



All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) for Alternative Dispute Resolution

Session: London's Future as an International Dispute Resolution Centre

29th April 2019, 15:00-17:00

The Thatcher Room, Portcullis House, Parliament.

Parliamentarians present:

John Howell MP (Chair, APPG for ADR)

Christina Rees MP (Vice Chair, APPG for ADR)

John Spellar MP (Chair, APPG for Singapore and APPG for Transatlantic Trade)

Alberto Costa MP (Member, APPG for ADR)

Apologies:

Bob Neill MP (Member, APPG for ADR and Chair of the Justice Select Committee)

Bambos Charalambous MP (Member, APPG for Legal and Constitutional Affairs)

Witnesses:

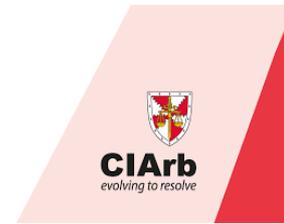
Jonathan Wood (Head of International Arbitration at RPC, CI Arb Chair of the Board of Trustees)

Jordan Cummins (CBI Senior Associate Director—London Policy)

Paula Hodges QC (Head of Global Arbitration Practice at Herbert Smith Freehills and VP of the LCIA Court)

Lucy Greenwood (Independent arbitrator and CI Arb Trustee)

Audley Sheppard QC (LCIA Board Chair, Global Co-Head of International Arbitration at Clifford Chance)



Minutes of the session

Welcome from John Howell, Chair of the APPG for ADR.

John opens the session by discussing the importance of London as a centre for arbitration and international ADR, welcoming the witnesses and expressing his pleasure at the number of viewers in attendance. John expresses his support for London International Disputes Week and outlined the format of the session. The session will be divided into two halves, with separate panels of witnesses. All witnesses will be called upon to speak for 10 minutes apiece, followed by questions from the panel and audience.

Section 1: The current landscape for dispute resolution

Witnesses: Jonathan Wood, Jordan Cummins, Paula Hodge QC

The Chair calls Jonathan Wood to speak

Jonathan opens by discussing his role as CI Arb Chair of the Board of Trustees and his extensive experience in international arbitration. He says ADR is crucial for trade and investment and London is a success story. Companies need confidence that their contracts will be respected and enforced. This is particularly important for international contracts.

Jonathan outlines London's role as a historical centre of trade, discussing Lord Mansfield and the development of English Law. The key strengths of English Law are its certainty, predictability and its adaptability, all of which are valued by the business community.

Jonathan discusses the QMUL—White & Case survey's findings around the popularity of English Law for international contracts. English Law underpins international law and has been successfully exported around the world. Jonathan argues the Anglo-Saxon legal system is something to be proud of.

Jonathan moves on to the separate issue of why the English legal system is popular with businesses. The fairness, incorruptibility and flexibility of the system is internationally renowned, and Britain has been at the forefront of legal developments.

Jonathan raises the British system of appointing judges as another key strength. Businesses and the legal profession value the experience of the judiciary, in a country where judges have extensive legal backgrounds, unlike in Civil Law jurisdictions.

Jonathan discusses the origin of the CI Arb London Centenary Principles and their value as a guide to policymakers. Their accurate reflection of how decisions are made has



been borne out by patterns of usage. London's strength on these points is what makes it an attractive seat.

Jonathan says that, both anecdotally and from the results of studies, it is clear that what makes London so successful is the international clientele it attracts. The LMAA, the LCIA and the International Cotton Exchange all report that international business is at the core of their success.

The Chair comments on his experience of the usage of English Law overseas and calls upon the next witness, Jordan Cummins

Jordan begins by outlining the work of the CBI and organisations they represent. This topic is of interest to the entirety of their membership, as ADR is crucial for the smooth functioning of trade and for the competitiveness of British business. CBI members consider arbitration to be a success story and they are expecting around 5% growth in the legal services sector over the coming year.

