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IAML Press Release: Surrogacy Symposium

PRESS RELEASE

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International surrogacy ‘a ticking timebomb’

The International Academy of Matrimonial Lawyers (IAML) Surrogacy Symposium brought together leading professionals from 30 jurisdictions from around the world including India, Australia, South Africa, Ukraine, Hong Kong, Argentina, Mexico, Israel and many European countries and US states.

The offices of London law firm Charles Russell Speechlys hosted a 1.5 day symposium on 18th and 19th May on the hot topic of surrogacy.

The keynote address came from Mrs Justice Theis of England, a high court judge with wide experience in this area, who warned of a ‘ticking timebomb’ in the UK with large numbers of parents failing to obtain legal permission to take care of their new children.

In England and many other countries outside the US, the surrogate remains the legal parent if no order is obtained. Many ‘intended parents’ do not realise this.

The symposium was designed to bring together experts from around the world to exchange ideas and consider areas of potential agreement and development of the law.

This is against the background of a possible Hague Convention on surrogacy. There was lively discussion and considerable disagreement on whether such a convention was necessary or beneficial.

William Longrigg, IAML president and partner of Charles Russell Speechlys, said: ‘One of the main issues internationally is the difference of opinion about the right of an individual to be a parent. The legal status of the surrogate is also a fraught subject. There is a fundamental conflict over the importance of the rights of the child in different jurisdictions but these differences need to be aired and discussed. This is the first conference on surrogacy which has brought together so many different jurisdictions and has been a huge success’.

Anne-Marie Hutchinson OBE, surrogacy specialist, IAML governor and partner of London firm

Dawson Cornwell said: 'The creation of a multilateral treaty on surrogacy arrangements is a priority and the IAML has committed the expertise of our members to the important work being undertaken worldwide to achieve this'.

Nancy Zalusky Berg, IAML president-elect, past president of the IAML USA Chapter and founding partner of Walling, Berg, & Debele, PA in Minneapolis, Minnesota, USA, said: 'It is critical, at this time, that we professionals in the field take steps to address the rights and needs of the children born via assisted reproductive technology to establish citizenship and the security of legally recognised parentage'.

IAML is an international organisation of about 700 practising lawyers who are recognised by their peers as the most experienced and skilled family law specialists in their respective countries. See www.iaml.org

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For further comment, please contact IAML Executive Director, Donna Goddard on +44 (0)1245 380010 or e-mail donna.goddard@iaml.org

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