The African International Economic Law Network Newsletter: Meet the All Female New Executive Team and More

By:

AfIELN

December 15, 2020

Some highlights from the AfIELN Newsletter December 2020 Issue include:

- Announcement of the New Executive Team and Welcome message from the new President
- Launch of the African Sovereign Debt Justice Network by Afronomicslaw.org
- SIEL Conversations
- AfIELN Virtual Colloquium Planning Committee
- Call for Papers
- Publications by Network members.

Welcome message from the President

Dear AfIELN Members, It is my pleasure to write to you as your President for the 2020-2022 term. The new executive teams comprising of myself, Dr. Titilayo Adebola (Treasurer), and Ms. Patricia Ouma (Secretary) took over from July 1, 2020 and we would like to thank the past executive members, our partners at Afronomicslaw.org and the AfIELN community who have all worked hard in the past year to actively grow our Network. This year, we inaugurated a new Advisory Board, comprising of all the past presidents, individuals previously involved with the establishment of the Network and/or play a prominent role in their substantive fields of scholarship on the continent. The members of the board are Caroline Ncube, Franziska Sucker, Jumoke Oduwole, Tomer Broude, James Gathii, Markus Wagner, Olabisi Akinkugbe, Ohio Ominu, Sara Ghebremusse, Luwam Dirar, Regis Semo, Ashimizo Afadameh, Ms. Jill Juma, and Mr. Suresh Nanwani. The role of the advisory board is to provide counsel and support towards the growth of the Network. We are also in the process of completing a new functional permanent AfIELN Website and we will let you know once the website is live.

Within Africa, a lot has been going on to deepen trade relations both within and outside the continent. Mauritius signed a free trade agreement with China; Kenya commenced trade negotiations with the US; Tunisia requested the Dispute Settlement Body (DSB) to establish a panel to examine anti-dumping duties imposed by Morocco, and Nigeria’s Dr Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala emerged a frontrunner to become the first African, and first woman to lead the World Trade Organisation (WTO). The significance of these events cannot be overemphasized and as Africa continues to develop its voice and contributions to IEL governance and scholarship, we hope that AfIELN will continue to provide the space for rigorous analysis and scholarship on international economic law issues as they relate to Africa. In this spirit of building and nurturing these conversations and bearing in mind the uncertainty surrounding air travel as a result of COVID-19, we will hold a virtual colloquium themed ‘COVID-19 and International Economic Law: Africa’s Experiences and Responses’ in lieu of our Fifth Biennial Conference. Our Call for Paper is now available on the SIEL website and our social media handles. We look forward to you joining us virtually next year.

Lastly, we know this year has been really tough for all our members as a result

of COVID-19. Many lost loved ones, jobs and funding opportunities, and the future remains uncertain. I hope you are finding comfort in something positive. I hope you take the time in the upcoming holiday season to do things that refresh your soul and nourish your spirit. This year has been hard; we all deserve a break and we should not feel guilty about it. Let us be gentle with ourselves even as we recount a year that did not go according to our plans. In light of everything going on, I would like to leave you with a quote I've been thinking about for a while now:

"You may not always have a comfortable life and you will not always be able to solve all of the world's problems at once but don't ever underestimate the importance you can have because history has shown us that courage can be contagious, and hope can take on a life of its own." – Michelle Obama

Here is to better and brighter 2021! Sincerely, Amaka Vanni, President, AfIELN.

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