Jordan outlines the contribution that arbitration and the wider legal services make to the economy, arguing that their contribution to the economy should be seen as important in their own right, as well as important to business as a whole.

As part of his preparation for this session, Jordan consulted legal, financial and corporate members of the CBI, who saw a significant potential for growth in this area. Areas for consideration include the Commonwealth and Eurasia (particularly Turkey, Russia and Ukraine). Countries with natural resources will be a growing market. Members also predict an increasing tendency towards using ADR. Russia's preference for using the UK for arbitration could also be a strength.

However, there is also increasing competition, with other countries vying for market share. CBI members have raised several examples of new facilities that have opened overseas and there are big questions around the Asian market. However, CBI members are confident that arbitration will continue to grow.

CBI corporate members have given Jordan a good insight into why arbitration is popular with the business community. They consistently raise flexibility, informal proceedings, confidentiality and its non-partisan nature as key. Members have particularly stressed that high level and potentially sensitive cases place great importance on confidentiality.

Jordan moves on to discuss the popularity of London and why CBI members are enthusiastic users of a UK seat. London is seen by businesses internationally as a neutral location. London's status as a financial hub is also a key attraction. The



popularity of English Law also encourages London to be selected. The UK is also known for protecting the principles of contracts.

London's neutral, highly experienced specialists and legal professionals are a draw for international businesses engaging in arbitration. London is known for hosting world experts for maritime, shipping and construction cases, among others. Businesses also appreciate being able to access other forms of ADR (particularly mediation), and this supports the popularity of London as a seat.

Overall, CBI members see a strong outlook for ADR and believe it will have a significant role in business growth into the future. They believe Brexit will be less of a threat to this area than to many of their other business concerns.

The Chair calls upon Paula Hodges QC

Paula begins by seconding the presentations of the previous two speakers, saying that she won't be contradicting any of their evidence but will seek to give her own flavour to it from her international experience. She has been involved in arbitrations from London to Singapore and Nigeria.

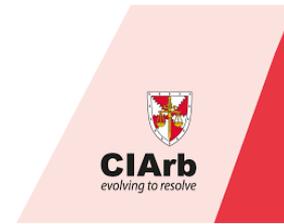
Paula believes it is crucial for businesses that they can have confidence in their contracts. This has become an increasingly pressing issue due to globalisation and the rise of ever more complicated and high-value cross-border deals. Companies doing business abroad will often have innate suspicions around being subject to foreign courts.

The basis of arbitration's growth lies in the way it has evolved to suit the needs of corporations. It is seen as flexible and parties value the say they have in selecting a legal venue and choosing representatives. It is important for parties to have their cases decided by individuals with experience in the area, with whom they share a cultural affinity.

Enforceability is one of arbitrations' key strengths, with the New York Convention underpinning the process and providing legal certainty. With 159 signatories and counting, its success as a single go-to international treaty cannot be overstated. The New York Convention work very well and is much more effective than reciprocal court judgement arrangements.

(Interruption from John Spellar MP, who asks for clarification on the issue of reciprocal court judgement arrangements)

Paula explains how reciprocal court judgements are done through several treaties and agreements, and unlike in arbitration do not have a single overarching international



framework. This is a very significant reason behind the massive increase in the number of arbitrations over previous decades.

Paula outlines the economic importance of arbitration, and the evidence of its effect on foreign-direct investment (FDI). This is of crucial importance for developing countries. A good example is Mauritius, which has successfully launched itself as a centre for ADR over the last decade. HSF is currently helping Sierra Leone on a pro bono basis and are hoping they may become the 160th signatory of the New York Convention.

Paula raises the CIArb London Centenary Principles, arguing they are an important summary of the qualities that make an attractive seat. Some say arbitration is not as speedy and cheap as before, but for her experience this is largely due to increasingly larger and complex cross-border cases.

