
International Bar Association Annual Conference:

**THE BEST OF INTERNATIONAL PRO BONO
Hot Topics in International Pro Bono in Asia: The
Environment**

Monday, October 15, 2007

Ruth Greenspan Bell

International Senior Lawyers Project

Serving the World Community

Public interest litigation activated U.S. environmental protection

- Starting in the 1960s, US public interest groups sued to force the government to implement its own laws including
 - ❑ Environmental Impact Assessment
 - ❑ Freedom of Information
 - ❑ Various provisions of the environmental statutes

Activists in Asia noticed, copied, adapted and refined

- China:

- Wang Canfa – law suits seeking damages for victims of environmental pollution

- India:

- MC Mehta – petitioned Indian Supreme Court to take the lead in controlling Delhi's pollution

The hard work of international pro bono is adapting models to fit local realities

- Obvious differences: legal tradition (e.g. common law vs. civil law)
- Less obvious differences:
 - Scant history of solving problems through litigation (or law)
 - No independent judiciary (China)
 - Idiosyncratic local rules and practices, e.g. initial jurisdiction in the Supreme Court (India)

Spotlight on two ISLP volunteers

Dick Spencer – Mongolia

Linda McGill - India

- Long term placements (3,6 months)
- Good listening, training, writing skills/applied expertise
- On the ground + links to resources in the States and elsewhere for specific problem solving

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