

Dear Members and Friends of the International Section,

It's a great pleasure to greet you and wish you a Happy 2012! I'm taking this opportunity to introduce myself and also share with you the upcoming work of the section's International Development Committee.

Firstly, by way of introduction, here is a little background on me: I spent my childhood in Panama, daughter to an American father and Panamanian mother. I have lived and/or worked in many parts of the world, including France, Argentina, India, and Bosnia. Fourteen years ago, I learned mediation from Joe Folger and Tricia Jones as an undergrad student, and have remained in the field in some form or another. From 2002 – 2005, I was a Rotary Peace Fellow in Argentina. I now work for the New York Peace Institute, a large community mediation and training program in New York City. My interest in Conflict Resolution is deep and longstanding, especially as it relates to restorative justice and under-represented people. I look forward to connecting with all of you in these or new areas of interest.

As some of you know, for the past two years I've served the section as co-chair to the International Development Committee (IDC). This year, the IDC will resume its annual task of soliciting nominations and selecting Outstanding Leadership Awardees. The Outstanding Leadership Award is given yearly to honor exceptional work promoting conflict resolution in development projects around the world and highlighting the field of conflict resolution in creating stronger democracies and economies. Our past awardees have come from all corners of the globe, including Argentina, India, Kenya, Romania, Russia, Uganda, and the United States. Their areas of work have included the justice system, civil society development, work with youth, community mediation, environmental protection, and post-war reconciliation. Past awardees have richly contributed to our International Day agendas through their presentations and engagement with attendees. The professional and personal experiences of these individuals have broadened our imaginations, networks and sense of global community in invaluable ways.

I invite you each to assist in this year's search for those special individuals or organizations to nominate for the Award, people who are worthy of recognition, but also whose presence during International Day could help take our section to new levels of awareness and participation. We will be putting out a call to nominations in late January for a submission deadline of March 15<sup>th</sup> and final selection sometime in April. You can help us by identifying strong nominees, and by spreading the word among your contacts and friends. Please send all nominations to us at [idc.nominations@gmail.com](mailto:idc.nominations@gmail.com).

Together with Walter, I'm looking forward to our upcoming projects and teamwork. Please feel free to reach out to us with your ideas, questions, or helping hands!

Wishing you a fruitful and exciting year ahead!

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