Paula and other professionals based in London and working in arbitration are increasingly finding themselves determining cases around the world. From her experience, London does have to up its game and really compete to hold on to its current position.

London is home to a lot of very qualified arbitrators, which is an important draw. English/British arbitrators are appointed more than any other nationality and serve as great ambassadors for London overseas. The number of highly qualified international lawyers based in London is also a draw.

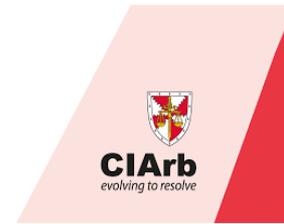
However, there are other seats that are increasingly attracting business away from London. Russians in particular are now looking towards Asia, with Asian arbitration institutions registering to hear Russian disputes. EU sanctions on Russia are a key driver of this, and it is a good example of how a policy move can have significant potentially unforeseen impacts on arbitration.

The Chair discusses his role as the Prime Minister's Trade Envoy to Nigeria and asks the panel about how arbitrations function overseas, and whether the growth of the sector in places not viewed as incorruptible like Britain may affect the 'brand' of arbitration.

Jonathan Wood answering The Chair

The process of arbitration is designed to deal with this issue, with parties picking arbitrators that, while not biased in their favour, are selected as someone with the capacity to give them a fair hearing. Stopping corruptibility in arbitration must be done through the profession, engendering high standards and accountability.

The Chair asks Paula about her previous experience arbitrating in Lagos



Paula says the case she was involved in was seated in Lagos, but the arbitrators involved were all British silks. She saw no evidence of corruption at any point. Many countries around the world (such as in Latin America) have developed their legal systems greatly in recent years and, with adequate safeguards, parties now view them as possible seats.

Guidelines and principles have been introduced by institutions and by organisations such as the IBA, which are very aware of this issue. The profession is very aware of the danger that can be done to the brand of arbitration if there are questions around ethics, and the industry is working hard to self-regulate.

Jonathan Wood interjects

Jonathan says that CI Arb is at the forefront of this drive. As a professional body, they have disciplinary measures and a professional code of conduct. These measures are used actively, and members know that they will be held to ethical standards.

Christina Rees MP asks the panel about their views regarding international competition and how London can seek to hold on to its status. Will Brexit pose a new threat?

Paula answers Christina's question

Paula believes the UK needs to look at ensuring they treat their judges right, as they are a key draw. She also believes London needs to upgrade its physical facilities, and could do with a modern, larger dispute resolution centre. London's centre is comfortable but outdated. When visiting Hong Kong, New York and Singapore it becomes increasingly clear that London is falling behind in this regard. A new centre is highly important, and an error with the City of London has put back the plans for updated facilities.

Also, policymakers need to be very aware of the effect any new legislation might have on the legal sector and on arbitration. Examples of this include everything from GDPR to sanctions. Paula believes arbitration often doesn't get the consideration it needs. Another issue in the facilitation of arbitrations is the question of visas. Latin American citizens often struggle with visas for arbitration in the US, and this has led to users looking to Canada or London instead.

Paula doesn't believe Brexit should have any substantive effect on London's status in arbitration, however other seats are using this as an opportunity to capture market share. Paris, Frankfurt and multiple seats in Asia are leading this charge. However, in matters of substance users want English Law, not EU Law and London has lots of favourable advantages. Paula believes arbitration will be less affected than the courts.



(John Spellar MP interjects to ask Paula to go into more detail regarding the situation with the City of London)

Paula says the arbitration community have relied upon the City of London to give affordable and decent premises for arbitration. The LCIA is a non-profit and can't compete with new developments. However, due to some errors around EU procurement regulations this has been put back.

Jonathan Wood answers Christina's question

Jonathan agrees with Paula that there is an issue around physical premises in London. Singapore is a good example of a government giving good support to arbitration and he recently viewed Maxwell Chambers in Singapore. The government in Singapore has recognised the importance of arbitration for attracting investment, and the government can give a head start to the sector.

