The Future of Law: Technology, Innovation and Access to Justice

Workshop to be held on November 28 and 29th *2018 in Berlin*

Organized by the Chair for Public Law and Comparative Law, Humboldt University of Berlin and the Friedrich Naumann Stiftung for Freedom

Background

Access to justice is understood as the ability for people to address their everyday legal problems, either through recourse to courts or other forums. It is estimated that globally, around 4 billion people live outside the reach of the law, and do not have the security, opportunity or protection to redress their grievances and injustices.

Challenges of access to justice can manifest in multiple ways, these can include where courts and legal institutions are out of reach of litigants for reasons of costs, distance or even a lack of knowledge of rights and entitlements. It can also be caused because many judicial institutions are under-funded and as a result, there is poor infrastructure, inadequate staff and limited resources to meet the needs and demands of litigants who require such services. In many instances the text of law itself is riddled with complexities and that makes it difficult for it to be understood and used effectively. Access to justice can is therefore an expansive concept that has symbolic, financial, informational and structural implications for fights against poverty, inequality, violence and a lack of development. This significance has been recognized in the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals that see access to justice as a key driver for building peaceful and inclusive societies.

A key focus of this project is to understand how technology, seen as a disruptor in several industries and economies, can leverage innovation to introduce solutions to some of the most intractable justice sector problems. The German government, particularly through its Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development, has also identified the vast potential of digitalization and specifically targets the promotion of human rights and political participation in its recently published "Digital Agenda".

The conference aims to bring together leading lawyers, judges, academics, technologists and researchers to discuss ways in which advances in technology, can bring greater access, efficiency and effectiveness to justice sector reform. The outcomes from the conference will be published in an edited collection.

Themes

The themes for the conference will include:-

1. **How technology is changing the nature of work and altering the practice of law- Experiences from the private sector.**
   How can actors like law firms, consultancies and corporations who are faced with new technologies and platforms, adapt to changing scenarios and ensure there is greater accountability and transparency in their work? What is the potential of new legal services like predictive and analytic platforms, e-

discovery tools, online dispute resolution platforms in the delivery of legal services?

2. **Building a Smarter Judiciary, Prosecution and Court: How does the public sector respond and harness technology for ensuring better access to justice?**
   What are the implications of technological advancements on government led litigation and policies regarding justice sector (criminal and civil justice) reform? How can the judiciary reinvent itself to address critical access to justice barriers by relying on technology? Can Court systems be improved to make them more cost efficient an accessible? Can the prosecution use data driven interventions to improve their litigation capacities?

3. **The role of the University and the Bar in preparing lawyers for the future**
   What are the implications of technology and innovation on the development of legal education curriculum? Do law schools require to develop a new type of lawyer? How can technology change the delivery of legal education in the age of a robot-lawyer? What role does the bar play in ensuring quality lawyers and continuing education?

4. **Digitilization, Civil Society and Development cooperation**
   How can technology and data driven strategies be used to improve the functioning of civil society organizations as well as capacity building and rule of law reform and promotion abroad? What implications will empirical techniques, analytics, and innovation have on the broader social sector?

Submission Instructions: Please submit an abstract (500 words) that contains title, author, research question, methodology and your main argument to lawandthefutureberlin2018@gmail.com by **April 22, 2018**. Selected participants will be informed by mid to end **May 2018**. Final papers between (7,000 -9,000 words) are to be submitted in electronic format by **September 30, 2018.**

Selection: Submissions will be reviewed by a selection committee composed of members affiliated with the Chair for Public Law and Comparative Law at Humboldt University Berlin and the Friedrich Naumann Stiftung for Freedom.

Selected candidates will be awarded a stipend to cover parts of their travel and accommodation costs.

For more details contact Siddharth de Souza (siddharth.de.souza@rewi.hu-berlin.de) &Maximilian Spohr (Maximilian.Spohr@freiheit.org)