

## PREFACE

*International Institutional Reform* was the theme of the 2005 Hague Joint Conference – the seventh in a series of collaborations led by the American Society of International Law (ASIL) and the Nederlandse Vereniging voor Internationaal Recht (NVIR). Ably developed by Conference Co-Chairs Lucy F. Reed (ASIL) and Menno Kamminga (NVIR), twelve panels, four plenary sessions and sixty-six panelists tackled issues related to the reform debates that seem to be a part of virtually every international institution today. However, as these pages will demonstrate, a thoughtful examination of these discussions provided an occasion to appreciate the progress and development of forms of cooperation that would have been unthinkable even a decade ago when these joint conferences first began.

This gathering in The Hague in 2005 was also special because it marked the eve of ASIL's Centennial celebration in 2006. As ASIL's younger sister by five years, NVIR was pleased to be among the first to congratulate ASIL on reaching this milestone. As we opened this seventh joint conference in the Peace Palace, we reflected on The Hague's role as the world's legal capital and the extensive ties that ASIL members have had with this historic city and with their Dutch colleagues. We further reflected on the international character of the ASIL's membership that included many of the non-US participants at this joint conference.

Though we opened our meeting in the Peace Palace, we met in the shadow of the war in Iraq. Our first Joint Conference was also convened in the shadow of war following Iraq's invasion of Kuwait in 1990. A luncheon address was abruptly cancelled in 1995 when the minister of government who was to make the address was called away to deal with what we have come to know as the Srebrenica crisis. These are sober reminders that our deliberations are not academic ones, but address fundamental issues of global governance. The premise of the Joint Conference program was to create an opportunity for transatlantic and international discussion of contemporary issues in international law. The energetic attendance at the meeting reminded us of the many well-placed and informed individuals who together can play an important role in developing wise and enduring policies for the future.

We would like to close on a note of sincere gratitude to the Board of the Foundation, led by Mr Rein-Jan Hoekstra of the Council of State, and the Asser Institute, led by its Director Frans Nelissen, for having organized this event so well once again. Equally, we are much indebted to our colleagues Lucy Reed and Menno Kamminga, the two Conference Co-Chairs who, through genuine transatlantic cooperation, organized a topical, interesting and coherent program. The continued support on the part of the staff of the American Society of International Law is much appreciated. We further gratefully acknowledge the support of the Municipality of The Hague. We warmly thank the Municipality of The Hague and the other sponsors and contributors who helped to ensure a secure financial base for the Seventh Hague Joint Conference.

As we write these words, we are already planning our next Hague Joint Conference and look forward to seeing you in The Hague in 2007.

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