Jordan Cummins interjects: CBI members raised the issue of physical facilities with him, and he believes physical infrastructure should not be underestimated.

Jonathan also suggests the UK government should bear in mind that it is important for any new centre to be located close to established legal infrastructure, and that lawyers typically work with large amounts of paperwork so issues around access and transport are crucial.

Paula Hodges interjects: she has visited the new Lagos Arbitration Centre, it is lovely but in an area of high traffic, however she doesn't believe that is a huge issue in itself as it is doable.

John Spellar MP asks the panel for their views and experiences around the issue of visas for arbitrations in the UK.

Jonathan Wood addresses the question

It has proved an issue and it can be hard to work around. Often, individuals needing to visit London for arbitrations will be required to visit High Commissions or Embassies to do interviews, and in one case he had to deal with a situation around a foreign MP who was still required to go through that process.

(interjection from John Spellar MP: have you made representations to the Home Office about this? Not on specific cases, but on the general principle?)

Jonathan says they have talked to government departments with regards to sanctions, but not specifically on visas.



Question from John Spellar MP: interested to hear more about why Turkey, Russia and Ukraine are key clients, and about what type of businesses choose London?

Paula responds

Both nationals and corporations from these countries often pick London. In most cases they are very much international companies. Paula argues that the popularity of English law is not in doubt and its usage will continue, however what needs to be protected is the seeping out of arbitrations from London. Increasingly, arbitrators are being asked to go abroad.

The Chair now asks the audience if they would like to address a question to the panel

Dr David Cowan from the Global Legal Post asks about whether the panellists continue Dublin to be a threat.

Paula responds

Paula agrees that Dublin is becoming more competitive, however she believes they are not yet as advanced as a seat to be prime competition to London. However, Dublin offers another option for parties who want an EU flavour. For parties who want English Law, Brexit won't change London's attractiveness as a seat.

Lateef Yusuff asks about protectionism and diversity in international arbitration. Nigeria values English Law, however there are serious issues around diversity in appointments.

Paula responds

The LCIA is taking a leading role in tackling the issue of diversity. Until recently, there has been considerable focus on gender diversity but less on age and nationalities. From her experience in appointing, institutions do try to be very open-minded and attempt to appoint the best person for the job. However, there is a significant chicken and egg issue around experience. She believes young and less experienced arbitrators can however bring a real keenness to an appointment and will typically make the most of an opportunity. Paula sees CIArb's worldwide branches as a real strength for the development of arbitration globally and is keen to encourage more mentoring schemes.



Section 2: Challenges and opportunities

Witnesses: Lucy Greenwood and Audley Sheppard QC

The Chair introduces the second session, which will focus on challenges and opportunities for London as a seat. He asks Lucy Greenwood to speak on the topic.

Lucy Greenwood

Lucy opens by discussing her international experience and the perspective she has on London after decades of practising in various jurisdictions. She returned to practising in London last year, and she brings an interesting perspective of how London is seen overseas.

One key difference she noticed when practising in the US is that they have a strong sense of regional hubs, which is not the case for the UK. In the US, different cities and regions are known for specialising in different types of disputes—DC for ISDS, California for technology, Miami for Latin America disputes (although recently challenged due to issues around visas).

In the UK, international arbitration is very much focused around a single London hub. However, Scotland have made great efforts in recent years to develop their arbitration sector, which Lucy considers to be up and coming. Dublin is doing similarly, to a lesser extent.

In terms of London's popularity as a seat, there are two key issues to consider: (a) choice of governing law and (b) choice of seat (venue). Both considerations will affect London's popularity as a seat. When writing a contract, parties can select London as their legal seat and then later move the seat altogether or hold hearings in a different country. In that case, London will lose the economic benefits of the arbitration.

