

**Report of the 12<sup>th</sup> Annual GLIN Directors' Meeting  
September 6-9, 2005  
Washington, D.C.**

**Tuesday, September 6, 2005**

Directors, members, and observers of the Global Legal Information Network assembled at the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C. from September 6-9, 2005 for the 12<sup>th</sup> Annual GLIN Directors' Meeting. The first gathering since the release of the new GLIN system in February 2005, the meeting brought together representatives from 19 GLIN member jurisdictions (Democratic Republic of the Congo, Costa Rica, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Inter-American Development Bank, Justice Studies Center of the Americas, Kuwait, Mauritania, Mexico, MERCOSUR, Nicaragua, Organization of American States, Panama, Paraguay, Romania, United Nations, United States, Uruguay) for the largest conference to date. Delegations from three potential GLIN member nations: Mali, Saudi Arabia, and Trinidad and Tobago, also participated in the meeting.

James H. Billington, Librarian of Congress, welcomed those assembled and reminded the audience that "it is imperative that the citizens of one nation have access to and an understanding of the laws of other nations." He congratulated members of the network for their work, and praised the new GLIN system: "The increased, international understanding provided by the new, multilingual version of GLIN is thus a major achievement, one that all of you should rightfully look upon with pride. More than ever, GLIN is making a vital contribution to a future world in which citizens will all have access to the laws that govern them."

Rubens Medina, Law Librarian of Congress and Chair of the GLIN Executive Council then offered opening remarks. He noted that the deployment of the new GLIN system in February marked a major achievement and offers many features that have been long-desired by GLIN members including multilingual interfaces; the ability to add a wide range of legal materials such as judicial decisions; and open, public access to all information in GLIN except in a few cases where legal impediments prohibit jurisdictions from such distribution. With respect to open access, Medina noted that representatives from many governments that attended a meeting in Paris in November 2004 created the Declaration of Paris "affirming the principle that it is the duty of governments to publish the laws they enact and make them available, free of charge, to their citizens." He commended those countries that support this principle by allowing GLIN to provide worldwide access to their legal materials.

Medina expressed gratitude to the U.S. Congress for its generous support that enabled the development of the new GLIN system. He urged GLIN members to plan for the future and consider ways to sustain the development and maintenance of the system and the network. As in the past, he underscored the importance of GLIN standards and exhorted the members to keep their database files current and complete. Finally, he noted the importance "populating" the new modules of GLIN so that the database will include the full range of legal information. He suggested that expanding partnerships with a

variety of institutions may be a useful strategy to gain access to all categories of legal information.

Status reports from GLIN members followed the opening remarks. Guillermo Castillo from the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) described the efforts that his organization has made to support the expansion of GLIN in various regions in the Western hemisphere. To date, Castillo said, the IDB has coordinated programs in MERCOSUR, Central America, and the Caribbean. Over the past year, the IDB organized three sub-regional meetings (Hammond, Louisiana; Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic; Curitiba, Brazil). These workshops, which focused on a variety of topics, have “opened new doors for participation and regional cooperation.” Castillo described how the IDB has helped many countries by providing equipment. They have established a forum for communication within the region that has more than 100 users. He noted that in the IDB will soon turn its attention toward the countries in the Andean region and will fund Peru, Bolivia, Colombia, and Venezuela. He thanked GLIN Central for its efforts on the new system and asked that we all work together to respond quickly to the needs of national stations.

Argentina could not send representatives to this year’s meeting, but they provided a status report that was delivered by Graciela Rodriguez-Ferrand, Senior Legal Specialist for Argentina, Law Library of Congress. Since 2001, Argentina has had a stable GLIN team located in the Library of Congress of Argentina. This team obtains translation services from the Library of Congress. This year the Inter-American Development Bank donated computer equipment that has helped them perform their GLIN work. They recently entered into a cooperative agreement with the Supreme Court. Under this agreement, the Supreme Court will provide them with the texts of its decisions and the GLIN team in the Library of Congress will provide English and Spanish summaries. They also reported that they are working on an agreement with the Buenos Aires Bar Association and they have proposed new terms for inclusion in the GLIN thesaurus.

Sandra Sawicki, Legal Analyst, Law Library of Congress presented the report that was prepared by GLIN Brazil which was unable to send representatives to the meeting. The report noted Brazil’s efforts to input new laws into the system while also reviewing records already existing in GLIN. After the release of the new system in February, Brazil worked to add missing full texts and to do an overall quality review of the Brazilian file. In June 2005, Brazil hosted a workshop for MERCOSUR GLIN stations. One outcome of the meeting was the agreement to translate summaries of MERCOSUR norms into Portuguese. A new workspace was designed in the Ministry of Justice for the GLIN Brazil station and GLIN Brazil entered into an agreement with the publisher of the official gazette of Brazil to get the electronic version of the gazette for inclusion in GLIN. They are also working on an agreement with the Supreme Court. Finally, Brazil reported on its efforts to publicize and promote GLIN through training of Ministry of Justice officials and through a publicity campaign launched through radio and major periodicals.

The report from Costa Rica was delivered by Ana Duran Salvatierra, GLIN Legal Analyst for Costa Rica. She noted that Costa Rica has undertaken the translation into

Spanish of the GLIN training manuals which they feel will be very useful for countries in the Central American region. This past year they have also approached different departments about the possibility of cooperation. They have asked one organization to add legal literature to GLIN and another to assist in adding the appropriate amendments and relationships.

