Weinstein International Foundation
MEDIATING A BETTER FUTURE

2026 INTERNATIONAL MEDIATION WRITING COMPETITION

The Weinstein International Foundation is proud to announce its sixth iteration of the International Mediation Writing Competition. Law students from select countries around the world are invited to write a mediation memorandum on behalf of a client who is preparing to participate in the mediation of a litigated dispute.

Entries will be judged by a distinguished panel of judges, including Senior Fellows and designated representatives from participating law firms and law schools in the following countries:
Brazil, China, Ecuador, Egypt, Ethiopia, India, Moldova, Nigeria, Pakistan, Romania, Singapore, Vietnam, and Zambia.

The top paper will be awarded a maximum cash prize of **$1,000 (USD).**

The Weinstein International Foundation works through a global network of ADR-trained Senior Fellows from around the world, who have developed the cultural understanding and local knowledge necessary to promote the resolution of conflict through mediation and other dispute resolution practices in their own countries and beyond.
The Senior Fellows who are leading the International Mediation Writing Competition in their respective countries are listed below.

Brazil



Mariana Freitas de Souza is a lawyer and mediator, serving as president of the Brazilian Center of Mediation and Arbitration (CBMA), a pioneering private mediation and arbitration center in Rio de Janeiro, and a partner at PVS Advogados. She has been a lawyer and law professor in Brazil for over twenty years and teaches ADR at Candido Mendes University while providing commercial mediation trainings, including at CBMA, which she coordinates. She serves on the panel of Neutrals of CBMA, FGV Chamber of Mediation and Arbitration, Brazilian Commercial Mediation and Arbitration Chamber (CAMARB), and Industry Federation of São Paulo (CIESP/FIESP). Ms. Freitas de Souza is also a member of the arbitration and mediation committees of the Brazilian Bar Association and the Brazilian Lawyer's Institute. She sits on the advisory board of the Brazilian Bar Association and is Vice-President of ICFML, the Portuguese qualifying program for IMI certification. She has further served as a member of the UN Global Mediation Panel and designated by the Leaders League publication as one of the best mediators in Brazil.

China



Jiang Heping is a former judge with 30 years of judicial experience, who participated in drafting the Supreme People's Court judicial documents on ADR and designed the court-annexed ADR pilot program in Dongguan Court. He has adjudicated more than 6,000 civil and commercial cases and was named a Guangdong Provincial Expert in Trial Practice by the Guangdong High People's Court. In 2025, he left the bench to serve as a lecturer at Dongguan Polytechnic, teaching Criminal Law, Civil Law, and other law courses. In 2026, he joined the panel of mediators at the Dongguan Intellectual Property Dispute Association and the Dongguan Court and served as an arbitrator at the Dongguan Arbitration Commission. Since 2011, he has published dozens of articles on mediation, authored A Practical Guide to Pre-Trial Mediation and Commercial Mediation Handbook. He has conducted mediation trainings throughout China and trained over 1,000 professionals.

Ecuador



Ximena Bustamante is an established mediator in Ecuador and the founding partner of PACTUM Dispute Resolution Consulting, a firm dedicated exclusively to collaborative law through negotiation, mediation, and neutral third-party assistance. She is a Neutral on the Global Mediation Panel of the United Nations Ombudsmans Office and Vice Chair of the Mediation Committee for the International Bar Association. Ms. Bustamante has served on neutral panels for the Mediation and Arbitration Centers of the Quito Chamber of Commerce, the Ecuadorian American Chamber of Commerce, the Pichincha Chamber of Industries, and San Francisco de Quito University, as well as at the Mediation Centers of the Office of the Attorney General, and the Center for Law and Society (CIDES). She is also a professor at San Francisco de Quito University and the Public Management Program at IDE Business School in Quito. Ms. Bustamante has acted as the National Director of Mediation at the Attorney General's Office of the Republic of Ecuador and as Deputy Director of the Arbitration and Mediation Center of the Quito Chamber of Commerce.

