

ELIZABETH A. H. ABI-MERSHED

EDUCATION

MASTER OF LAWS, International and Comparative Law, *with Distinction*, Georgetown University Law Center, Washington, D.C., May, 1996.

JURIS DOCTOR, *Cum Laude*, Washington College of Law, American University, Washington, D.C., May, 1991. Member, *The American University Law Review*; Officer, Student Bar Association.

LONDON PROGRAM FOR INTERNATIONAL LAW (Certificate), Notre Dame Law School, London, England, Summer, 1988.

BACHELOR OF ARTS, Art History, University of Maryland, College Park, Maryland, 1987.

EXPERIENCE

**INTER-AMERICAN COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS
ORGANIZATION OF AMERICAN STATES**, Washington, D.C.

Assistant Executive Secretary *2007-current*
Consultant /Specialist/Senior Specialist/Principal Specialist *1992-94/94-96/97-02/02-07*

Provide legal advice to the Commission in the execution of its mandate. Responsibilities include coordinating and supervising the work of the legal staff, particularly the preparation and review of draft admissibility and merits reports for presentation to the Commission; directing the work of the group responsible for matters before the American Court of Human Rights, including the preparation of cases, briefs and hearings; and supporting the work of the group in charge of urgent measures of protection. Thematic responsibilities include providing coordination and support to personnel assigned to rapporteurships, both in the design and implementation of projects and in the preparation of visits and draft reports. General responsibilities include participating in initiatives to formulate and implement procedural reforms and update working methodologies within the Secretariat, training lawyers, fellows and interns, and organizing and participating in promotional activities.

WASHINGTON COLLEGE OF LAW, Washington, D.C. *Summer Academy*
Professorial Lecturer/Adjunct Associate Professor *2002-04/2005-current*

Initially taught practitioners and law students about the inter-American human rights system as part of a course on regional human rights approaches during the summer session of the Human Rights Academy; as from 2007, co-teach a course on women's human rights focusing on the regional system.

WASHINGTON COLLEGE OF LAW, Washington, D.C. *Fall 1992-Spring 1994*
Adjunct Tutor - LL.M Program

Instructed graduate law students from civil or Dutch-Roman legal systems in common law legal research, analysis and writing.

WASHINGTON COLLEGE OF LAW, Washington, D.C. *Spring 1992*

Legal Consultant

Drafted brief on compensation issues in a case before the Inter-American Court of Human Rights; researched criteria for reparation of material and moral damages, as well as costs and legal fees.

PACIFIC INSTITUTE FOR RESEARCH & EVALUATION, Bethesda, Maryland

Fall 1992

Consultant Attorney

Advised on the tax and corporate aspects of subsidiary acquisition and drafted implementing agreements.

LAW CLERK TEMPORARIES, Washington, D.C.

Fall 1992

Legal Researcher

Researched and drafted legal memoranda on issues including interlocutory appeal, mandamus, contract interpretation, civil procedure and legal ethics for use in civil litigation.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE, Washington, D.C.

Spring 1991

Extern, Office of the Legal Adviser, Private International Law

Analyzed international agreements concerning private international law and the recognition and enforcement of foreign judgments, with reference to domestic case law and foreign legislation.

WASHINGTON COLLEGE OF LAW, Washington, D.C.

Winter 1990-Spring 1991

Dean's Fellow/Research Assistant

Researched issues of international judicial procedure and human rights law in regional systems; edited and drafted notes for an article about a seminal case before the Inter-American Court of Human Rights.

PACIFIC INSTITUTE FOR RESEARCH & EVALUATION, Bethesda, MD

Fall 1990

Legal Researcher

Surveyed the treatment of juvenile offenders in Maryland as part of a project for the State.

FITZPATRICK & VERSTEGEN, Washington D.C.

Summer 1990

Law Clerk

Drafted legal memoranda, motions and instruments; interviewed clients; researched and analyzed legal issues concerning administrative and employment law, civil procedure and damages.

ACCORD FOUNDATION, Bethesda, MD

1988-1990

Assistant Executive Director

Supported the implementation of non-violent conflict resolution projects in the Middle East, managed agenda, prepared budget reports and tracked revenue and expenditures.

LANGUAGES: ENGLISH (NATIVE), SPANISH

PUBLICATIONS

“The United States and the Inter-American Court of Human Rights,” in *THE SWORD AND THE SCALES: THE UNITED STATES AND INTERNATIONAL COURTS AND TRIBUNALS* (Cesare P.R. Romano ed. 2009).