Jaime Nogales Torres, GLIN Director for Ecuador, noted that GLIN Ecuador has invested in technical enhancements this year including faster Internet connections and the hiring of a new computer specialist. GLIN Ecuador has signed agreements with several government agencies to provide access to GLIN. They offered training to legislators on how to use GLIN and the benefits of participation. GLIN Ecuador provided information to the army on maritime law—specifically laws related to ports from various countries. Located in a non-governmental organization, CESC (Centro de Estudios de la Sociedad Civil or the Center for the Study of Civil Society), the GLIN station in Ecuador has been funded completely by private funds.

Deputy Carlos López, President of the Technical Support Committee, Congress of Guatemala, provided opening remarks before the status report for Guatemala. Deputy López noted that the presence of Guatemala at the meeting ratified its support for GLIN. He emphasized the importance for the rule of law and stated that GLIN is an important tool to sustain the rule of law and to create “brotherhood and solidarity.” His remarks were followed by Guatemala’s status report delivered by Miguel Alvarez Galvez, Legal Analyst for Guatemala. Alvarez noted that they have worked on several agreements over the past year. They have worked to open auxiliary GLIN offices in the judiciary and have also tried to enter into cooperation with some universities. Their goal, he noted, is to reach everyone interested in the legislative process.

Medardo Aragon, Acting Director, GLIN El Salvador, next presented his country’s status report. He noted the absence of a GLIN Director for El Salvador and said that presently two Congressional Deputies are in charge of the GLIN station. Over the past year, El Salvador has worked to add retrospective material and is has worked back from 1991 to 1987. He reported that GLIN El Salvador has received 82 requests for information from congressmen and citizens. They have recently created a web page for their station that is available through Internet and through a congressional intranet. They are pleased to have had the opportunity to participate in the IDB-sponsored workshops the goal of which is to understand GLIN as a valuable tool for comparative law.

Hugo Rodriguez Filippini, Secretary General of the Uruguayan Senate, noted Uruguay’s continuing support for GLIN before turning the podium over to Carmen Garcia Mendieta, Director of GLIN Uruguay and GLIN MERCOSUR. Garcia Mendieta began with a report from MERCOSUR. She noted that MECOSUR legislation is not supra-national but rather its instruments must be approved unanimously by all four legislatures (Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay, Uruguay). They will be working to input the arbitration decisions of MERCOSUR which is the first expression of jurisprudence for MERCOSUR. She noted that MERCOSUR is working on creating a parliament which may have implications for information to be added to GLIN in the future.

With respect to GLIN Uruguay, Garcia Mendieta stated that they are maintaining a current file and that they have also done some retrospective work. This past year they faced difficulties with equipment, but the IDB was able to provide them with equipment needed to continue their work. They have been working with the District of Montevideo which is contributing its information to GLIN. The District of Montevideo produces more legislation than the national legislature. GLIN Uruguay has finalized an agreement with a university so they will have access to recent writings and opinions of legal scholars. They are in the process of working with several sub-national governments (provinces) in an attempt to acquire their legislation for GLIN. They are also working to input several recently updated codes.

The report from Kuwait was delivered by Abdullah Al-Qahtani, Technical Specialist, GLIN Kuwait. Some technical upgrades in the Ministry of Justice, including the installation of firewalls, caused some difficulties in sending PDF documents to GLIN this year. Responsibility for GLIN was also shifted this year to another part of the Ministry of Justice, the Technical Support Office, under the supervision of Sulaiman Al-Mansour. Some improvements were made including the addition of new employees, increased Internet speed, and additional fiber optic lines. In an effort to promote GLIN in the region, they issued invitations to several Arab League nations to attend the GLIN Directors' Meeting. Kuwait has started to translate data into Arabic for incorporation into GLIN. Al-Qahtani ended by emphasizing that they are "expending every effort to accomplish what we have promised."

The afternoon of Tuesday, September 6<sup>th</sup>, was devoted to a review and discussion of a draft "Policy & Standards" document. In a session moderated by Connie Johnson and Sandra Sawicki, meeting participants were given the opportunity to provide comments and offer suggestions on such things as "Member in Good Standing" criteria; definitions of "current" and "complete" GLIN files; and the content of the legal literature module of GLIN. The members' suggestions will be reviewed and a revised policy document will be circulated before the end of the year.

### **Wednesday, September 7, 2005**

The meeting continued on Wednesday, September 7<sup>th</sup> with the presentation of the remaining status reports from GLIN members. As Honduras was unable to send representatives to the meeting, Sandra Sawicki delivered their report. GLIN Honduras noted that they had offered GLIN training to members of their legislature. They reported on their collaboration with other GLIN teams in Central America. Honduras offered some suggestions for improvements to the GLIN system such as including file size as part of GLIN records and adding a statistics module. They also stated that they had taken steps to create an agreement with the judiciary to try and obtain judicial decisions for GLIN.

Marco Castillo next described the work of the Justice Studies Center of the Americas (JSCA), a non-governmental organization based in Chile that is contributing legal literature to GLIN. Castillo explained that the JSCA was established in 1999 to promote judicial reform and is comprised of OAS member states. They have created a

virtual library to improve access to judicial information and their goal in joining GLIN is to supplement this library. JSCA has contributed 66 legal writings to the database to date. He noted that they have been receiving more queries about laws that are available through GLIN.

