



*Human Rights, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) & the Law
2020 Global Symposium*

MEDIA ADVISORY
**Laureates of International Justice Award in memory
of His Excellency Justice CG Weeramantry Announced**



With special thanks to leading international organisations for their experts' guidance:



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May 2020

Laureates of International Justice Award Announced to 1,404 Registrants from 101 Countries in Global Online Symposium on Human Rights, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) & the Law

Professor Marie-Claire Cordonier Segger of Canada, the UK and Switzerland, Advocate Neshan Gunasekera of Sri Lanka & Hon Justice Professor Marcel Szabo of Hungary have been named as the distinguished global winners of the International Justice Award in honour of His Excellency Judge CG Weeramantry.

In these troubled times of the global pandemic, an occasional ray of hope, honour and distinction can prove deeply meaningful, illuminating our world through the storm clouds. During the 2020 *Global Symposium on Human Rights, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the Law* hosted by the McGill University Faculty of Law, the University of Montreal Faculty of Law and other partners on 15 May 2020, the first Laureates of the prestigious Weeramantry International Justice Award in honour of His Excellency Judge CG Weeramantry were announced to 1,404 online registrants from over 101 countries.

This eminent international award for law and sustainable development was awarded to Professor Marie-Claire Cordonier Segger of the United Kingdom, Canada and Switzerland, advocate Neshan Gunasekera of Sri Lanka and the Hon Justice Marcel Szabo of Hungary.

The Weeramantry International Justice Award is granted to distinguished senior-level jurists whose lifeworks, intellect and character offer the highest possible credit to the memory of His Excellency the late Judge Christopher Gregory Weeramantry, recipient of the UNESCO Prize for Peace Education, Right Livelihood Award Laureate and former Vice-President of the International Court of Justice. The award recipients honour his Excellency's international legacy, including his concern for the interests of current and future generations; his commitment to international law, peace and sustainable development; and his global humanism and leadership in the law.

HE Justice CG Weeramantry was known as one of the earliest and most vocal champions of peace, justice and sustainable development. His life, his works and his teachings have inspired many young people to become leaders in international law. Indeed, as a role model, he advanced the potential of international law as a powerful tool for positive change.

The Weeramantry family, under the honorary leadership of Mrs Rosemary Weeramantry, was pleased to announce the first laureates of the award. As Professor Romesh Weeramantry explained, on behalf of the Weeramantry family: "They shall bring passion and dedication to all aspects of their work and will follow in the footsteps of my father and the many leaders and humanitarians whom his life, his works and his own mentorship inspired."

Professor Marie-Claire Cordonier-Segger (UK, Canada, Switzerland)

Professor Cordonier Segger is the Senior Director of the Centre for International Sustainable Development Law and Full Professor of Law in the University of Waterloo, Canada, Founding Councillor of the World Future Council, currently serving as Leverhulme Trust Visiting Professor in the University of Cambridge and Executive Secretary of the Climate Law and Governance Initiative with the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, and has authored over 21 books. She was selected as a laureate for her outstanding legal scholarship and teaching, and for her leadership of international foundations, councils and networks, including the Centre for International Sustainable Development Law (CISDL), the Climate Law and Governance Initiative with the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, and the Biodiversity Law and Governance Initiative with the Convention on Biological Diversity and UN-Environment. The award recognises Professor Cordonier Segger as a founding pioneer in the field of international law on sustainable development, and a leading jurist for current and future generations interests, and for the protection of life on Earth. [Link to Photo.](#)

Advocate Neshan Gunasekera (Sri Lanka)

Advocate Neshan Gunasekera is the leader of the transitional justice programmes in Sri Lanka for the United Nations Development Programme, a jurist member of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature, a member of the World Future Council, and former Executive Director of the Weeramantry International Centre for Peace Education Research. Advocate Gunasekera was selected for his ceaseless efforts to advance justice and inclusion for all peoples during and after conflicts, most notably in Sri Lanka through the United Nations Development Programme and his work as a jurist member of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature. [Link to Photo.](#)

Honourable Justice Professor Marcel Szabo (Hungary)

Justice Marcel Szabo of Constitutional Court of Hungary, is a deeply respected Professor of International Law, author and editor of several articles, journals and volumes, and former Ombudsman for Future Generations of the Parliament of Hungary. He was selected as a laureate of the 2020 International Justice Award for his work serving as a leader in advancing intergenerational equity and the rights of current and future generations as a Justice on the Constitutional Court of Hungary, where he continues to advance justice and the concerns of all. [Link to Photo.](#)

As laureates of the 2020 Weeramantry International Justice Award, the honorees become commissioners and mentors for the newly announced HE Judge CG and Rosemary Weeramantry Global Fellowship. The Global Fellowship aims to be the most prestigious and influential in its field, worldwide, and shall be open to graduate students and recently graduated scholars studying international law and governance related to sustainable development, and also to early-career professionals who demonstrate outstanding research and analytical ability. *"On behalf of my family, I am thrilled to congratulate these honorees and look forward to seeing their continued work in the years to come. It shall be a pleasure to serve with the new HE Justice CG Weeramantry International Justice Award Laureates on the commission which will, in the future, designate the recipient of the HE Judge CG and Rosemary Weeramantry Global Fellowship in order to honour their legacy."* - Romesh Weeramantry

Professor François Crépeau, Hans & Tamar Oppenheimer Chair in Public International Law, McGill University Faculty of Law, who co-chaired the global symposium, remarked: *“The HE Justice CG Weeramantry International Justice Awards are a wonderful way to celebrate the legacy of one of the great international judges of the post-war era and to recognise contemporary jurists whose impact on the world demonstrate Justice Weeramantry’s belief that Law has a major role to play for making this planet a better place for the many”*.