“Due Diligence and the Fight against Gender-Based Violence in the Inter-American System,” in *DUE DILIGENCE AND ITS APPLICATION TO PROTECT WOMEN FROM VIOLENCE* (Carin Benninger-Budel ed. 2008).

“El Sistema Interamericano de Derechos Humanos y los Derechos de la Mujer: Avances y Desafíos,” *DERECHO INTERNACIONAL DE LOS DERECHOS HUMANOS* (compiled and edited by Claudia Martín, Diego Rodríguez Pinzón and José Antonio Guevara, Editorial Fontamara 2004).

Hypothetical case and bench memoranda for 2003 and 2002 Inter-American Human Rights Moot Court Competition, Washington College of Law: Valencia et al v. Liberté, co-authored with Juan Pablo Alban; Williams et al v. Buenaventura, co-authored with Mario López.

“The Inter-American Commission on Human Rights: Prospects for the Inter-American Human Rights System to Protect and Promote the Human Rights of Women,” in *WOMEN AND INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS LAW*, vol. II, 417-43 (Kelly Askin and Dorean Koenig eds. 2000).

“La Comisión Interamericana de Derechos Humanos y Su Relator Especial sobre los Derechos de la Mujer: Una Nueva Iniciativa para Fortalecer la Capacidad de la Mujer para Ejercer sus Derechos Libre y Plenamente,” in 29 *REVISTA IIDH* 145-52 (1999).

“The International Protection of Human Rights: Seeking Efficacy through Regional Approaches,” paper delivered during the Seminar “Ten Years of Human Rights Work in Suriname,” published in *CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS* (Moiwana’86 1997).

“La Comisión Interamericana de Derechos Humanos y Su Informe Especial en Derechos de la Mujer: Una Nueva Iniciativa para Examinar el Estatus de la Mujer en las Américas” (co-authored with Denise Gilman), in *PROTECCIÓN INTERNACIONAL DE LOS DERECHOS HUMANOS DE LAS MUJERES [Primer Curso Taller]* 149-73 (IIDH eds. 1997).

“The Organization of American States and Human Rights in the Caribbean,” (co-authored with David J. Padilla), in *DEMOCRACY AND HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE CARIBBEAN* 1-33 (Ivelaw Griffith and Betty Sedoc-Dahlberg eds. 1997).

“Regional Approaches to Human Rights and Supervisory Mechanisms: The Inter-American Human Rights System,” paper delivered during XXIV Annual Conference, Canadian Council on International Law, published in *MEETING PROCEEDINGS* (CCIL 1995).

Book Review: **“United States Economic Measures against Cuba: Proceedings in the United Nations and International Law Issues,”** 89 *A.J.I.L.* 868-71 (1995).

“Thirty-Five Years Defending Human Rights,” 46 *Américas* 50-54 (OAS 1994).

“International Election Observing: Enhancing the Principle of Free and Fair Elections,” (Co-authored with David J. Padilla), 7 EMORY INT’L LAW REV. 73-132 (1993).

SELECTED PRESENTATIONS

Panelist, **“Preventive measures on enforced disappearance from a gender perspective”** and **“Enhancing the work of the Working Group on Enforced and Involuntary Disappearances (WGEID) in relation to women and from a gender perspective;”** WGEID, International Center for Transitional Justice, UN Women, OHCHR, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, April 17-19, 2012.

Trainer, **“El sistema de peticiones individuales,”** *Curso de Entrenamiento Sistemas Interamericano y Universal de Protección de los Derechos Humanos;* Instituto Interamericano de Derechos Humanos (IIDH), IACHR, Washington College of Law, University of Texas, Washington DC, yearly from 2005 to 2012.

Guest speaker, **“International and Regional Mechanisms for the Protection of Health Related Rights,”** Health and Human Rights Seminar; Georgetown University Law Center, Washington DC, March 14, 2012.

Guest speaker, **“Domestic Violence against Women and Girls,”** International Women’s Human Rights Seminar; Georgetown University Law Center, Washington DC, February 14, 2012.

Panelist, **“Taller: Uso del Sistema Interamericano como mecanismo para la protección de los derechos reproductivos”**, Congreso Latinoamericano Jurídico sobre Derechos Reproductivos; Colegio de Abogados y Abogadas de Costa Rica, IIDH, San José, Costa Rica, 29 de noviembre de 2011.

Panelist, **“African Union and OAS actions and initiatives to support and promote and protect human rights: challenges and achievements,”** Forum on Challenges and Opportunities in the Promotion and Defense of Democracy and Human Rights in Africa and the Americas; AU Commission, OAS General Secretariat, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, October 12-13, 2011.