Connie Johnson presented the status report that was sent by GLIN Korea which could not participate in the meeting. GLIN Korea was awarded the GLIN Model Station Award in 1997 which shows its commitment to GLIN. In September 2001, they launched a GLIN website and their efforts this year have focused on publicizing the new release of GLIN. There was a major turnover of staff in the National Assembly Library in 2005 resulting in new staff for GLIN. Finally, Korea is interested in seeing GLIN membership expand to include its neighboring countries as it has interest in the laws of those nations. It would also like to see the laws of OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) member countries in GLIN.

The report from Mexico was delivered by Dr. Jorge Gonzalez Chávez, Director of GLIN Mexico. Dr. Gonzalez Chávez said he was interested in receiving suggestions and support to try and raise awareness and interest among legislators in Mexico in GLIN. He noted that next year there will be changes in both the Executive and Legislature and he is concerned that the transition will be difficult. Finally, he noted that Mexico has proposed new candidate terms for the GLIN thesaurus.

Ana Rosa Chavarria, Director of the GLIN station at the Nicaraguan Supreme Court expressed her gratitude for the new release of GLIN as this enabled them to begin contributing judicial decisions to the database. She reported that her team has been working closely with Sandra Sawicki at the Law Library to make sure that they understand all the procedures for contributing information to the new system. Representatives from the Nicaraguan Supreme Court participated in two of the IDB-sponsored workshops.

Lorena Perez, Legal Analyst for the Organization of American States (OAS) commented that the OAS has had three different Secretaries General since they signed a cooperative agreement with GLIN. Perez remarked that the new GLIN system is much better than the previous version and will facilitate the work of the OAS. The OAS has been working on updating summaries including the addition of Spanish versions, and their goal is to update the 2004-2005 material and then begin retrospective work.

The GLIN Panama report was delivered by Salvador Sanchez, GLIN Legal Analyst. Panama has had the benefit of a stable team with the same legal analysts and technical specialists engaged in GLIN work since Panama joined the Network. Panama participated in the IDB-sponsored workshop in the Dominican Republic and agrees with the suggestions made by Honduras. They are adding retrospective material to GLIN and are also working on agreements with 3 different institutions (a Bar Association and two universities) for the provision of material from legal journals.

Stella Chenu, Director of GLIN Paraguay, reported that her station offers comparative law to other institutions. They have signed an agreement with the official gazette to receive digital versions of the laws. She said that they have not encountered any problems using the new system and that the multilingual interface helps to support use by the public. Chenu mentioned that GLIN Paraguay is working on records that existed in the old version and now must be brought into compliance with GLIN standards. They are planning, she reported, to conduct GLIN training for legislators and legislative support personnel.

The Director of GLIN Romania, Dan Chirita, remarked that his station has been adhering to GLIN standards for currency. They are keeping up to date with the legislation and are working to add retrospective material. He noted that this is not as difficult for Romania as for some other jurisdictions because they are a relatively new democracy. Romania is planning to add legislative records to GLIN based upon a database that they have maintained in their parliament since 1996. They have also approached the constitutional court about adding jurisprudence to GLIN.

Although Russia could not participate in the meeting, Peter Roudik, Senior Legal Specialist for Russia, Law Library of Congress prepared and presented a brief status report on their behalf. He observed that 2005 had been a difficult year for the publisher of the official gazette (the GLIN station in Russia) as they had undergone a major reorganization. However, in spite of this, the GLIN team has been expanded and they have recently started to input new legal information into GLIN including codes. The GLIN Russia team is now in closer contact with the Law Library and this appears to be a hopeful sign for their future participation.

Following the report about Russia, Lakhsara Mint Dié, from GLIN Mauritania, gave a presentation that focused more widely on efforts to promote GLIN in West/Central Africa. She noted several obstacles that hinder the participation of African countries in GLIN. These include a lack of individuals sufficiently educated to serve as legal analysts and/or technical specialists and the lack of English training for the contribution of summaries. She also believes that a training period longer than one week is required and that follow up is also necessary. Lack of adequate infrastructure is also an impediment. She offered several suggestions for improving GLIN: simplify the search system; create better, illustrated help screens; titles and legal instrument names should also be multilingual; and hyperlink subject terms in the metadata records. Dié strongly urged the “popularization” of GLIN including the promotion of national interfaces that would more culturally appropriate.

Connie Johnson read the report that was prepared by GLIN Taiwan which could not send representatives to the meeting. Taiwan received the GLIN Model Station Award in 2002 and the team that helped earn that distinction is still in place. They created or revised almost 600 laws over the last year and have created a Chinese version of the GLIN thesaurus. They plan to launch a new version of the GLIN Taiwan website in October that will extract the most recent laws added to the GLIN database.

Another Senior Legal Specialist from the Law Library, Issam Saliba, was called upon to deliver the report from Tunisia, a member that could unfortunately not attend the meeting. The GLIN station in Tunisia, which has been a member of GLIN since 1996 is located in the Center for Juridical and Judicial Studies (CEJJ) [affiliated with the Ministry of Justice]. Although it experienced problems related to its Internet service over this past year, the problems have now been solved and they now have the infrastructure needed to meet GLIN requirements. They have conducted training sessions for all judges at the Center and plan to begin entering selected decisions of the Court of Cassation.