Egypt



Hon. Dr. Sherif Elnegahy is a globally recognized dispute resolution expert with over 20 years of experience. A Rotary Peace Fellow, Fulbright and Chevening Scholar, his career is distinguished by his commitment to innovative justice. He has led consultancy projects for UNDP in Sri Lanka and Malawi, designed and delivered peacebuilding programs for UN Women in the Arab States and Palestine, and serves as a key advisor on mediation affairs to the Saudi Ministry of Justice. As a sitting Judge at the Court of Appeal in Egypt and mediator for international organizations such as the Green Climate Fund, Hon. Dr. Elnegahy's dispute resolution expertise bridges the gap between legal theory, judicial practice, and restorative, creative justice. He is a dedicated educator, serving as a visiting law professor and course leader for negotiation and mediation at the British University in Egypt (BUE), where he cultivates the next generation of legal professionals. A pioneering author and accredited CEDR mediator, he is dedicated to building sustainable peace and advancing access to justice in the Arab world and beyond.

Ethiopia



Gidey Belay Assefa is a doctoral candidate in International Investment Law at the Australian National University and a consultant and attorney at law with Gidey Law, a commercial and investment law platform focusing on dispute settlements. He previously worked as an associate attorney at ALG LLP in Addis Ababa, where he specialized in international arbitration. In 2022, he was selected to join the inaugural cohort of the ICC's Hold the Door Open scholars' program, which provides training for future leaders of international arbitration from Africa. Mr. Assefa has taught law at Addis Ababa University and Aksum University, where he led the legal aid center. He holds an LL.M. in Transnational Dispute Resolution from the University of Manchester and an LL.M. in Commercial Law from Hawassa University.



Maedot Yeshak Tesfaye serves on the Federal High Court of Ethiopia with over ten years of judicial experience, presiding over cases involving a range of complex matters, including commercial and investment disputes. She has extensive training and expertise in court systems, procedures, and rules, in addition to specialized training and certification in dispute resolution and private international law. She is an active member of national and international organizations dedicated to dispute resolution, including the London Court of International Arbitration, the International Chamber of Commerce Young Arbitrators Forum and the International Building Quality Center, where she works to develop ADR protocols for effective dispute resolution mechanisms in emerging economies such as those in Africa, particularly with regards to the building and construction industry.

India



Laila T. Ollapally is an IMI-certified mediator with experience mediating over 600 complex civil and commercial disputes. She is the founder of CAMP Arbitration and Mediation Practice, a pioneering private mediation initiative in Bangalore, India. She began her mediation journey as the founding coordinator of the Karnataka Mediation Centre (KMC), the court-annexed program of the High Court of Karnataka, from 2007 to 2021. She continues to serve as a senior mediator and master trainer at KMC. Ms. Ollapally served on the committee of the Supreme Court of India to provide recommendations on the draft legislation on mediation and as part of the Ministry of Legal Affairs' working committee on mediation rules and standards in India. She serves on the panel of the Singapore International Mediation Centre (SIMC). She further serves on the Board of IMI and the International Advisory Board of the Global Mediation Panel, UNDP.

Moldova



Patricia Zghibarta is an international disputes lawyer at Sidley Austin LLP in Geneva, where she focuses on international investment and commercial arbitration. Before joining Sidley, Ms. Zghibarta gained experience at Clifford Chance in Frankfurt, after having worked for approximately four years as a consultant in dispute resolution at the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD). At the EBRD, she advised governments on ADR reforms, including commercial dispute resolution, court digitalization, enforcement of commercial judgments, and the business, regulatory, and investment climate in Eastern Europe and Central Asia. Ms. Zghibarta trained in both Moldova and the United Kingdom, where she pursued an LL.M. at the University of Cambridge as a Chevening and Cambridge Trust Scholar. She is qualified as a solicitor in England and Wales.