One of the reasons London is so popular as a seat is because of its formal legal infrastructure. The UK is a signatory to the New York Convention and domestic legislation—in the form of the Arbitration Act 1996 (which applies to England and Wales and Northern Ireland)—is internationally respected.

London is also a popular seat because of its infrastructure. Several popular international institutions are based in London and these are a draw, although in many cases their facilities could do with an upgrade. New private facilities have recently opened in London, which will be attractive for high-end cases.

Perceptions around a seat are of crucial importance, so while Brexit may only be a perceived threat this can still have an impact on London's popularity. Lucy agrees with



Paula's earlier evidence that there are no substantive reasons with Brexit should affect London as a seat. However, Lucy believes any doubts about London during contract writing may result in a different seat being select. It is therefore of crucial importance to communicate that London is open for business as usual.

Regarding London's formal legal infrastructure, there are threats here. Earlier suggestions of amendments to the 1996 Arbitration Act are one such example. Under the 1996 Act, there is a limited right of appeal that is very rarely used successfully. The former Lord Chief Justice Lord Thomas suggested he wanted to expand the grounds for appeal and ensure cases could contribute to the development of English Law.

However, businesses and clients have made clear that they don't want this to be a feature of arbitration, and that confidentiality is of utmost importance, along with enforcement. While the threat of amendments to the Arbitration Act 1996 have receded, these issues being a talking point in the market is still a risk to London's status as a seat. The arbitration sector in the UK must be able to speak as a united front.

There are several opportunities for London, including the new private facilities that have recently opened to fill a real gap in the market. There is also an opportunity for growth in smaller arbitrations. London has a wealth of ad hoc arbitrations which can sometimes get less attention, but which are equally important. Several schemes have been developed in recent years to deal with smaller cases, including the CIArb BAS scheme and the LMAA's small claims procedure. There is significant capacity for small claims currently heard through the courts to move to arbitration.

The Chair calls upon Audley Sheppard QC

Audley begins by discussing his background working with various organisations internationally, including in Ireland and the Commonwealth to help promote arbitration. He is interested in discussing the challenges and opportunities for arbitration in more detail.

This session is focusing on commercial arbitration, and it must be borne in mind that this is an extremely broad category. Cases can vary hugely in topic and in value, ranging from billions of pounds to smaller cases, which are still of importance. London hosts ad hoc and institutional arbitrations, including sector-specific cases requiring great expertise, including in the areas of commodities, metal exchange, maritime and shipping.

Audley argues that the central consideration for this conversation must be those who create contracts, selecting English Law and choosing London as a seat. He believes physical facilities are less important, as they are not as central a consideration during this process. Typically, in-house lawyers are the ones putting clauses around



arbitration into their contracts. However, physical facilities do help to give a 'halo effect' to a seat and are important for reputational reasons.

With regards to challenges for London, Audley believes government needs to take a central role in dealing with these. The greatest challenge is the slow dilution of the popularity of English Law. As the governing law and the seat of arbitration are connected, when a different law is selected the seat will usually be outside London. This is an area that needs to be focused upon.

General global trends are also having an inevitable influence on arbitration. The worldwide pivot to Asia is having an effect as several centres for trade are becoming increasingly assertive. Singapore's development as a seat has been heavily supported by their government. There is also increasing national assertiveness, such as in Nigeria where companies are increasingly using Nigeria as a seat in all contracts.

The Chinese Belt and Road initiative is also likely to have an effect, although it is too early to tell the full impact. There is a strong possibility that contracts may insist on using China as the seat. In some cases, London is losing out due to parties having a greater cultural affinity with another seat. There is also a degree of anti-colonialism at play, as well as inevitable issues around geography. Indian parties are increasingly looking to Singapore.

The sense of English Law being experienced and established is an important difference between London and many of the more recently popular seats. However, a key threat to London is the danger of UK banks losing influence abroad, as their insistence on using English Law has had a very significant influence on dispute resolution worldwide. English Law is the governing legal system of finance, and if English banks lose influence it is inevitable that English Law will too.