Rosemary Noona, representing the Director of GLIN United Nations, offered the report from her station. The United Nations GLIN team has recently experienced some staff changes and two new members have joined the team. Noona commented that the new system has made it much easier to add the full text to records. They have started to work retrospectively, but the full texts will have to be scanned as they do not exist electronically. She remarked that GLIN is currently the only index available for the U.N.'s Juridical Yearbook. The U.N. is working on a Memorandum of Understanding to formalize their participation and to make the texts of their material available to the public through GLIN. Noona offered the U.N.'s assistance in creating other language versions of the GLIN thesaurus. Finally, she pointed out that she is now using GLIN to research laws on expulsion and deportation.

The Director of GLIN United States, Donna Scheeder, explained that over the past year the U.S. GLIN station has been reorganized and an action agenda was developed that combined both current and retrospective projects. A new attorney will soon be hired to keep current with U.S. laws, court decisions, and legal writings. The statutes will be linked to Senate and House reports available electronically through the Government Printing Office. All U.S. statutes will be in GLIN by 2006 and digitization of old House and Senate reports will begin that year. Scheeder told the audience that they should consider the open access model as a source for legal literature.

The newest member of GLIN, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, was represented by its Director, Maurice Nyamugabo Mpova. He described how Lakhsara Mint Dié had worked closely with the office of the Official Journal to become a GLIN member. In 2005, Dié helped to train the GLIN Congo team on the new system and they are now adding about 250 legal texts per month. Mpova remarked that there are many benefits to joining GLIN such as the fact that their laws are open for the world to see--including international banks and investors. GLIN facilitates the dissemination of legal texts to citizens; facilitates judicial and legal reform; helps the transition to democracy; and is useful for comparative legal research.

To wrap up the session on reports from GLIN stations, representatives from two potential GLIN members, Mali and Saudi Arabia, were provided the opportunity to offer remarks. Oumou Ba Sangare, Deputy of the National Assembly of Mali, announced that they intend to establish a GLIN station in the legislature of Mali. They are currently working on a judicial reform project with the United Nations and believe GLIN will support that work. The National Assembly of Mali has a computer department and a

documentation center and GLIN will facilitate the dissemination of legal texts. She expressed an interest in having exchange visits with all the members of GLIN. After her statement, Abdulrahman Al-Zahrani of the Shura Council, Saudi Arabia, announced the intention of the Saudi Arabia to join GLIN very soon.

The afternoon session began with a presentation from ATS (Advanced Technology Systems), the company that was awarded the contract to design and implement the new GLIN system. ATS provided a preview of some of the new GLIN features that will be available in February 2006. Amelia Baker, presenting on behalf of ATS, began by proclaiming that nine new interface languages will be added to GLIN: Arabic, Chinese (traditional), German, Italian, Korean, Lithuanian, Romanian, Ukrainian, and Russian, bringing the total number of interface languages to 13. Baker mentioned that the text of summaries will remain in the languages that are input even for other languages. The edit function will be available directly from the search process for those who have edit rights. This will allow contributors to “fix” a record at the point where they see it. Another new feature in GLIN will be the ability to save work in process or partially completed work. The search capability that has been added for the “pending full text” files will be extended to all outstanding contributions. In order to alleviate the possibility of more than one person working on the same GLIN record, a “record locking” feature will be implemented that essentially assigns that record to only one person until they have completed their work.

Many GLIN members have requested improved statistics and reporting, and Baker exhibited some of the new and redesigned reports that will be available. The “Help” center in GLIN will be enhanced to include such things as “rollover” text (to provide details on labels and tabs) and, in some cases, pop-up boxes to provide more specific information. Finally, Baker reported that a number of enhanced usability features will be implemented including improved visual layout and contrast and more helpful error messages.

Following the presentation, an open discussion session was held to allow GLIN members to share their reactions to the presentation and to offer comments and suggestions based on their experiences using the new system. Abdullah Al-Qahtani, GLIN Kuwait asked for a way to “jump” to a particular country on the search results list (which now displays jurisdictions in alphabetical order). The system currently provides a way to “limit” the search results list to a particular jurisdiction and this was demonstrated. After some discussion, it appeared that a concern exists that the name of the jurisdiction is not prominent enough on the search results page. Al-Qahtani suggested the use of country flags.

Rosemary Noona, United Nations, asked if there was a way, under the User Summary report, to find out more specifically who is using the material of the United Nations. As demonstrated, there is currently only one “Viewed” column that counts anyone who has looked at the U.N.’s material. She wants to see this further refined so that they can tell how many people outside the institution are looking at their information. Lakhsara Mint Dié, GLIN Mauritania agreed that it was important to break the “Viewed”



category into public and non-public viewers. Cris Daniluk, ATS, said that he believed it would not be difficult to further refine the “Viewed” statistic to show the number of internal viewers and the number of external viewers.

Oumou Ba Sangare from Mali suggested that we should put translated versions of the GLIN Charter on the website. GLIN Central agreed to do this.

