

Good evening, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen. As Secretary-General of the Permanent Court of Arbitration, it is my pleasure and honour to be with you today. One might even think it has become a tradition, given that some eight years ago the then Secretary-General of the PCA delivered the keynote lecture at this same conference.

Still, maybe a few words to set the scene in terms of the PCA's pedigree: the PCA is the world's oldest institution devoted to the resolution of international disputes. It was established in 1899 by the Hague Convention for the Pacific Settlement of International Disputes. The Convention itself was a product of the First Hague Peace Conference held at the initiative of the last Russian Czar, Nicholas II.

A global institution from the very beginning, the PCA now comprises 122 contracting parties. Our current caseload consists of nearly 170 pending registry cases, involving over 50 different States. In addition to providing registry services, the PCA has acted as, or designated an, "appointing authority" in response to more than 740 requests.

More specific to today's topic (ISDS and Freedom of Information), I note that the PCA takes no position as to whether States should enter into treaties for the protection of investment. It is for States to determine what system should govern the relations between foreign investors and host States. The PCA can, however, draw on extensive experience with investment-related disputes, enabling it to provide technical expertise and an institutional perspective in the ongoing