Speaker, **“The Death Penalty in the Inter-American System,”** Panel discussion on the international jurisprudence regarding the death penalty and the prohibition of cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment or punishment; World Coalition Against the Death Penalty in collaboration with Belgium and Chile, Geneva, Switzerland, October 10, 2011.

Speaker, **“Access to Justice for Women Victims of Violence in the Americas,”** Seminar on Human Rights, Violence against Women and Access to Justice; Inter-American Commission of Women (CIM), Washington DC, September 27, 2011.

Speaker, **“The Inter-American System of Human Rights: Opportunities for Law Schools,”** Southeastern Association of Law Schools Annual Meeting, Hilton Head, South Carolina, July 24,

2011.

Panelist, “Maternal Mortality and Xakmok Kasek Indigenous Community v. Paraguay;” O’Neill Institute, Georgetown University Law Center, Washington DC, June 7, 2011.

Speaker, “**Gender and Witness and Victim Protection in the Inter-American System,**” Expert Meeting on Gender and Witness and Victim Protection Programming; Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Geneva, Switzerland, May 26-27, 2011.

Participant, Expert Meeting on State Responsibility and the Due Diligence Principle in relation to Violence against Women; Due Diligence Project, Northeastern School of Law, Boston, Massachusetts, April 26-27, 2011.

Speaker, “**The exercise of women’s political rights in the Americas,**” First Hemispheric Forum “Women’s Leadership for a Citizens’ Democracy;” CIM, Spanish Agency for Development Cooperation, UN Women, Ibero-American General Secretariat, Washington DC, April 4-6.

Expositora, “**La obligación de protección de los derechos de las mujeres en la jurisprudencia del sistema interamericano de derechos humanos**”, 3er Seminario Internacional sobre la Jurisprudencia de la Corte Interamericana de Derechos Humanos; UNAM, Konrad Adenauer Stiftung, Ciudad de México, México, 9-11 de marzo de 2011.

Discussant, “**Transnational Advocacy, Gender and International Human Rights Systems,**” Gender Justice in the Americas: A Transnational Dialogue on Sexuality, Violence, Reproduction & Human Rights; University of Miami School of Law, Centro de Derechos Humanos de la Universidad Diego Portales, Center for Reproductive Rights, Columbia Law School, Miami, Florida, February 23-25, 2011.

Panelista, “**Estándares del Sistema Interamericano de Derechos Humanos en materia de Justicia de Género**”, Semana Mujeres, Liderazgo, Justicia, Paz y Seguridad; Mesa de Género de la Cooperación Internacional en Colombia, Bogotá, Colombia, 9 de noviembre de 2010.

Panelist, “**Reparations for Women Subjected to Violence,**” Side event, mandate of the Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women, its Causes and Consequences; Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, New York, New York, October 14, 2010.

Presenter, “**Maternal Health in the Inter-American System,**” Expert Convening on Maternal Mortality, Morbidity and Human Rights: A dialogue with human rights bodies; UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, Geneva, Switzerland, September 1, 2010.

Panelist, “**Crimes against Humanity and Gender Justice,**” in Forging a Convention on Crimes against Humanity; Washington University Law, Whitney Harris World Law Institute, The Brookings Institution, Washington DC, March 11-12, 2010.

Presenter, “Derechos Humanos en el Sistema Interamericano”, Inter-American Defense College, Washington DC, February 2, 2010.

Instructor, “**Los Derechos Humanos de la Mujer y los Sistemas de Protección Internacional de los Derechos Humanos**”, Segundo Programa Especializado sobre Derechos Humanos de las Mujeres; IDEHPUCP, Raoul Wallenberg Institute, Lima, Perú, 17 de noviembre de 2009.

Speaker, AQ Summer Issue Panel: Human Rights – Advances and Challenges Today in the Hemisphere, Americas Society, New York, New York, July 24, 2009.

Presenter, “**Comparative Experiences and Working Methods from other Human Rights Bodies**,” Discussion Group with the CEDAW Committee on the Optional Protocol to CEDAW; Women’s Rights Action Watch Asia Pacific in collaboration with the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, New York, New York, July 19, 2009.

Presenter, “**The Inter-American Commission and its Secretariat**,” Meeting between the IACHR and its Secretariat and the African Commission on Human and Peoples’ Rights and its Secretariat, organized with the support of the Center for Human Rights, Faculty of Law of the University of Pretoria, Banjul, The Gambia, May 12, 2009.

Speaker, “The Right to Vote: A Human Right,” presented by the Election Law Society, George Washington University, Washington DC, March 19, 2009.

