

## ABILA Centennial Celebration

January 27, 2022

President Leila Sadat,  
Distinguished members of the American Branch of the ILA,  
Ladies and gentlemen,

It is a distinct privilege and pleasure for me to congratulate the American Branch of the ILA on its Centennial Celebration. I do this in two capacities: one as President of the International Law Association (ILA) until the next Biennial Conference in Lisbon in June, the other as President of the Japan Branch.

Let me express my heartfelt congratulations on your reaching this milestone. The American Branch is one of the ILA's oldest. I have always greatly appreciated the invaluable contributions it has made to the development of international law over the years. Through these years in which peace has been interrupted by two World Wars, the cold war and other conflicts, the American Branch has made strenuous efforts to help establish and strengthen the rule of law in international relations. These, of course, are the main goals of the ILA. I have enjoyed working closely with Professor James Nafziger, the former President of the American Branch and ILA Vice-Chair, in the Executive Council and other ILA meetings.

On behalf of the Japan Branch, I would like to take this opportunity to once again thank the American Branch for its great assistance in connection with the Kyoto Biennial Conference. We had planned to host the Conference in Kyoto in 2014. However, the disruptions caused by the 2011 earthquake and tsunami made the original schedule unfeasible. When we were facing this crisis and desperately trying to overcome multiple difficulties, the American Branch kindly volunteered to host the 2014 Conference in our stead.

As a result, we were able to postpone the Kyoto Conference to August of 2020. Just as we were preparing for that event, however, the

COVID-19 pandemic struck, making it impossible to operate in an in-person format. The unavoidable move online made many of the preparations moot and created difficulties in finance and conference organization. The American Branch gave us generous financial assistance, which allowed us to go forward with the 2020 Kyoto Conference and into the future.

Although the COVID-19 created many challenges for the Japan Branch in hosting the Conference online, I have to say there were some positive aspects too. We were afraid the meeting would turn out to be quite modest. However, everything worked out fine. Five hundred participants registered, and I think this experience opened new digital possibilities for the ILA. The Kyoto Conference was held online in November and December. The Closing Session was held on December 13, 2020, coinciding with the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of the Japan Branch. We were thus able to celebrate our centennial in the presence of many ILA members joining online from all over the world.

Next year we will celebrate the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the ILA. I look forward to the commemoration to be held in Paris.

Once again, congratulations on your Centennial Celebration. I look forward to continuing to work closely with the American Branch under the leadership of President Leila Sadat.

Thank you.

ILA President  
President of the Japan Branch  
Judge, ITLOS