



Global Essay Competition

From Foundations to Frontiers: UNCITRAL's Role in Shaping Tomorrow's Trade Law

Background

In 2026, the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law (UNCITRAL) marks its 60th anniversary - six decades of shaping the rules that underpin global commerce. This milestone invites not only reflection on UNCITRAL's achievements in harmonizing and modernizing international trade law, but also a forward-looking inquiry into how UNCITRAL can steer an increasingly complex and dynamic global trade landscape.

As part of the UNCITRAL 60 celebratory events, the UNCITRAL secretariat is launching a global essay competition open to all researchers with an interest in international trade law and related disciplines.

The essay competition aims to:

- Engage researchers in shaping debates on the future direction of international trade law;
- Promote interdisciplinary thinking and innovative approaches to legal development;
- Strengthen global awareness of UNCITRAL's work; and
- Foster inclusive participation across diverse legal systems, regions, and academic traditions.

Theme

The global essay competition under the theme "*From Foundations to Frontiers: UNCITRAL's Role in Shaping Tomorrow's Trade Law*" invites original research and thought-provoking contributions that address:

- The social and economic impact of UNCITRAL texts, assessing their role in facilitating international trade and promoting legal certainty across jurisdictions.
- Innovative and forward-looking ideas on the future of international trade law, exploring how UNCITRAL can continue to serve as a solution-oriented, inclusive, and responsive forum in an evolving global context.

Interdisciplinary perspectives that integrate legal analysis with insights from economics, technology, and other relevant disciplines to address emerging trends and challenges are encouraged.

Eligibility and Submission Requirements

- The competition is open to researchers from all disciplines with an interest in international trade law. Submissions must be endorsed by a university or recognized research institution.
- Submissions may be made in any of the six official languages of the United Nations (Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish) and should not exceed 10,000 words. Submissions should be sent to the UNCITRAL secretariat by email (uncitral60@un.org) under the subject line “Global Essay Competition” before **31 December 2026**.

Evaluation and Awards

- Essays will be evaluated by a distinguished panel composed of current and former members of the UNCITRAL secretariat, as well as eminent professors with recognized expertise in international trade law.
- The top ten winning authors—ideally two from each regional group—will be invited to present their essays during the UNCITRAL Commission session in Vienna in June/July 2027. Those essays will be published as part of UNCITRAL 60 documentation. Winners will also be offered a visiting scholarship at the UNCITRAL secretariat.

Contact

For further information, please contact: uncitral60@un.org