Panelista, “**La CIDH: el procedimiento contencioso**”, *IV Curso Especializado para Funcionarios de Estado sobre utilización del Sistema Interamericano de Protección*; IIDH, San José, Costa Rica, 20 de enero de 2009.

Panelist, “**Lessons Learned from the Inter-American System**,” Meeting on the African System for the protection of Human Rights in Collaboration with the African Union; MacArthur Foundation/INTERIGHTS, Abuja, Nigeria, November 8-9, 2008.

Panelist, “**The Scope of Reparations: Challenges in Defining their Scope and Guaranteeing Their Enforcement**,” Advocacy before Regional Human Rights Bodies: A Cross-Regional Agenda; MacArthur Foundation, American University Washington College of Law, IACHR, IACtHR, Washington DC, October 20, 2008.

Presenter/panelist, “**Los Derechos de la Mujer y el Sistema Interamericano de Protección de Derechos Humanos**,” Programa Especializado sobre Derechos Humanos de las Mujeres; IDEHPUCP, Raoul Wallenberg Institute, Lima, Perú, September 22, 2008.

Panelist, “**The Role of the Inter-American Commission**,” 34th Annual Friedmann Conference; Columbia Society of International Law, Columbia University, New York, New York, April 8, 2008.

Panelist, “**Nuts and Bolts’ of the Inter-American Human Rights System**,” [CLE course on] The United States and the Inter-American Human Rights System; Columbia Law School, HRI, CEJIL, ASIL, New York, New York, April 7, 2008.

Panelist, “**Gender and Reparations in the Inter-American Human Rights System**,” Conference on Reparations in the Inter-American System: A Comparative Approach; Washington College of Law, Washington DC, March 6, 2007.

Presenter, “**The Inter-American Human Rights System and the Prohibition of Torture,**” Training Seminar, UN and Regional Systems’ Legal Framework on Torture; Washington College of Law, Washington, DC, March 3, 2006.

Presenter, “*El sistema interamericano y sus mecanismos en relación con los derechos humanos y el medio ambiente*”, Taller: *Fortalecimiento de Derechos Humanos y Medio Ambiente en América*; CEDHA/AIDA, Buenos Aires, Argentina, December 6-7, 2005.

Panelist, “**US Attitudes toward the Inter-American Court of Human Rights,**” Conference on US Attitudes Toward International Courts and Tribunals; Project on International Courts and Tribunals, The Hague, July 1-2, 2005.

Presenter, “**Regional Approaches and the European and Inter-American Experiences,**” Regional Conference on the Establishment of an Effective African Human Rights Court; South African Network on the African Court, et al., Nairobi, Kenya, April 7-10, 2005.

Panelist, “**Inter-American Approaches to Protecting the Rights of Women,**” Expert Meeting on Violence against Women and Women and Poverty in Africa; Interights, Maputo, Mozambique, January 17-20, 2005.

Panelist, Civil Society Meeting on Ratification by Canada of the American Convention on Human Rights; Rights & Democracy, Ottawa, Canada, November 17, 2003.

Commentator, “*Convenciones Internacionales de Mujeres: Sus mecanismos de seguimiento y su influencia en la administración de justicia,*” Seminario Interamericano Sobre Género y Justicia, CEJA-JSCA et al, telelink with Viña del Mar, Chile; panel sponsored by and convened via teleconference from the World Bank, Washington, D.C., November 13, 2003.

Panelist, “**Trafficking in Humans,**” Annual Conference of the International Bar Association; IBA, San Francisco, California, September 19, 2003.

Presenter, “**El Sistema Interamericano de Protección de Derechos Humanos: Aspectos teóricos y prácticos,**” Seminario-Taller “La Promoción y Defensa de los Derechos Humanos de las Niñas, Niños y Adolescentes en el Sistema Interamericano de Protección de Derechos Humanos;” Relatoría de la Niñez de la CIDH/Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores, Mexico City, Mexico, March 11, 2003.

Panelist, “*Género y Acceso a la Justicia en Perú: Un Diálogo de Aprendizaje;*” World Bank, web-link Washington, D.C./Peru/Geneva, November 4, 2002.

Panelist, “*The Role of Law in Incorporating the Perspective of Gender: The Experience of the Inter-American Human Rights System,*” conference initiating the gender mainstreaming project of the OAS; OAS/CIM/CIDA, Washington, D.C., May 22, 2002.

