

Bobby Dean, Vice President: Bureau Report October 2015 - Executive Committee, Dominican Republic

After missing our previous gathering in Austria while I was on duties in South Africa, it is my pleasure to be reunited with many friends across the world this time in the Dominican Republic. In fact, I think it is notable that I can write that first sentence. The first objective of IFLRY's Plan of Action (POA) is to be 'more Global' and I think this Bureau is well on its way to achieving that.

In South Africa I working with the Democratic Alliance and the Africa Liberal Network (ALN). As we consolidated our relationship with both, there were promising discussions there about the possibility of re-establishing a pan-African youth force. Those discussions have continued throughout the year and, now that the ALN have a new coordinator in place, we hope to make good progress on this before the end of our term.

In another region, I was pleased to see IFLRY continue its active involvement in the development of the Arab Youth Union for Freedom and Democracy (AYUFD). I took on the role of Course Director in the delivery of a seminar (held mostly in Arabic with translation) on human rights just ahead of its General Assembly. It was again good consolidating moment for our relationship.

With this work in Africa and the Middle East, as well as the notable progress in Latin America and continued engagement with North America and Far East Asia through CALD, I think this is the most global IFLRY has ever been. However, it comes at a time that for financial and administrative reasons relating to our fourth POA objective of sustainability, our membership looks set to reflect exactly the opposite notion - with a decidedly European tilt to it. I hope that the Working Group on Statutes can find a way to resolve this, perhaps through greater recognition of our Regional Partnership working and some sort of affiliate status for all of its members that works for IFLRY and them in equal proportions.

Our second POA objective relates to our advocacy work, and again I see progress here too. Libel lost some momentum after after unfortunately losing its founding Editor to personal commitments, but with the newly appointed Editor, Krijn van Eeden, in place I expect it to continue to serve its purpose as a policy discussion forum for our members. I want to take this opportunity to thank Harriet Ainscough for all her hard work in getting Libel off the ground.

As Pauline Kastermans continues to shape the Human Rights Programme positively, the anticipated potential for it to evolve into IFLRY's advocacy arm becomes ever more promising. Our involvement in the United Nations General Assembly and anticipated involvement in COP21, continued engagement with Liberal International and ICMYO, as well as participation in global initiatives such as *Have You Seen My Rights?* means we are well placed to become a more effective advocate for our members.

In our third POA objective, and the final one I have to mention, I take the most pride. IFLRY continues to have at its core the ability to be an outstanding Capacity Builder. I personally take a real hands-on approach in this area, taking on the role of Course Director in Jordan earlier in the year, Serbia more recently and supporting the Course Director to our forthcoming event in Turkey. I also contributed heavily to our grant application for next year's Annual Workplan and continue to assist in the development of our Pool of Trainers, which is close to completion.

In my previous report I remarked upon the fact that I felt our capacity, in office and voluntarily, was being stretched and that it had impacted upon the delivery of certain projects that I personally had made commitments to - namely the website. I understand this was the source of much debate at the last Assembly

and I was not there to speak from my perspective. I urge anybody with an issue with this to take the opportunity to see me (or contact me by email) so that I can share with you my perspective on this.

For the record, I am not directly responsible for the delivery of it. I have pushed vociferously within the Bureau for the job to be completed by our supplier but have been let down repeatedly. I am as frustrated by this as anybody.

Finally, and to end my report in a positive note, I'm sure you will agree that as we enter the final phase of our term the Bureau has made great strides in each of the four areas of our POA. This gives me confidence that the next Bureau will have a solid foundation to build upon in the next term.