

Does The World Need An International Negotiation Initiative?

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While working on the manuscript for a book published last year (*Negotiation: Things Corporate Counsel need to know but were not taught - Walters Kluwer, 2017*), I submitted a draft to an eclectic peer group from all around the world to gauge whether I was on the right track. The group comprised corporate counsel, business people, negotiation and mediation scholars and trainers, practitioners, neuroscientists, culturologists and lawyers. Terrific ideas, suggestions, critique, support and challenges came in. They greatly influenced my thinking and writing.

One idea that made its way into the book, indeed Michael McIlwrath of General Electric endorsed it in his Foreword, is the need for an international negotiation initiative, an INI.

The initial proposition for an INI is that it would:

- be born global, trans-cultural and well-funded, and inspire as a non-profit entity;
- promote consensual ways of overcoming the problems and hindrances that afflict individuals, organizations and societies when negotiating effective outcomes;
- bring to the global stage core concepts of negotiation that today are only debated, if at all, at local or national scholarly levels, such as canons of good negotiation practice, an international code of negotiation ethics and cultural negotiation paradigms;
- provide a capacity-building engine, equipped to change attitudes to research and training in negotiation in higher education and professional bodies around the world;
- create or bridge gaps in access for those who badly need, but can't afford, world class negotiation training, for example by attracting funds for scholarship programs;
- include and assist diverse stakeholders in negotiation, including businesses, governments, and communities, and not be limited to commercial negotiation; and
- provide a platform on which practitioners/negotiators can collaborate and participate with scholars and trainers on research to improve the effectiveness of negotiations.

This seed, propagated by a small and diverse group of stakeholders, has now begun to germinate. For example, the International Association for Conflict Management has agreed to schedule a session at its Annual Meeting in Philadelphia PA on July 8-11, 2018 to consider the question: Is it time for an International Negotiation Initiative? Led by some leading international negotiation experts, the session will explore the INI's potential value, attract ideas and proposals, improve the concept and generate traction.

The INI's website includes a downloadable version of the latest INI Concept Paper and enables you to contribute your thoughts via the contact button. Or feel free to reach me via www.michaelleathes.com and I will connect you to the INI dialogue.

The INI concept is evolving. It could travel far and enrich the practice of negotiation. You can help shape it. You are invited, nay urged, to influence this conversation.

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