

## INTRODUCTION

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In 2015, a steering committee made up of myself and other members of the South African Branch of the International Law Association (ILA) commenced our planning for hosting the 77th Biennial Conference of the ILA, which was to take place in Sandton in August 2016, two years after our hosting bid was approved by the Executive Committee of the ILA in London.

We decided to announce at the conference the inauguration of the John Dugard Lecture in International Law to honour the work done by John in this area of law and beyond, over a career spanning 50 years, and the legacy he has left behind. The idea received unanimous approval from members of the South African branch and John accepted the honour in the humble manner he is known for. Thank you, John, for being here tonight and to letje for joining in our celebrations.

The lecture for which we are gathered here tonight was introduced subject to only one condition, namely that scholars selected to present at this event must be eminently qualified in the field and regarded by their peers as leading scholars in international law. Professor James Crawford, who amiably and without hesitation accepted to present the inaugural John Dugard Lecture in International Law, undeniably fulfils these criteria and we are greatly honoured by his presence tonight. His illustrious career and ascendancy to the bench of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in 2015 display a rich and varied collection of milestones: they include several commended books, most notably his works on the creation of states in international law and on state responsibility in international law; his reports as UN Special Rapporteur on State Responsibility; as legal counsel in numerous cases before the ICJ; as counsel in international arbitrations; as judge or arbitrator in many international arbitration proceedings; and as counsel before national courts in a number of landmark cases. To add to this, I recommend reading his dissenting opinion in the recent *Marshall Islands* case before the ICJ on nuclear disarmament and his criticism of the test applied by the majority to determine whether a dispute existed between the parties as a prerequisite for the court to assume jurisdiction in the case.

Turning to John. Since Professor Crawford's tribute will elaborate on key aspects of John's career, it will suffice for me to take a few lines

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from the editorial preface of the collection of essays published in John's honour in 2017, the year after he turned 80. There the editors wrote:

Proving that 80 must be the new 60, John remains awe-inspiringly active in various international law and other role, including as ad hoc judge at the ICJ. Recognised and acclaimed as South Africa's leading international lawyer, Dugard's reputation extends well beyond his work in that field. Equally as impressive and important ... has been his contribution to the development of a culture of human rights jurisprudence, both in academia and in the courts, during and after the years of apartheid.