The chair of the closing plenary, Susan Breau, Law Faculty Dean at the University of Victoria, where the awards were announced, further declared: *“I cannot tell you how delighted I am to congratulate you on behalf of us all. I cannot imagine more deserving winners of this first award. I just want to say personally this is one of the highlights of my international law career. In my twenty-years of being an international lawyer, Judge Weeramantry inspired me over and over again with his elegant judgements and the three of you will carry on his work and make us all extremely proud.”*

Responses from the laureates, who deeply respected and honoured the works of His Excellency Justice Weeramantry, were both awed and delighted. Advocate Neshan Gunasekera said: *“I am deeply humbled to receive this distinction, more so as the judge was a beacon of peace and inspiration for so many young jurists in my country, Sri Lanka, and worldwide. I will endeavour to be worthy of the honour.”* Professor Marie-Claire Cordonier-Segger stated: *“It is a great honour to share this international award with his Honour Judge Szabo and Advocate Gunasekera. We are very deeply committed to the mentorship and inspiration that, as Weeramantry International Justice Award laureates, we can give back to the global community which His Excellency Justice CG Weeramantry gave us.”* The Honorable Justice and Professor Marcel Szabo further stated: *“I was deeply moved and honoured to receive the award. As a young lawyer, Judge Weeramantry was a great idol for me. I admired him for all of his efforts to help safeguard our planet. This is my lifetime goal and this wonderful prize will keep my energy highest to try to follow in his footsteps”*

The Global Symposium on Human Rights, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the Law celebrates and congratulates the honorees for their incredible achievements.

FURTHER BACKGROUND NOTES

His Excellency the late Judge Christopher Gregory Weeramantry

- In his early career as an advocate and professor, he dedicated his time to defending the voiceless and teaching young minds, including as a professor of public international law in Australia and Sri Lanka.
- In 1988, he became President of the International Association of Lawyers Against Nuclear Arms (IALANA).
- He was appointed as a Judge of the International Court of Justice in The Hague in 1991 and later became its vice-president in 1997.
- He was founder of the Weeramantry Centre for Peace Education Research, and Patron Emeritus of the Centre for International Sustainable Development Law (CISDL).
- He was awarded the UNESCO Prize Winner for Peace Education in 2006.

- He was awarded the Sri Lankabhimanya, the highest National Honour of Sri Lanka, in 2007.

Justice Marcel Szabo

- He has been the Professorial Head of European and International Management at the Faculty of Law and Political Sciences of Pázmány Péter Catholic University since 2009 and teaching at the university since 1997.
- Between 2011–2012, he represented the Hungarian government in front of the International Court of Justice in The Hague.
- From 2012–2016, he served as the Deputy Commissioner for Future Generations at the Office of the Commissioner of Fundamental Rights in the parliament of Hungary.
- He was the founder of the Hungarian Yearbook of International Law and European Law in 2012 and has continued to be the editor-in-chief, as well as being on multiple other editorial boards of legal journals.
- Since 2016 he has been serving as a member of the Permanent Court of Arbitration seated in the Hague.
- He is currently a Judge appointed to the Constitutional Court of Hungary.

Professor Marie-Claire Cordonier Segger

- Professor Cordonier Segger serves as Senior Director of the Centre for International Sustainable Development Law (CISDL), an international legal research and educational foundation based in Montreal, with affiliates in Santiago, San Jose, Cambridge and Nairobi, and laureate of the *Justicia Fundamentum Regnorum* Award.
- She is currently a Full Professor of Law in the Faculty of Environment at the University of Waterloo, Canada, where she is a senior advisor of the Interdisciplinary Centre on Climate Change (IC3), fellow of the Balsillie School of International Affairs (BSIA) and Board Member for the International Law Association of Canada.
- She is also Leverhulme Trust Visiting Professor at the University of Cambridge, United Kingdom, where she serves as Law Fellow and Director of Studies at Lucy Cavendish College, and with the Bennett Institute, the Centre for Environment, Energy and Natural Resources Governance (CEENRG) and the Lauterpacht Centre of International Law (LCIL).
- She has edited/authored over 20 books and 120 studies, in 6 languages, serves on the boards of several law journals, and edits a Cambridge University Press series of volumes, and is a Councillor of the World Future Council.

Advocate Neshan Gunasekera

- Advocate Neshan Gunasekera served as the Director of the Weeramantry Centre for International Peace and Education from 2007-2012.
- He served as the South Asia Director of the International Association of Lawyers Against Nuclear Arms from 2007-2018.
- He has been engaged with the World Future Council since its inception, and was elected as Councillor in 2017.
- He has also been a leader in the International Union for the Conservation of Nature since 2012, currently as a member of the Commission on Education and Communication.
- He is currently supporting Peacebuilding and Transitional Justice Programmes in Sri Lanka through the United Nations.