Marco Castillo, Justice Studies Center of the Americas, mentioned that he had spoken to Charles Dove about the future use of XML in GLIN and wanted the others to hear about this. Daniluk said that this is not a feature that will be implemented in February, but in the future the aim is to make the data that is in GLIN be available in an open XML format so that jurisdictions could use this information in different ways. For example, they could download all the data in GLIN, or only the data that has changed since the last download.

Al-Qahtani expressed concern about the use of “pop-ups” in the next release as some browsers prohibit these. Daniluk explained that what GLIN intends to provide are not really “pop-ups” as many people know them through Internet. Rather, GLIN will use an HTML box that is drawn on top of part of the screen to provide more help information in certain areas.

Connie Johnson, GLIN Central, asked if different language versions of the thesaurus will be available when the new language interfaces come online. Andrew Spell, ATS, said that all the main terms are currently being translated, but he said that GLIN members could help provide scope notes and “used for” terms. The goal is to have user acceptance testing of the thesauri in November. A URL will be made available with a template that will allow GLIN members the ability to review and offer revisions to the various language thesauri.

Lakhsara Mint Dié asked how countries might implement local interfaces to GLIN. Spell explained that ATS is working on a data exchange effort and made reference to Cris Daniluk’s earlier comments on creating a pre-set XML format that would help GLIN members tap into GLIN data in different ways.

Al-Qahtani remarked that GLIN Kuwait had lost some data when the new system was implemented and expressed concern about security. Janice Hyde stated that Kuwait’s data was most likely not “lost,” but is now in a “pending full text” bin. She offered to work with Kuwait to locate it. Tony Martino, ATS, said that all the data from the old system is retrievable, but that some data is now only available by the application and not accessible to the public.

Lorena Perez, Organization of American States, and Lakhsara Mint Dié both asked about linking to documents at different websites. Andrew Spell responded that they should make a request to a GLIN Central administrator who can approve certain URLs. Janice Hyde stated that GLIN Central retains the right to review and approve links to external sites. She explained that linking to OAS sites will most certainly be

approved, but GLIN did not want members to link to any external website without review.

Lakhsara Mint Dié proposed that multiple languages be used for the instrument classes, for example, “loi” in French in addition to “law” in English. Cris Daniluk suggested that the easiest way to do this was to string both language versions together, e.g. law/loi. Janice Hyde suggested that the instrument class field could, like the summary field, be made truly multilingual with separate tables for the different languages. The English language instrument classes would be selected and displayed with the English language summary and the French language instrument classes would be displayed with the French language summary. It was agreed that this issue needs further discussion to come up with an acceptable solution.

Dan Chirita, GLIN Romania, mentioned that there has been interest expressed in have a members’ discussion forum or chat room. Rubens Medina asked if this had to be a part of the system itself or could it be a separate system. Charles Dove, GLIN Central, said that many issues came up at the time of the new release and it would be helpful at such times to have a forum where members could share comments and experiences. Medina stated that he had no doubt about the need for this, and said that we need to move to implement something as soon as possible. Eduardo Ghuisolfi, GLIN Uruguay, mentioned that the Inter-American Development Bank currently operates a communication forum for the GLIN-Americas. He noted that this has been an enriching experience and something similar would be a good tool for the whole Network. Medina said that a common language is needed for communication and to date we have used English. He said that he welcomes any country that wants to add another common language, but stressed the need to have a common language to communicate effectively. Ghuisolfi responded that he was not proposing that the forum be in a particular language, but rather that the Network consider the format and procedure used by the GLIN-Americas forum.

#### **Thursday, September 8, 2005**

The implementation of the multilingual interface has posed some unique challenges for GLIN, especially in the development and maintenance of different language versions of the thesaurus. Sandra Sawicki, GLIN Thesaurus Administrator, underscored this point in her presentation on the GLIN thesaurus. She described how the GLIN Thesaurus Council at the Law Library of Congress, comprised of legal specialists representing various jurisdictions, meets weekly to refine the GLIN thesaurus by considering and adopting new English-language terms for the thesaurus, adding and refining scope notes, and reviewing hierarchical relationships. She noted that a new term cannot be added to the GLIN thesaurus until the equivalent term exists in all four languages. The situation will become more complex in February when an additional nine interface languages are added. Sawicki demonstrated the online form for proposing new candidate terms. She invited all GLIN members to consider proposing terms for the thesaurus and requested the assistance of GLIN members to provide translations of terms into the GLIN interface languages.

Miguel Alvarez Galvez, GLIN Guatemala, asked how long it takes to process a term through the GLIN Thesaurus Council. Sawicki said that it might take about a month to move through the entire process now that multiple language equivalents are needed. Carmen Garcia Mendieta, GLIN Uruguay, said that they have been translating the GLIN thesaurus terms into Spanish from the beginning. Some discussion centered around regional differences in terminology. Medina suggested that in some cases these differences could be handled as “used for” terms.

The new release of GLIN also enabled the contribution of a wider range of legal materials. In addition to statutory material, three additional “modules” are now available: judicial decisions, legislative records, and legal literature. A presentation by Rubens Medina focused on strategies for adding data to these modules. He noted the importance of completing the statutory module by insuring that constitutions, laws (both current and retrospective), codes, treaties, and regulations are all included. He outlined three approaches to handling the retrospective material: working in discrete increments of time; adding laws by specific subject areas; and adding older laws as they are amended or otherwise affected by new laws. Medina mentioned that the Law Library is working on standards and procedures for adding codes to GLIN.

