

International law increasingly vital, says head of UN World Court



Judge Hisashi Owada, President of the International Court of Justice

26 October 2011 –

It is vital that international law underpin developments on the global stage, especially in an ever increasingly globalized and interconnected world, the head of the United Nations International Court of Justice ([ICJ](#)) said today.

“It is no exaggeration to say that all regions of the world have become closely intertwined,” Judge Hisashi Owada, President of the ICJ, the principal judicial organ of the UN, said as he reported to the General Assembly on the court’s activities over the past year.

“In this 21st century, international politics are undeniably interconnected; a truly global economy has emerged; and our natural environment and global climate change have created new challenges,” he noted.

In these times of unprecedented interconnection between States and peoples, it is my sincere belief that a firm reliance on international law must underpin any and all future developments on the global stage.

“In these times of unprecedented interconnection between States and peoples, it is my sincere belief that a firm reliance on international law must underpin any and all future developments on the global stage.”

Established in 1945 under the UN Charter, the ICJ – sometimes referred to as the World Court – settles legal disputes between States and gives advisory opinions on legal questions that have been referred to it by authorized UN organs or specialized agencies.

Judge Owada noted the trust that the international community continues to place in the Court to handle a wide variety of legal disputes.

“States from all corners of world, faithful to their attachment to international law, continue to have recourse to the Court in order to find a judicial settlement to their disputes,” he stated.

Since last October, the Court has rendered four judgments and three orders on cases involving countries from all regions of the world and raising a broad range of legal questions, from border and maritime disputes to compensation for injury and racial discrimination.

Given a “remarkable” increase in the number of cases on the docket, the President said the Court is now opining on more than a few cases on a parallel basis, thus making its best endeavours to eliminate a backlog on judicial work.

“It is my hope that Member States will continue to rely on the International Court of Justice to assist them in the pacific settlement of their disputes and that more States will accept the Court’s jurisdiction.”

The Court’s current docket stands at 15 cases, most of which are still at the stage of being in the hands of the parties who are presenting their written proceedings in advance of the oral hearings.

The two most recent cases that have been filed concern a border dispute between Costa Rica and Nicaragua as well as the row between Cambodia and Thailand over the Preah Vihear temple.

News Tracker: past stories on this issue

[Palau seeks UN World Court opinion on damage caused by greenhouse gases](#)