Dumitru Lefter is the director of the Mediation Center of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry and a member of the Mediation Council of the Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Moldova. A certified mediator by the Ministry of Justice, he is the co-founder and president of the Mediation Academy and Legal Studies and serves as an expert, sharing his experience in the development of mediation organizations and the implementation of best practices in legal systems in Europe. With over ten years of experience in the field of mediation, he has successfully mediated 500+ mediation cases in Moldova and internationally. He holds a master's degree in international law and a licentiate in international law from the State University of Moldova. Mr. Lefter works to contribute to a more informed and strategic approach to the adoption of mediation, not only in Moldova but in other jurisdictions where he is actively involved.

Nigeria



Victoria Banke Olagbegi-Oloba is a lawyer called to the Nigerian Bar Association and a prominent scholar specializing in Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR). Currently a Postdoctoral Research Fellow at Stellenbosch University, she received the prestigious 2022 Weinstein JAMS International Fellowship for her dedication to ADR and conflict resolution. Dr. Olagbegi-Oloba has taught ADR courses, mentoring over 2,500 students and professionals. She is renowned for her facilitation of ADR training in Nigeria, having trained more than 3,000 individuals, including judges and community leaders. As a member of the College of Neutrals, ICMC, and the Panel of Neutrals at the Ondo State Multi-Door Courthouse, she resolves high-profile mediation cases. Additionally, she consults for Nigerian state judiciaries on establishing and promoting court-connected ADR programs. Her qualifications include certifications in Advanced Mediation Skills from Edwards Mediation Academy and Conflict Management from Harvard Law School.

Pakistan



Dr. Nudrat E. Piracha serves as Tribunal Secretary for JAMS, as a legal and academic advisor to Judge Charles N. Brower, and as a Partner at Samdani Qureshi Aqlaal. She is the first lawyer from Pakistan to become a Fellow of the Chartered Institute of Arbitrators, UK (FCIArb), and the first woman in Pakistan to have qualified as an S.J.D. She has extensive experience in arbitration in Pakistan, and has practical experience as an advocate in the areas of International Commercial Arbitration and International Construction and Investment Disputes before the ICC, ICSID, SCC, and Adhoc Tribunals. She is a solicitor in England and Wales, a Member of the High Court of Pakistan Bar, and the Country Reporter for Pakistan for the Kluwer Arbitration International/Board of International Transnational Arbitration. She served as a scholar in residence for six months at ICSID in 2016 and has been designated by the Government of Pakistan to join the panel of arbitrators of ICSID for an 8-year term.

Romania



Constantin-Adi Gavrilă is a well-known international mediator based in Romania with 20 years of extensive experience. He is the President of ADR Center Romania, co-founder of the Craiova Mediation Center Association, and works extensively with ADR Center as a Senior Mediation and ADR Expert, training mediators and advising governments and other clients in their efforts to promote and implement mediation. From 2007-2017, Mr. Gavril served as Co-Chair of the Independent Standards Commission convened by the International Mediation Institute (IMI). In 2020, Mr. Gavril was selected for his mediation expertise by the European Commission for the Efficiency of Justice (CEPEJ), Council of Europe, to provide services related to the field of mediation in the implementation of CEPEJ cooperation programs. Mr. Gavril received his Ph.D. from the University of Craiova with an emphasis on Mediation and Access to Justice.

Singapore



Tat Lim is a dispute resolution practitioner and the managing partner of a boutique law firm based in Singapore. For close to three decades of practice, he has appeared as counsel in trials and appeals at all levels of the Singapore courts, in negotiations, neutral evaluations and mediations, and in domestic and international arbitrations. Mr. Lim has been appointed as an arbitrator in institutional arbitrations and as a mediator in over 10 institutional and ad hoc mediations. He also mediates public interest disputes as a mediator / regional consultant of the Compliance Advisory Ombudsman (CAO), World Bank Group. He has also been appointed as chair and member of numerous inquiry and disciplinary panels, committees, and tribunals, and has been appointed as an expert in Singapore law in Hong Kong court proceedings and in Singapore International Arbitration Centre (SIAC) arbitration proceedings.

