

## FACULTY ANNOUNCEMENT

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### **Asian Society of International Law holds inaugural conference at NUS; NUS Law chosen as Secretariat**

The newly-formed Asian Society of International Law (AsianSIL) held its inaugural conference at the NUS Faculty of Law over the weekend from 7 to 9 April 2007.



From left: H.E. Dame Rosalyn Higgins, Prof Tan Cheng Han, A-G Chao Hick Tin, Judge Hisashi Owada

The law school hosted high-profile participants from at least 12 countries, including H.E. Dame Rosalyn Higgins of the UK, president of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) at The Hague, Judge Shi Jiuyong of China, former president of the ICJ, and Dr C G Weeramantry of Sri Lanka, former vice-president of the ICJ.

The society's first act was to appoint its president, ICJ judge Hisashi Owada of Japan, who indicated that the biggest challenge was "to create a society that is sustainable and which is going to grow".

Of its 20 executive council members, two of them are Singaporeans. They are Professor Tommy Koh '61, Chairman of the Institute of Policy Studies and Ambassador-at-Large, and Professor Tan Cheng Han '87, Dean of the NUS law school.



From left: Prof Yasuaki Onuma, Prof Venkateswara Subramanian Mani, Prof Sang Myon-Rhee, Justice Zubayer Rahman Chowdhury, Judge Hisashi Owada, and Prof Borhan Uddin Khan

Prof Tan commented that it was about time that Asian lawyers had a platform of their own to discuss international law. "Recent events have shown us that international law in a globalised world is a body of law that is of crucial importance and we in Asia must be clear in our minds, we cannot neglect it, we cannot allow other international law scholars around the world to do the running on international law, we need our own perspectives to be brought to the table as well", added Prof Tan.

The NUS Faculty of Law has also been chosen as the seat of AsianSIL's Secretariat. This is on account of Singapore's strategic location as a centre of communications.

Issues on international law will be discussed in regular forums conducted by AsianSIL.

In its inaugural conference, AsianSIL held discussions along the following five main themes:

- International Law in Asia - Past, Present and Future (Plenary Session)
- International Commercial Arbitration (Panel Session)
- International Law of Human Rights (Panel Session)
- International Law on Peace and Security (Panel Session)
- The International Law of the Sea (Panel Session)

The final session, which was the Business Meeting of the Society, was concluded by lunchtime on 9 April 2007, closing a fulfilling 3-day conference for the new society and its participants.