In terms of Brexit, it is too early to tell the full degree of its potential effects. Continental-based institutions are now pushing for the use of non-English law. Sanctions on Russia are also going to have an effect, with Singapore and Hong Kong now pushing for this business.

A great strength for the UK to focus on is its soft power and soft influence. London's universities and professors are world-renowned in this area and they are a great resource. Overseas lawyers particularly like to study here, and this has an impact on London's reputation globally.

Arbitration needs to be seen as an attractive mode of dispute resolution, and there are some challenges around time and cost effectiveness. There is also talk of existential threats to the integrity of arbitration, arising primarily out of ISDS.



Worldwide, key features of arbitration have been challenged by figures such as Elizabeth Warren. This can have a pervasive effect, on state contracts and arbitration in general. Diversity is also an issue and arbitration cannot afford to be seen as out of touch.

Audley turns to the LegalUK forum and the importance of the Legal UK brand. The trust it has globally is key. Liz Gloster chairs this forum and it is a crucial opportunity for dialogue. One area he is keen to focus on is relations with the banking centre, which will be especially crucial if China requires third party funding for their infrastructure initiatives. Kazakhstan is also an important future market who are keen to adopt English Law and a visit by the Law Society to Mexico also identified opportunities. Anglophone Africa may also be an area for growth.

London International Disputes Week will be held next week, and practitioners have put together an excellent week of activities, covering all areas of litigation and arbitration. The aim is not to be triumphalist but to communicate the strengths of English Law and of London.

The government needs to take dispute resolution seriously and reinforce messaging. Audley believes more can be done worldwide, creating noise through embassies and other diplomatic links, for example in Moscow. He has seen greater involvement from the Ministry of Justice, which is a positive. Jonathan Wood, Ian Gaunt and Audley frequently meet with the MoJ and the government is engaged with the Bar Council and the Law Society.

However, campaigns can be budget strapped and there is room for further support. Government can work here with the private sector and UK businesses overseas would be happy to help. Government can also take advantage of institutes in the UK, such as BIICL and various universities.

In terms of physical infrastructure, it is true that the arbitration community are all looking enviously at Singapore. However, it is mistaken to say that if they build it they will come; while it has a halo effect, it is not enough by itself. Audley agrees with other witnesses that London's physical infrastructure is looking a little tired.

Sanctions are a more difficult topic. Arbitrators have spoken with HM Treasury about this, seeking to let ongoing cases continue. Regardless, there needs to be more consideration of the effects on arbitration during the policy-making process. The ICC in France is a great example of government support for arbitration, with the state providing their accommodation.



The Chair thanks the panel for their remarks and questions them regarding the role of lawyers within arbitration. He is particularly interested in the role of non-lawyers as arbitrators, and whether arbitrations not based in London are a challenge or an opportunity.

Lucy addresses the question

Ad hoc arbitrations are a significant opportunity for London and we need to look beyond the 'tip of the iceberg' high-value cases. The LMAA is a great example, as they deal with large numbers of ad hoc arbitrations and cases frequently involve non-lawyers as arbitrators. There is also room for more specialist schemes, with the rise of travel sector arbitration schemes as a good case study.

The Chair comments that he is very happy to hear that there is potential for growth in non-lawyer arbitrations, as it is an area he would very much like to move into in the future! He addresses the same question to Audley.

Audley argues it is a shame that arbitration doesn't have more non-lawyers. A key reason for this is that parties in disputes often want to 'lawyer up', choosing big legal names who then select a Chair from a similar background. Institutions are making progress around gender and nationality; however, arbitration could benefit also from a greater move towards using architects, engineers, accountants etc.

Christina Rees MP jokes that you can never have too many lawyers. Christina asks whether contract writing should be a core focus and asks the panellists to identify their top 3 opportunities for London as a seat.

