AN INTRODUCTION:
INTERNATIONAL LAW AS LAW

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While the American Society of International Law’s 102nd Annual Meeting was shaped by political and foreign policy debates, the 103rd Annual Meeting provided an opportunity to challenge underlying assumptions about our international legal system and to renew our focus on “International Law as Law.”

The international legal system is unique. Like domestic law, international law is created, implemented, and enforced—but in a manner that is distinct, varied, and constantly evolving. Understanding how international law functions as law today requires an examination of the nature of the actors in the international legal system and the changing ways in which they interact with one another. These developments are challenging and transforming traditional visions of international law, sparking new and renewed theoretical and practical debates.

The 2009 Annual Meeting presented a broad range of perspectives on the creation, implementation, enforcement, and critique of international law today. In over thirty-five panels featuring leading practitioners, scholars, and government officials, we examined the changing character of fundamental aspects of the international legal system. For example, we considered the sources of international law, the role of states and their constituent branches of government in generating and implementing international obligations (including the role of domestic courts in enforcing treaty obligations), the law-making and law-executing functions of international organizations, and the role of non-state actors (including civil society, individuals, and businesses) as creators, enforcers, and subjects of international law. We also examined developments in substantive law and innovations in techniques for achieving compliance.

The Annual Meeting and the Proceedings would not be possible without the tireless work of the program committee members: Nehal Bhuta, Tomer Broude, Oona A. Hathaway, Derek Jinks, Richard Johnson, Russell LaMatte, Frédéric Mégret, Andrea J. Menaker, Dianne Otto, Vasuki Nesiah, Natalie Reid, Sandesh Sivakumaran, Paul B. Stephan, Ruth Teitelbaum, Allen Weiner, and Gwen Kathleen Young. We would like to thank them for their creativity and commitment to organizing such a rich program. We also extend our warm appreciation and deep gratitude to ASIL Executive Director Betsy Andersen for her invaluable guidance and to ASIL President Lucy Reed for her strategic vision and leadership. Additionally, the success of the meeting and the Proceedings also hinge on daily work performed by many ASIL staff members, including Akua Gyekye, Julie Furgerson, Djurdja Lajic, Cody Oliphant, Veronica Onorevole, Alison Plenge, Nasser Qadri, Kelly Vinopal, and Sheila Ward. In particular, we would like to highlight the efforts of Preeti Kundra Deshmukh, who served as Managing Editor of the Proceedings.

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