With respect to judicial decisions, cooperation with courts is likely to be the most effective means of securing access to this material. He cited two examples of current agreements. In Nicaragua, the legislature has agreed to input statutes, and the Supreme Court is directly adding its judicial decisions to GLIN. In Argentina, through an agreement, the Supreme Court is providing electronic texts of its decisions to the GLIN station at the Library of Congress in Argentina which is then adding the metadata.

Medina observed that the volume of legislative records demands selection, and the focus for this material should be adding those records that directly relate to statutes in GLIN. Finally, GLIN stations should consider entering any reports that they prepare for the legislature and also consider partnering with institutions such as bar associations and university law schools to acquire relevant legal literature. Medina cautioned that copyright issues must be considered and he said that GLIN Central would offer a copyright waiver form on the website.

In a discussion following Medina’s presentation, Charles Mwalimu, Senior Legal Specialist, Law Library of Congress, suggested the addition of a separate module for customary law because he does not see where this would fit in the current 4-module scheme. Medina responded that many systems recognize indigenous law and that this would in many cases fit in the statutory module. In some other instances, information about indigenous law could be put into the legal literature module. We should, he suggested, be prepared to be flexible and not always define law based on Roman standards.

Stella Chenu, Director of GLIN Paraguay, asked about selection criteria. She said that Medina mentioned in his presentation that “there is no issue that is not important” to include, but she recalls receiving precise instructions in 1999 during her GLIN training

about selection criteria. She was told at that training not to include things related to internal issues—such as the travel of a particular individual. Is this still the standard? Medina replied that strictly private laws—those that relate to compensation for individuals, or their travel may be omitted, but it would not hurt to include these as well. “When in doubt, include it,” he said. Miguel Alvarez Galvez, GLIN Guatemala, said that he shared Stella Chenu’s concern. When they were trained, they were told not to include private laws and so they did not include the budgets of private offices; however, Guillermo Castillo of the IDB said his institution was interested in this information so they began to include it. Carmen Garcia Mendieta, GLIN Uruguay noted that they exclude regulations that have individual content such as the naming of public schools and travel for individual officials, but they do include it on their local GLIN database. She will consider contributing this to GLIN in the future.

Ana Duran Salvatierra, GLIN Costa Rica, remarked that they have a problem with adding judicial decisions because they are concerned about including the names of parties. This information is generally not made available to the public. Initials are used instead of names to protect privacy. Medina said that the input fields for names of parties in GLIN are optional and this information does not have to be added.

Janice Hyde offered the report from GLIN Central, highlighting accomplishments of the past year. She noted that the Law Library continues to input laws for Spanish- and Portuguese-speaking countries that are not yet members of GLIN and that its staff had contributed over 925 laws to GLIN in the past year. Great progress was made to add retrospective laws for 19 Latin American countries covering the period of 1950-1975 with efforts to input summaries almost complete and the scanning of associated full texts well underway. GLIN Central offered a training session in March and is developing a distance training capability to reach those who may not be able to travel to Washington. Finally, she described promotional efforts over the past year including visits to Canada, Pakistan, Luxembourg, and France.

As required by the GLIN Charter, Rubens Medina, Chair of the GLIN Executive Council, reported on the Executive Council’s activities over the past year. The Executive Council held three meetings over the past year; issued assignments to both the Membership Committee and the Technical Committee; and considered three proposed changes to the GLIN Charter. Two of those proposals were submitted to the members in advance of the meeting for their consideration at the business meeting (Thursday afternoon). The other proposed change concerns Section 11.04 of the Charter and relates to the Charter amendment process. Currently, this section appears to support inequitable voting rights between Contributing and Supporting Members. The Executive Council suggests some minor language changes to make the process more democratic. Finally, Medina reported that the Executive Council discussed the need to formalize the definition, roles, and responsibilities of GLIN Central that exists as a *de facto* entity but is nowhere described.

Medina then asked Janice Hyde to give the report of the Membership Committee. Hyde said that the Executive Council at last year’s meeting had assigned the Membership

Committee with three tasks: elect a Chair, consider expanding the size of the committee; and review the purpose statement. The Membership Committee completed its assignment. It appointed Janice Hyde to be the Chair; it decided that the size of the committee should remain the same for the following year; and it reviewed and revised the purpose statement. She said that although the Membership Committee decided not to increase its size, it had decided to establish regional work groups or task forces to help promote GLIN in different regions. The Committee also established a set of criteria for a “GLIN Member in Good Standing” and refined the criteria required to earn a “GLIN Model Station” award. Finally, she admitted that the committee had not fulfilled one part of its purpose statement: quarterly contact with GLIN Directors, but said that they are in the process of creating a letter that will be sent quarterly to Directors with the intention of assisting those whose stations may not be complying with GLIN standards.

Next, the report of the GLIN Technical Committee was offered by Dan Chirita, GLIN Romania and Chair of the Technical Committee. The report, prepared jointly by Dan Chirita and Eduardo Ghuisolfi, outlined the role that Technical Committee members played in the process of preparing work statements, evaluating proposals by various contractors, and user acceptance testing leading to the implementation of the new release of GLIN in February.

