



## Duarte De Athayde's incoming President speech at the General Meeting of the 46<sup>th</sup> Annual Congress of Aija, in Paris on the 30<sup>th</sup> August 2008

Chers collègues, Chers amis,

**C'**est avec grande émotion et joie que j'initie en cet instant mon mandat de président de l'Association Internationale de Jeunes Avocats – AIJA.

*I wish to start by telling you that in my opinion AIJA is beyond any doubt rightfully entitled to a relevant place in the international legal community.*

Cette légitimité de notre association découle de plusieurs facteurs.

Tout d'abord de son étonnante continuité. Malgré tout ce qui s'est passé au XX<sup>e</sup> siècle, l'AIJA est là sans interruption depuis 1962 ! Quelles que soient les divergences entre nations et cultures, depuis 46 ans l'AIJA est un lieu de rencontre pour des jeunes avocats du monde entier!

Et ceci est d'autant plus important dans un Monde qui recommence à se polariser.

*Secondly from its unbelievable diversity. This is one of our major achievements: friendly cooperation amongst so many different nationalities and cultures.*

Troisièmement du respect et la défense inconditionnels et permanents d'un cadre de principes et valeurs communs exprimés notamment dans les déclarations d'Athènes de 1966 et dans la Charte du Jeune Avocat adoptée à Naples en 2004.

*Fourthly from the outstanding productivity of AIJA, directly connected to a highly motivated membership base, and to a unique rate of active members!*

*So, diversity, continuity, struggle for fundamental values and a highly productive membership give AIJA unquestionable legitimacy to be and act as a player in the international legal community, under any circumstance.*

J'exercerai mon mandat toujours fondé sur la conscience de cette légitimité.

*I will always keep in mind such legitimacy when representing AIJA internally and externally, namely when continuing to follow and implement the existing MOUs of AIJA and to cooperate with sister associations in common projects, joint seminars or other sessions.*

*Secondly I wish to tell you where in my opinion lay the interests and goals of AIJA and what do I plan to do as President in order to protect such interests and attain such goals.*

A cet effet, il est important d'analyser le positionnement de notre Association parmi la communauté juridique internationale et notamment parmi les associations d'avocats.

Les associations d'avocats peuvent être nationales ou internationales, régionales ou globales.

L'AIJA appartient au groupe très réduit d'associations globales d'avocats et juristes d'entreprise.

*Within this small group, AIJA is the ONLY ASSOCIATION THAT SPECIALISES. It specialises in career building lawyers and corporate counsels (our core membership is 35 / 45 years old). These are lawyers and corporate counsels undergoing the most significant phase of the affirmation of their professional careers.*

*There are several relevant Consequences of such specialization. The downside is the need to constantly renew our membership due to the outflow of overaging members. It is a true challenge to the Association and even a certain disadvantage vis-à-vis open ended global associations as far as total number of members is concerned (although every association is always confronted with pressures to renew membership).*

*However, It is not our ultimate goal to be the biggest global association of lawyers. And, anyway, AIJA has been consistently following a successful growth strategy to have a membership as big, diverse and geographically spread out as possible. I am convinced that there is still room for AIJA to double or triple in size in the following few years.*

*Here lays an essential function of the President: to work with the Executive Director, with the Membership Forum and ultimately with the National Representatives in development and expansion of our membership.*

*On the other hand, specialization of AIJA has very positive side: by concentrating in career building lawyers and corporate counsels, AIJA gets hold of members that are in the strongest and most intense moments of their careers and thus enthusiastically active, committed and productive. Our members are very self-motivated and dynamic.*

*As a result, AIJA has a very high rate of active membership and an impressive group of active lawyers and corporate counsels in absolute terms.*

*This is where our association has to focus: keeping our membership vibrant and active; creating the conditions for our members to satisfy their need to build up their careers, to network and to reach recognition and profile, to improve and develop their technical and professional skills.*

*AIJA can pursue this goal, at a strategic level, by setting clear and attainable targets and by constantly measuring the degree of fulfillment of such objectives.*

*Here sits another essential project that I intend to pursue: the revision of the strategic plan. The strategic plan was adopted for the period 2004-2009. It is therefore essential to assess what has been achieved and propose to the General Meeting in Budapest a new Strategic Plan. I intend to also involve the Strategic Planning Group in the implementation of this task.*

À un niveau organisationnel, le but de maintenir notre base associative vibrante et active s'obtient en maintenant une structure absolument flexible afin de permettre à chaque nouveau membre de devenir immédiatement actif (je poursuivrais la politique d'intégrer les nouveaux membres aussitôt qu'ils contactent l'association) ; en maintenant la base associative ouverte et accessible (à ce propos je réfère le scholarship program et les

**continued:**

projets en cours pour faciliter l'accès de jeunes avocats à nos évènements, notamment Budapest); en conservant des règles de fonctionnement facilement compréhensibles (j'ai l'intention de donner un pas additionnel dans le sens de la communication du contenu des gouvernance guidelines aux membres et en outre de revoir les statuts de l'AIJA).

*Content-wise, by continuing to focus in giving to its vibrant membership the opportunity to constantly take part in the production of cutting edge scientific work. But also by giving them the opportunity to debate the most up to date and essential professional and human rights topics.*

*Scientific work is a driver of our association. Our members gather around common scientific projects. It gives opportunity to learn and to network.*

*Any President of AIJA has to accept that it is a priority to assure that the association continues to produce high quality scientific work and that the LCC and the Forum of the Commissions, the work coordinators and the presidents of the commissions do perform.*

*In addition we need to continue to create the tools to facilitate the organization of seminars by our members, such as workable templates but also the possibility to take advantage from AIJA agreement with JLC, our PCO.*

*We also need to give more visibility to our scientific work by improving our publication policy, by definitely implementing an interactive website (which is an important membership benefit).*

*And keep in mind that these are also important tools to pursue a consistent local and global sponsorship policy.*

*On the other hand AIJA is now putting in place mechanisms that will allow the association to regularly voice its opinion on key professional interest issues and to take an active role in the international debates taking place in the legal community worldwide (namely by publishing reports on the key topics that transversally interest our profession).*

*The VOP Project will enhance AIJA's role as the voice of career building lawyers internationally and its recognition as a "voice of the profession".*

Enfin, l'AIJA devra dans un futur proche envisager l'organisation des méthodes de développement des capacités techniques professionnelles qu'elle propose d'ores et déjà à ses membres à ce propos je réfère le skills development seminar qui se tiendra lors de la Conférence de Mai à Londres).

*With this focus AIJA is sure to continue to be the most dynamic global association of lawyers*

*and corporate counsels; to be an association of productive and committed members; and to be an association dedicated to the development of the next ruling generation.*

*These features and the strategic goals of AIJA combined with its particular legitimacy in the international legal community make our association a most relevant and important step for any career building lawyer and corporate counsel.*

*When looking back at their careers and curricula former members of AIJA recognize the importance of our Association.*

*Let's guarantee that AIJA continues to make a considerable difference in the career of any lawyer or corporate that chooses to be a member!*

Merci à tous!  
Paris, 30 Août 2008.