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World Justice Forum III Invigorates Activism for a Stronger Rule of Law

The World Justice Forum III brought together over 400 world leaders from more than 100 countries and a multitude of professional disciplines in Barcelona, Spain, on June 20-23, 2011, to propose new initiatives to strengthen the rule of law in communities around the world. The Forum, an initiative of the World Justice Project (WJP), was honored by the patronage of His Majesty King Juan Carlos I of Spain, who served as Honorary President of Forum III.

The Forum addressed several critical and timely rule of law issues – including promoting fair elections, combatting human trafficking, and reconciling the rule of law with traditional justice systems – through the WJP’s unique approach of multidisciplinary collaboration. Forum speakers included, among others: William H. Gates Sr., Co-Chair of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation; Morgan Richard Tsvangirai, Prime Minister of Zimbabwe; Mary Robinson, former President of Ireland; and Adama Dieng, Registrar for the United Nations International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda.

The Forum served as an incubator of new cross-disciplinary programs to advance the rule of law worldwide. Leaders from government, business, education, law, engineering, and many other professions worked together in the Forum’s ten project design sessions, which led to the creation of dozens of interdisciplinary projects. Examples of projects include, among others: improving understanding of newly created laws in Kosovo; providing strategic litigation on behalf of informal workers in Latin America; and educating teachers about the rule of law in Cambodia and Afghanistan. Over the coming months, these and other innovative rule of law projects will be implemented in countries around the world.

The World Justice Forum III also unveiled the inaugural World Justice Project Rule of Law Awards, established to honor leaders who have taken significant steps towards advancing the rule of law from an interdisciplinary perspective. The Awards were presented to: Arthur Chaskalson, Chief Justice of South Africa (ret.), a visionary pursuer of justice in South Africa who challenged the implementation of apartheid laws; and Aruna Roy, a social and political activist whose organization, Mazdoor Kisan Shakti Sangathan (MKSS), led the campaign to enact India’s Right to Information Act in 2005.

Of particular significance, findings from the *WJP Rule of Law Index™ 2011* report, covering 66 countries around the globe, were presented for the first time at the World Justice Forum III, including new coverage of Russia, China, and Brazil, among other countries. Journalists around the world increasingly cite the *Index* as an authoritative reference on rule of law-related issues. The *Index* has been referenced by leading media outlets, including the *Economist*, the *Washington Post*, and leading newspapers in over 60 countries.

Following the successful third World Justice Forum and the release of the expanded *WJP Rule of Law Index™ 2011* report, World Justice Project Executive Director Hongxia Liu will be leaving the organization after two years of devoted service. Under her guidance, the WJP hosted three regional conferences and two World Justice Forums, launched the public release of the *WJP Rule of Law Index™* report, and completed the transition into an independent 501c3 organization. The WJP will soon be seeking a new Executive Director and is accepting inquiries.

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About the World Justice Project

The World Justice Project (WJP) is an independent, 501 (c)(3) non-profit organization that works to advance the rule of law for the development of communities of opportunity and equity worldwide. The Project's multinational, multidisciplinary efforts are dedicated to developing practical programs in support of the rule of law around the world. Its work is carried out through the convening of world leaders at global and regional meetings, including the World Justice Forum; through the provision of seed grants for rule of law projects; the WJP Rule of Law Index; and new scholarship on rule of law issues. For more information on the Project's outstanding and multidisciplinary Honorary Co-chairs, co-sponsoring organizations, funders, and its founder, William H. Neukom, please visit www.worldjusticeproject.org.

About the World Justice Forum

The World Justice Forum is the world's largest global multidisciplinary gathering of policymakers, advocates, and representatives to advance the rule of law, and is the only such platform in the world. Representatives from a variety of disciplines develop projects aimed at strengthening the rule of law. The first two World Justice Forums were held in Vienna, Austria, in July 2008 and November 2009, respectively. The World Justice Forum III was held June 20-23, 2011, in Barcelona, Spain. For more information, please visit www.wjp-forum.org.

About the WJP Rule of Law Index™

The WJP Rule of Law Index™ is an innovative quantitative assessment tool designed to offer a detailed and comprehensive picture of the extent to which countries adhere to the rule of law in practice. The Index provides original and detailed data regarding a variety of dimensions of the rule of law, which enables stakeholders to assess a nation's actual adherence to the rule of law; identify a nation's strengths and weaknesses in comparison to other similarly situated countries; and to track changes over time. A statistical sensitivity and reliability analysis of the Index data was conducted by the Econometrics Unit of the European Commission's Joint Research Centre and concluded that it is statistically and conceptually coherent.