



IBA 2025 TORONTO
2-7 NOVEMBER
ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF THE INTERNATIONAL BAR ASSOCIATION



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2025 INTERNATIONAL BAR ASSOCIATION ANNUAL CONFERENCE

**Metro Toronto Convention Centre (MTCC)
South Building, 222 Bremner Blvd, Toronto, ON M5V 2T6, Canada**

SUNDAY 2 NOVEMBER 2025

Jaime Carey

IBA President 2025-2026

OPENING CEREMONY

SPEECH

Welcome and Bienvenue

Your Excellencies, distinguished guests, dear colleagues and friends,

It is a great honor and a profound privilege to welcome you all to the 2025 Annual Conference of the International Bar Association, here in the vibrant

city of Toronto.

I want first to express my sincere gratitude — to the Host Committee, to the local bar associations of Ontario and Canada, to our sponsors, and to every delegate who has traveled across continents to be here.

I would also like to express special gratitude to the IBA staff, to our Executive Director, Mark Ellis, and to all IBA Officers, Committee Officers, and Council members — because without their effort and collaboration, this conference would not be possible.

Additionally, my sincere thanks to my partners, and to Claudio Visco, our President-Elect, for their support and friendship.

And last — but by no means least — my heartfelt thanks to my wife Lucia, who has accompanied and supported me during these 42 years of IBA career. If it had not been for her, I would not be here today.

I am personally very pleased that we have been able to convene an extraordinary number of over 5,500 attendees, an attendance that ranks among the top five most attended IBA annual conferences in history.

Before I continue, I must confess something I've noticed about Canadians.

Coming from Chile, and given our strong ties with Canada, I've always admired Canadians for their kindness and consideration — but I wasn't quite prepared for the level of politeness here!

During my first few hours in Toronto, I think I heard the word “sorry” more times than I do in an entire month back home!

I began to suspect that Canadians might one day start apologizing for apologizing.

But let me say clearly — there is no need to apologize. You are a wonderful country and wonderful people.

Perhaps that’s part of what makes this country so admirable — a deep sense of respect, humility, and dialogue — values that also sustain the rule of law.

I would like to highlight the strong relationship that has long prevailed between Chile and Canada.

We share a friendship built on democracy, open trade, and mutual trust.

In 1996, Chile signed its first Free Trade Agreement — and it was with Canada.

That agreement focused on cooperation in mining, clean energy, and human rights.

Our partnership reflects what this conference itself represents — openness, collaboration, and the belief that the law can unite rather than divide.

We are also deeply thankful for the vision and insight of major Canadian pension funds and companies, who have been our clients for these last decades and who have invested substantially in mining, utilities, toll roads,

agribusiness, forestry, fisheries, finance and in many others in Chile.

For many years, Canada has been Chile's number one foreign investor, and always among the top three.

This consolidates a strong, enduring relationship between our countries — and it makes me truly happy that Toronto is hosting this conference during my presidency of the IBA.

Over the coming days, we will share ideas, challenge assumptions, build networks, and renew our commitment to the rule of law and justice in an ever more complex world.

As lawyers — and here I include judges, academics, in-house counsel, and public interest advocates — we carry responsibilities that go beyond our clients or individual cases.

We are stewards of institutions, guardians of rights, and intermediaries between power and people.

Everywhere, the rule of law is under strain — from populist pressures, authoritarian backsliding, and crises that test institutional resilience.

The legal profession must stand firm.

But it is not enough to defend the law as a formal ideal — we must ensure that justice is real and accessible; that courts, legal services, and institutions reach the marginalized, the vulnerable, the powerless.

During my tenure, together with Claudio Visco, we have focused on several key priorities.

Artificial intelligence — and related technologies — are already reshaping how we practice law, how evidence is gathered, how disputes are resolved, and how rights are protected — or threatened.

The key question is: How do we harness innovation without sacrificing accountability, fairness, transparency, or dignity?

