

Access to Justice and the Market for Legal Services
A World Bank Workshop
June 18, 2002, 9:00 am – 4:30 pm
701 18th Street, N.W., Washington, D.C.
Room JB 1 075

Lawyers, notaries, and other legal professionals are an integral part of the justice system of every nation, providing legal advice, representing litigants, validating transactions. But in most countries most legal professional are not government employees. Rather, they operate in the private sector. In many nations, complex government regulations affect the price and quality of the services provided. Governments often grant legal professionals a monopoly over the provision of legal services and frequently limit the number of legal professionals. In some instances, government even sets minimum or maximum prices for the services provided.

Poorly drawn or poorly implemented regulations can be a major barrier to access to justice. If the limits on who can do legal work are too tight, prices will rise and the poor and even the middle class may be unable to afford needed services. Conversely, because it hard for a layperson to evaluate the quality of a legal professional, without some regulation of provider quality, consumers of legal services can suffer. These problems can be particularly acute in the countries where the World Bank works, where access to justice is often already restricted and where consumers' ability to evaluate the quality of legal help already problematic.

The aim of this workshop is threefold: to draw attention to the issues involved in regulating the legal service market, to provide those working on legal and judicial reform with tools for evaluating the quality of the regulation in developing and post-communist states, and to offer suggestions for how to improve the regulatory climate.

Agenda

9:00 – 9:30: Welcome & Introduction

9:30 – 11:00: The Consequences of Government Regulation of Legal Services Markets in Moldova and Slovakia. Luba Zimanova Beardsley, Co-Director, World Bank Legal Institutions Thematic Group

11:15 – 12:45: Techniques for Evaluating the How Well Government Regulates the Legal Service Market. Professor Gillian Hadfield, University of Southern California Law School

12:45 – 1:30: Buffet lunch/Informal discussion

1:30 – 3:00: Reforming the Market for Legal Services: The Experience in the United Kingdom. Peter Harris, Lord Chancellor's Department; Antonia Romeo, Head of the Market Intelligence, Lord Chancellor's Department

3:15—4:30: Open Discussion

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