



SECTION NEWS

The Section Sends Law Books to Liberia

By Zubaida Qazi

The Section of International Law, in conjunction with the Africa Committee, has partnered with West, a division of Thomson Reuters, and Books For Africa (BFA) to provide legal books to African law schools, universities, bar associations, and civic groups. This partnership is one of the initiatives stemming from the Section's 2007 International Legal Exchange (ILEX) trip to West Africa.

During the trip, which included visits to Ghana, Liberia, and Sierra Leone, one specific need that was brought to the ILEX delegation's attention was the shortage of modern law school textbooks available for law students and faculty, particularly in Liberia and Sierra Leone. The ILEX delegation, with the assistance of BFA, volunteered to be of assistance.

BFA is a nonprofit organization based in Saint Paul, Minnesota, with the singular goal of ending "the book famine in Africa." Created in 1988, BFA has already sent over 20 million books to 38 countries on the continent. Today, BFA is the world's largest shipper of primary, secondary, and university school books to the African continent.

In June 2008, BFA launched a new initiative to further the rule of law in Africa by addressing the continent's scarcity of law and human rights books. Named after the federal magistrate judge and BFA board member, the Jack Mason Law and Democracy Initiative is cochaired by former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan and former Vice President Walter Mondale. Lane Ayres, director of the initiative, is an attorney and active member of the Section's Africa Committee. He has been on the board of and a volunteer with BFA for many years.

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The first shipment by the Law and Democracy Initiative was made to the Louis Arthur Grimes School of Law at the University of Liberia in Monrovia in late 2008. The Section of International Law—with special thanks to Salli Swartz, Victor Mroczka, Edna Udobong, Marilyn Kaman, and Cara Lee Neville for their efforts—financially supported this shipment along with the Indiana University School of Law in Bloomington.

The initiative is in large part a partnership with West, the law book publishing arm of Thomson Reuters. West is donating the latest edition new books—including law-teaching books, legal treatises, human rights, and rule of law books—to be sent to Africa. For the shipment to Liberia, West donated a total of 1,500 books—50 copies each of titles for 23 subjects, along with a resource library of more than 200 separate titles that span the breadth of U.S. law, including several human rights subjects, a set of *American Jurisprudence*, and a set of *American Law Reports*. West is also donating law books for a shipment to Sierra Leone, one of the countries visited by the ILEX delegation to West Africa.

BFA has requests for books from several other African schools and bar associations and is currently raising funds for a shipment to the Law Association of Zambia. Although the books are all donated by West, BFA needs continuing support from law firms, law schools, and individuals for shipping and related costs, so that the shipment to Liberia is the first of many each year to law faculty and bar associations across the continent.

For more information on how you or your firm can be involved with the Jack Mason Law and Democracy Initiative, visit www.booksforafrica.org/initiatives/law-democracy.html or contact Lane Ayres at lanebfa@gmail.com.

Visit the Section's website to read about the ILEX trip to West Africa in the summer 2007 issue of ILN. ♦