Vietnam



Tuan Nguyen is a certified mediator of the Ministry of Justice and the co-founder and director of the Vietnam Commercial Effective Mediation Center (VEMC), providing conflict management, mediation, and online dispute resolution services to companies in Vietnam and internationally. As part of his role as Director of VEMC, he and his team are committed to promoting mediation as a preferred form of dispute resolution in Vietnam, contributing to legislative reform to provide increased access to justice through mediation, and improving the justice system in Vietnam. A graduate of the MBA program at the University of Warwick Business School and Hanoi National University Law School, he further serves as the managing partner at ANT Lawyers, which has offices in Hanoi, Ho Chi Minh City, and Da Nang.



Do Thanh Thuy is an experienced lawyer and ADR practitioner. She was a visiting lecturer in Intellectual Property (IP) at the Judicial Academy of Vietnam, and she has substantial academic knowledge and practical expertise in all areas of commercial law, intellectual property, employment law, real estate, and general corporate law. She has worked for a number of prominent organizations, i.e., Big C – an affiliate of Casino Group (France), Heineken International N.V. (Netherlands), and other large corporations in Vietnam. Currently, Ms. Do is a mediator and lawyer for ANT, a pioneer professional law firm providing ADR and mediation services in Vietnam. Ms. Do offers mediation and conflict resolution services to assist businesses, employers, groups, and organizations in resolving disputes, differences, and conflicts. She also promotes the use of mediation through training activities.

Zambia



Mugeni Siwale Mulenga is a trained mediator and arbitrator who served as a judge of the Constitutional Court from its establishment in 2016 through 2024. She previously served as a judge of the High Court, where she actively promoted the use of mediation among litigants before her court. During her judicial tenure and while acting as Chairperson of the Committee on Training and Continuing Education and as a member of the Committee on Court-Annexed Mediation and Delay Reduction, among other committees, she advocated for increased mediation practice and training of the justice sector and other stakeholders. Preceding her ascension to the bench, she worked for the National Water Supply and Sanitation Council (NWASCO) where she practiced and promoted the use of ADR in the sector. She also served in the Attorney General's Chambers under the Ministry of Justice.



Stephen Lungu has practiced law in Zambia for over 30 years. He is a partner at Shamwana and Co., based in Lusaka, where he specializes in international law and banking, intercultural management, leadership, and sustainable development. A highly accomplished legal professional with extensive experience in civil litigation, he was conferred as State Counsel by the President of the Republic of Zambia in 2018. A former president of the Law Association of Zambia (LA), he is an accredited mediator and ADR trainer, and has served as the commissioner of the small claims courts, where he mediates pro bono small claims cases. He holds a law degree from the University of Zambia and a master's degree in international banking and finance from King's College, University of London.



Lois Chisompola Sikwenda is the Managing Partner of Valerie and Partners and co-founder and director of the Institute for Mediation Excellence, one of Zambia's first mediation centers to provide mediation and training to build the capacity and quality of mediators in the country. She previously served as senior research advocate to the president of the Constitutional Court, district registrar, and mediation coordinator of the Committee on Court-Annexed Mediation. Drawing from her experience on the bench, Ms. Sikwenda works as both a representative of clients and as a third-party neutral, facilitating effective and mutually satisfactory agreements in negotiation, mediation, and neutral evaluation. She holds a Master of Laws degree in ADR from the University of Cape Town and a post-graduate diploma in legislative drafting from the Zambia Institute of Advanced Legal Education. She has been recognized as a Global Woman Leader for her professional achievements and impact on Zambia's business landscape in bridging bridges to justice through mediation and negotiation.