Following the report, Medina noted that the Technical Committee had commented that the system will continue to be developed and enhanced. He strongly urged GLIN members to consider ways to become a self-sufficient, independent Network. He said that the Library of Congress and the U.S. Congress is unlikely to continue to indefinitely support system development. Medardo Aragon, GLIN El Salvador, thanked the members of the GLIN Technical Committee for their work that made the new system possible. Carmen Garcia Mendieta, GLIN Uruguay, said that she would like to congratulate the Technical Committee and thank GLIN Central for the “transfer of technology” and their financial support. “You do not know how important this is for poor countries like Uruguay,” she said.

Rubens Medina opened the GLIN business meeting by introducing Carol Hardy Vincent, Congressional Research Service, who served to facilitate the meeting. A quorum was established with 15 voting members present.

As required by Section 4.01 of the Charter, the first order of business entailed deciding on the size of the Executive Council. Medina stated that the Executive Council recommended that the size of the Executive Council remain the same for the next year; however, he said that the Executive Council had discussed expansion in the future to reflect a more regional representation. He noted that GLIN is a cooperative and each member has equal rights. For reasons of equity, the Executive Council should consider future expansion that better represents the global character of GLIN. The members voted unanimously to keep the size of the Executive Council at five.

The members next considered the proposed amendment to Section 5.01B of the Charter. Rubens Medina proposed the amendment that would give permanent authority

to the Executive Council to act on behalf of the Network in specific “extraordinary or emergency situations.” Miguel Alvarez Galvez, GLIN Guatemala, asked for an interpretation of the amendment that was then read for simultaneous interpretation. Janice Hyde, GLIN Central, explained that the Charter currently requires the Executive Council to present a list of such situations annually to the members for their approval. At last year’s meeting, Julieta Volio Guevara, Director of GLIN Costa Rica, proposed that this authority be made a permanent part of the Charter to alleviate the need for annual approval. The members voted unanimously to approve the amendment to Section 5.01B of the Charter.

Rubens Medina asked Carol Hardy Vincent to read the text of the proposed amendment to Section 7.03A of the Charter that would grant signature authority to the Chair of the Executive Council in specific situations. After the amendment was read, Guillermo Castillo, Inter-American Development Bank, explained that the proposal includes “checks and balances” and does not give blind authority to the Chair to sign any document. Miguel Alvarez Galvez, GLIN Guatemala, said that he agreed with the proposal, but requested that a provision be added so that the Members are notified of the actions of the Executive Council. Medina responded that the Charter requires the Executive Council to report its activities to the members as it had done in its presentation earlier in the day. Alvarez said that he was aware of the annual report, but he did not want to wait an entire year to hear about the activities of the Executive Council.

A discussion ensued that focused on whether such notification was desirable, methods of communication, and the amount of time required between the action of the Chair and communication with members. A consensus was reached on new language to be added to the proposed amendment: “A copy of any document signed under the guidelines of this Section should be sent for information by any possible means to the members of the Network no later than 30 calendar days after the action.” It was agreed that this language should follow the phrase “unless otherwise prohibited by law.” The proposed change to the language of the amendment was adopted by a unanimous vote of the members. The members then voted unanimously to adopt the revised amendment to Section 7.03A of the Charter, thereby granting signature authority to the Chair in certain situations.

The next item for new business concerned the definition and roles of GLIN Central. Rubens Medina explained that although GLIN Central exists as a *de facto* entity, there is a need to clarify what GLIN Central is expected to do. There have been assumptions about the type of support that GLIN Central should offer, and it is time to formalize its roles and obligations. Guillermo Castillo, IDB, suggested that the discussion about GLIN Central be broken into two parts. One part would focus on the future “home” of GLIN and the second should focus on the role of GLIN Central.

Medina said that the future home of GLIN is an extremely important topic. He asked: will the Network be able to stand on its own in the future? The members need to begin to discuss this issue. The contribution of the Library of Congress may not always be there. The Network needs to start thinking clearly about its future. While an

immediate decision is not needed, time flies quickly, and he urged members to seriously consider ways for the Network to become independent.

Connie Johnson, GLIN Central, asked for clarification concerning the creation of a draft article for the Charter about GLIN Central. “Will members have input into this document?” she asked. Medina responded that GLIN Central will create a draft and circulate this to the members for review and comments; however, he emphasized that there are certain things that GLIN Central may not be able to do. Input will be considered, but resource constraints may limit what GLIN Central can promise. Eduardo Ghuisolfi, GLIN Uruguay, said that there are really three issues: the physical location of GLIN as an entity; what role GLIN Central will have; and where will we locate the database and system that is now outside of the Library of Congress. Medina suggested that we begin considering the issues related to the future “home” of GLIN, but he asked that the members vote on the proposal to define the character and functions of GLIN Central. His specific proposal was to draft a new Section of the GLIN Charter on GLIN Central for review and eventual adoption by the members.

Charles Mwalimu, Law Library of Congress, asked the purpose of this new Charter section. He asked, “Are you seeking recognition? Is your proposal to define formally GLIN Central or to add new functions and features?” Medina responded that it is a fact that GLIN Central has been performing some roles. Some members believe that we can perform additional roles, but it is a function of resources. For example, some have expected us to pay for travel. GLIN Central may be able to do some additional things that are suggested but after negotiations. A vote was then taken on the proposal to create a new Charter section on GLIN Central to be circulated for review. The proposal was adopted by a vote of 13 in favor and 2 against.

