Plains, which is about 30 miles north of here, is our newest one, and it is named for the Honourable Charles L. Brieant, a former Chief Judge of the Southern District, who had a distinguished career as a lawyer and public official in Westchester County, where the Courthouse is located, before beginning his 37 years' service as a Judge of this court.

I am delighted that many international delegations are attending this conference, both in person and remotely. I welcome the member delegations from the Ontario Supreme Court of Justice attending both in person and remotely; the Supreme People's Court of the People's

Republic of China, which is attending remotely; the Federal Court of Malaysia attending in person; the Supreme Court of the Philippines also attending in person; Chief Justice Menon and his colleagues from the Judiciary of Singapore who are in person and remotely; and the delegation from the Judiciary of England and Wales also attending in person and remotely. And we are also honoured to be joined by observer delegations from the Judiciary of India, attending in person; the Judiciary of Ireland High Court, attending remotely; the Supreme Court of Jamaica, attending remotely; the judiciary of Northern Ireland, attending remotely; the judiciary of Rwanda, attending remotely; and the United States Bankruptcy Court for the Western District of Washington, attending in person. I expect that the diversity of viewpoints and legal cultures represented here will lead to meaningful discussion and many opportunities to learn from one another.

JDRN was established last year to support and promote the practice of alternative dispute resolution methods within judicial institutions. The incorporation of such methods, including modes of mediation, into the judiciary's service of the public in our respective nations, enhances the efficiency with which we can resolve matters in a just fashion and lets us assist parties in reaching mutually satisfactory consensual resolutions of their disputes. By adopting ADR practices and incorporating them into our case management modalities, we avoid presenting parties with a false binary choice between engagement with public judicial institutions and retention of private alternative dispute resolution services. Courts can provide a range of pathways to dispute resolution, thereby increasing access to justice. I look forward to hearing your courts and delegations sharing their best practices and to presentations from experts in the field. Among those experts are representatives of our own Southern District of New York mediation programme, Magistrate Judges of our court who frequently mediate disputes as well as handle case management and representatives from the New York State Court system, whose vast operations include a statewide ADR programme. We will all have a great deal to learn and share over the next few days. I also look forward to opportunities for us to get to know each other informally during the scheduled sessions, breaks and lunches, at tonight's cocktail hour in the 25<sup>th</sup> floor library of the Thurgood Marshall Courthouse and at tomorrow's dinner, which is generously hosted by the Elisabeth Haub School of Law at Pace University's lovely campus building just south of the iconic Brooklyn Bridge. Thank you all so much for making this event possible and advancing this important work.