Lucy addresses the question

Lucy agrees with Christina that it is key to have arbitration factored in during contract writing, as it is harder to move to arbitration once you are already in dispute. Various ADR schemes are now providing a genuine alternative to small claims courts. It is crucial for parties to be aware of these services and there needs to be a push to increase visibility. In London, many claims go to courts unnecessarily. CI Arb's BAS is a good example of such a scheme, which with promotion could have a lot of potential. The growth of more schemes will increase visibility during contract writing.

Christina Rees MP outlines her role as Shadow Secretary of State for Wales and the ongoing conversations around whether justice should become a devolved area. She suggests a conversation with Baroness Morgan or the First Minister could be of benefit.

Audley addresses Christina's points

Audley's top 3 opportunities are: building on the superb brand of English Law/London; looking to developing economics, particularly where British banks are already



operating; and utilising the network of embassies, high commissions and law firms globally. He also adds a further fourth opportunity, arising from the extremely high esteem in which the British judiciary are held.

John Spellar MP asks the panel about their thoughts regarding AI and technology in arbitration. Is this a challenge or an opportunity for the sector?

Audley addresses the topic

Audley jokes that AI may eventually put them all out of jobs. AI may grow to be able to determine judgements to a high enough degree of accuracy for party to be happy to move on and not waste time in dispute. PPI claims are a good example of this, where technology could decide outcomes accurately. The ability to use technology to do more business internationally is a huge opportunity and can help deal with issues around cost. He has looked at similar issues as part of his work with the Commonwealth Arbitration Study Group.

John Spellar MP talks about his experience working with the Northern Ireland legal system, and wonders how much of commercial arbitration is spent as ‘dead time’, going through separate stages? Is there room for improvement in processes?

Audley addresses the question

Time and cost effectiveness always come up as issues in arbitration, but the problem is when parties are in a big commercial fight they typically want all stones unturned and are unwilling to limit disclosure. Mediation is a good means of dealing with many of these issues. In Audley’s opinion, typically there are parts of discovery that take too long. Usually an award is based on only a very small proportion of the documents disclosed and there is rarely a ‘smoking gun’ email or document uncovered. Arbitrators shouldn’t be afraid to make decisions around efficiency.

Jonathan addresses the issue

The insurance industry can provide lessons for arbitration in this regard. Insurers are involved in significant numbers of international disputes and want to make time and cost savings. Blind bidding mediation and AI are resources they use.

The Chair opens the discussion to the floor and selects Masood Ahmed from the University of Leicester to address the panel.

Masood Ahmed asks the panel their opinion about the potential effects of the Singapore Convention on arbitration, and whether they feel mediation and dispute avoidance may cause a culture shift away from arbitration. He also asks for their opinion of the rebranding of courts, and whether this could water down the reputation of the commercial court.



Jonathan addresses Masood's points

Jonathan doesn't feel changing the names of courts will send ripples internationally or convince anyone that they have been updated. The biggest issue with rebranding is that typically only domestic users even notice. The Commercial Court is well regarded, and he doesn't believe it should be rebranded. Lord Thomas and Sundaresh Menon have worked on a Standing International Forum of Commercial Courts, seeking to be thought leaders in this area and become a think-tank for the worldwide commercial judiciary.

In terms of the Singapore Convention, Jonathan believes it is an interesting development, alongside the many others that Singapore brings out on a regular basis. However, he questions how valuable it is to have so many innovations, as users can have difficulty keeping up.

Lateef Yusuff comments that in his experience non-lawyer arbitrators with significant sectoral expertise can be an excellent choice for parties and particularly commends CI Arb's work with ACCA in the area of tax disputes.

Paula addresses comments

Paula agrees with the questioner and believes this is a great opportunity for the future.

The Chair closes the meeting by thanking the panellists and commenting on their impressive expertise. He also thanks the audience for attending and comments on how excellent it is to see their degree of engagement.