

South African judge appointed to head new UN internal justice body

11 June 2008 –Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon has appointed Justice Kate O'Regan of South Africa as the fifth member and chairperson of the Internal Justice Council – established by the General Assembly to help ensure independence, professionalism and accountability in the new system of administration of justice at the United Nations.

Justice O'Regan was appointed a judge of the Constitutional Court of South Africa in 1994, and has worked as an attorney and a law professor, specializing, among other areas, in labour law, race and gender equality, and constitutional law.

She was chosen by consensus by the four other members of the Internal Justice Council, whose appointments were approved by Mr. Ban in April.

The two members nominated by staff, following a process inclusive of all staff unions, are Jenny Clift of Australia and Geoffrey Robertson of the United Kingdom and Australia. The two members nominated by management are Maria Vicien-Milburn of Argentina and Sinha Basnayake of Sri Lanka.

UN spokesperson Michele Montas said the Internal Justice Council "will play a critical role in establishing the UN's new system of administration of justice, due to enter into effect on 1 January 2009."

The five-member body will advise the Assembly on suitable candidates for judges on the future UN Dispute Tribunal and the UN Appeals Tribunal. It is also tasked with drafting a code of conduct for the judges, and for providing its views on the implementation of the new system to the Assembly.

The Council's establishment was recommended in 2006 by the "Redesign Panel" of external judicial experts, and is modelled on similar mechanisms at other international public organizations.