We need robust frameworks, professional standards, and cross-jurisdictional dialogue to ensure AI augments justice rather than erodes it.

The IBA is working through its committees and policy groups to provide practical guidance, training, and research on how technology can be implemented responsibly and ethically —ensuring innovation becomes a force for inclusion, not exclusion.

We believe that the IBA — as the global voice of the legal profession — can and will play a central role in this area.

A legal community that does not reflect society's diversity weakens its own legitimacy.

We must resist complacency.

The IBA has taken important steps — but we must go further: mentorship, removing structural barriers, and promoting women and underrepresented

groups in leadership.

True inclusion is not tokenism — it is integration, power-sharing, and continuous reflection.

The IBA continues to advance this cause through Diversity and Inclusion programs, and by fostering cooperation among bars and law societies across continents.

In a multipolar world, legal norms are being contested.

How do states reconcile sovereignty with international obligations?

How do lawyers operate when political tensions cross borders?

We must strengthen cooperative mechanisms — mutual legal assistance, treaty frameworks, and dispute resolution institutions.

The IBA's regional forums and working groups are committed to training, advocacy, and sharing best practices to uphold international norms even in challenging environments.

Around the world, we see pressure on judicial independence, civil society, and legal aid systems.

The pandemic, inequality, and conflict have strained our social contracts.

Lawyers and institutions must adapt — through pro bono frameworks, legal tech, and public interest strategies.

The IBA and bar associations are working to support jurisdictions where the rule of law is fragile.

Let me highlight two initiatives:

First, the IBA's film series on the Rule of Law, which vividly shows how judicial independence, fair trials, and anti-corruption efforts affect real lives. We are now partnering with the Danish Bar Association to revamp and bring these films into schools, so that young people can learn early about the principles of the rule of law.

Second, the IBA's eyeWitness to Atrocities project represents one of the most significant innovations in the documentation of international crimes in recent decades.

The project provides a secure, tamper-proof mobile app that enables users to capture photos and videos through embedded verifiable metadata that ensures vital evidence of war crimes, crimes against humanity, or genocide can be preserved and later authenticated for use in national or international courts.

We have partnered with LexisNexis to store nearly 100,000 pieces of pictorial evidence from numerous conflict countries.

Beyond its technological innovation, eyeWitness to Atrocities reflects the IBA's deep commitment to advancing justice and the rule of law amid impunity. The project not only strengthens accountability mechanisms but also sends a powerful moral signal: that the international legal community will not allow atrocities to disappear into silence or denial.

These initiatives are making a difference, especially in regions where justice systems face real challenges.

Finally, we have sought to strengthen the IBA's relationship with Africa and Asia.

We recognize that we have a debt to these continents — and a commitment to bring the IBA closer to them.

I have already traveled twice this year to Africa, and I will continue to look for ways to bridge the gap to make the IBA more accessible to lawyers in these regions.

The IBA is uniquely positioned to convene voices, incubate policy, and catalyze action.

We are not just observers, but actors.

Our committees, task forces, and regional forums can produce tools, training, and advocacy that strengthen the global legal profession.

I urge each of you: engage actively in committees, share insights from your jurisdictions, mentor younger lawyers, and bring home what you learn here.

The challenges we face do not respect borders — and neither should our cooperation.

In a moment of uncertainty, the lawyer's highest calling is courage — the

courage to speak truth to power, to defend rights, to protect institutions when trust weakens.

Over these days, I invite each of you to reflect on your role — as reformer, mentor, bridge-builder, innovator.

Let Toronto 2025 be remembered not just for the sessions we held, but for the commitments we made, the friendships we forged, and the resolve we renew.

May the rule of law always have its champions among us.
May justice find new pathways.
May our diversity strengthen, not divide.

Let us each put our grain of sand to make this a better world.

Thank you — and welcome to the 2025 IBA Annual Conference.