Rubens Medina next proposed a procedure for elections of members for the GLIN Executive Council and GLIN Foundation Board of Trustees. He proposed announcing names of nominees that had already been received, accepting additional nominees from the floor, and circulating ballots by e-mail on October 3. Guillermo Castillo asked if there would further opportunities to propose candidates. Janice Hyde responded yes, as ballots would not be circulated until October 3. The members voted unanimously to follow the proposed procedure for elections.

Medina then asked for additional nominations from the floor for GLIN Executive Councilors. No additional nominations were made. Turning to the Board of Trustees for the Foundation, Medina read the nominations for Category 1 Trustees (i.e., Trustees represented by GLIN members). Miguel Alvarez Galvez, GLIN Guatemala, said he wanted more communication from the Foundation. Medina said that the Foundation exists to serve the Network and is bound to follow the instructions of the Network. He noted that the bylaws of the Foundation may be amended to include a provision requiring reporting to GLIN members. Alvarez asked for copies of the bylaws. It was agreed that the bylaws of the Foundation would be made available through the GLIN website.

In other business, Guillermo Castillo, IDB, proposed the creation of a Task Force to explore the needs of regional centers. He urged that GLIN move forward to establish regional centers. Eduardo Ghuisolfi, GLIN Uruguay, said that the requirements for regional centers were discussed on Tuesday afternoon as part of the policy document and the Technical Committee had also discussed regional centers. He asked if Castillo was proposing the establishment of a regional center. Castillo responded that he proposed the formation of a group within the network to make regional centers a reality. Medina said that a procedure has been established for certifying well established, “model” stations to be regional centers, but the problem is political. It is beyond the power of the Network to force others in the region to acknowledge a particular country as a “center.” Ana Duran Salvatierra, GLIN Costa Rica, said that she believed that Castillo was talking about something different. She felt he was speaking about regional cooperation, not the creation of a separate structure.

Castillo stated that there were three points to be considered by the Task Force: 1) clearly identify any current regional centers 2) clearly identify and help any stations that wants to become a regional center and 3) identify and clearly state any additional activities that regional centers should undertake. Medina pointed out that Article X [10] of the GLIN Charter concerns regional centers and there is also a section of the policy document covering regional centers. Any group working on regional centers should consider the information that already exists in these documents.

Carol Hardy Vincent, facilitator, observed that there were three issues under debate: 1) whether to create a Task Force on regional centers 2) what its roles are and 3) who will be the members? Members were asked to vote on each of these issues. On the issue of whether or not there should be a Task Force, 12 voted in favor and one opposed. On the issue of adopting the three roles proposed by Castillo, 12 voted in favor and none opposed. There was then a call for nominations and/or volunteers to serve on the Regional Centers Task Force. Members of the Task Force include: Congo, Guatemala, Uruguay, Costa Rica (Costa Rica tentatively agreed pending consultation with the GLIN Director in Costa Rica). Eduardo Ghuisolfi asked that additional nominations be accepted until September 30. There were no objections to his proposal. The business meeting was then adjourned.

Rubens Medina then offered closing remarks. “When we gathered together for the first time 12 years ago, we had a vision of creating an international exchange of legal information. We believed that making accessible the laws of the world was an important endeavor--one that would help foster the rule of law and sustain democratic institutions. I was pleased to hear many of you express a continued commitment to these ideals.” He was encouraged to learn that so many members are working to establish cooperative relationships with other institutions to contribute additional types of legal material to GLIN and that many members have trained government officials and researchers how to use GLIN. He thanked the members for their many positive comments about the new release of GLIN and pledged to continue to enhance the system based on their suggestions. He concluded by saying, “I am convinced that the standing of the Network is solid and that the future is promising.”



A closing dinner was held in the Madison Hall of the Library of Congress and featured as speaker Susan Karamanian, Associate Dean for International and Comparative Legal Studies and Professorial Lecturer in Law, The George Washington University Law School. Professor Karamanian spoke of the importance of access to laws from around the world for practitioners and for policy makers. She provided specific examples of requests, including a recent request from the World Bank, that her office often gets for laws from various countries. She praised GLIN for its work it is doing to provide timely access to this information.

Rubens Medina then presented two awards. The 2005 GLIN Model Station award was given to GLIN Costa Rica. In announcing the award, Medina noted that “The [Costa Rican] team distinguished itself by reviewing all records from its jurisdiction for the last twenty years and updating the information contained in them so that all records are in compliance with the quality standards that emerged from the implementation of the new GLIN system in February of this year.” He noted that Costa Rica has also provided training to others in the region and that its Director, Julieta Volio Guevara, has been active in suggesting new policies and other network activities. Ana Duran Salvatierra, GLIN Legal Analyst for Costa Rica, accepted the award.

For the first time, an “Exceptional Service” award was given to an individual whom Medina noted had “distinguish[ed] herself by going above and beyond the ordinary to perform truly extraordinary acts of service.” Medina described the efforts of Lakhsara Mint Dié, of GLIN Mauritania, to promote GLIN in Africa and to provide training to the GLIN team of the Democratic Republic of Congo when they were unable to travel to Washington. He was honored, he said, to present the Exception Service award to Dié “for her innovation, her advocacy, and her commitment to improving the GLIN database and the Network.”

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