Panelist, “*Los derechos reproductivos en el contexto del sistema interamericano de derechos*”

humanos,” Seminario-Taller “La Promoción y la Protección de los Derechos Reproductivos a través del Trabajo de las Instituciones Nacionales de Derechos Humanos para América Latina, el Caribe y Canadá;” UNHCR/UNFPA/IIDH, San José, Costa Rica, May 15, 2002.

Panelist, “*Initiatives against trafficking in human beings: the experience of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights*,” Annual Conference of the International Bar Association; IBA, Cancun, Mexico, November 1, 2001.

Panelist, “*The Inter-American Human Rights System and the Protection of the Rights of Women*,” Conference “The Gender Dimension of Human Rights: A Development Perspective;” World Bank, Washington, D.C., June 1, 2000.

Speaker, “*Promises to Keep*,” series of meetings related to the issuance of the IACHR’s *Report on the Situation of Human Rights of Asylum Seekers in the Canadian Refugee Determination System*;” CCR, Senate Human Rights Committee, Toronto and Ottawa, Canada, April 4-5, 2000.

Panelist, “*Prescriptions for Enhancing Efforts to Redress Women’s Human Rights in International Legal For a in the Next Millenium*,” International Law Weekend; ILA, New York, New York, November 5, 1999.

Panelist, “*Implementation of the Inter-American Human Rights System: Practical Applications, Country Cases*,” Workshop on the Inter-American Human Rights System and Economic, Social and Cultural Rights; World Bank, Washington, D.C., September 16, 1999.

Panelist, “*The Inter-American Commission on Human Rights: Prospects for Protecting the Rights of Women*,” Conference on Race, Gender and Ethnicity; CUNY/Ford, New York, New York, February 20, 1999.

Trainer, “*La Corte Interamericana de Derechos Humanos*,” Training program for Argentine Judges and Lawyers; George Washington University, Washington, D.C., November 19, 1998.

Speaker, “*Sistema Interamericano de Protección de los Derechos Humanos: Convención de Belém do Pará*,” Tercer Curso Internacional “Mujer y Derechos Humanos;” Movimiento Manuela Ramos, Lima, Perú, December 4, 1997.

Speaker, “*Legal Strategies to Protect Women’s Rights under the Inter-American System of Human Rights*,” “Women of the World” Regional Conference; CRLP, Lima, Perú, December 4, 1997.

Speaker, “*The International Protection of Human Rights: Seeking Efficacy through Regional Approaches*,” Seminar “Ten Years of Human Rights Work in Suriname;” Moiwana’86, Paramaribo, Suriname, May 3, 1997.

Panelist, “*Protecting Human Rights in the Americas: A Legal Forum*;” Saint Mary’s University, San Antonio, Texas, November 11, 1996.

Speaker, "***The Role of the Inter-American System in the Caribbean and the Americas,***" Judicial Colloquium on the Domestic Application of International Human Rights Norms;" Interights, Georgetown, Guyana, September 4, 1996.

Speaker, "***The Inter-American System,***" Expert Technical Meeting on Mechanism for Urgent Response to Human Rights Emergencies under Article 58 of the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights; Interights, Nairobi, Kenya, July 24, 1996.

Panelist, "***The Inter-American System and the Convention of Belém do Pará,***" Women, Human Rights and the Inter-American System; IACHR, CIM, PAHO, IIHR, WCL, Washington D.C., March 29, 1996.

Panelist, "***Regional Approaches to Human Rights and Supervisory Mechanisms: The Inter-American Human Rights System,***" panel on "Globalism and Regionalism in the Development of Human Rights," XXIV Annual Conference of the Canadian Council on International Law; CCIL, Ottawa, Canada, October 20, 1995.

Panelist, "***Discussion of the Procedures of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights,***" Meeting on UN Human Rights Procedures Organized by the Human Rights Centre and the NGO Committee for the Opening of the Decade of the World's Indigenous People; United Nations, New York, New York, December 9, 1994.

Panelist, "***The Capacity of the Inter-American Human Rights System to Protect and Defend the Right to Health of Indigenous Peoples in the Americas,***" Roundtable Session entitled "Health and Human Rights of Indigenous Peoples," First International Conference on Health and Human Rights; Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts, September 22, 1994.

Presentations on the inter-American human rights system to classes or student groups, including Georgetown University, George Washington University Law School, Washington College of Law of American University, University of Virginia Law School, University of Toronto Law School, University of Montreal Law School, Trinity College, George Mason Law School, U.S. Army War College and the Presidential Classroom Program.

Presentations before the Permanent Council of the OAS, the Committee on Juridical and Political Affairs, and specialized working groups of the OAS.