

**DESPITE STATE BORDERS: THE EVOLVING IMPORTANCE OF THE
INTERNATIONAL LAW AND INSTITUTIONS TO INDIGENOUS PEOPLES AND
THEIR PUBLIC AND PRIVATE PARTNERS**

By Mary Cornish

**Presented on April 2 & 3, 2004 at Despite State Borders: The Evolving
Importance of International Law and Institutions to Indigenous Peoples and their
Public and Private Partners hosted by the Canadian Bas Association**

On April 2 & 3, 2004, the International Law Section in partnership with the Aboriginal Law Section held a successful and stimulating conference in Montreal. The conference explored the increasing role of international law and institutions as a means of advancing Indigenous rights and developing partnerships between Indigenous peoples and the public and private sectors. Panel and workshop discussions covered a wide range of topics including International Human Rights, International Trade, Accountability for Economic Development Projects, Intellectual Property and Traditional Knowledge, Cross-Border Partnerships and Security, Environmental Protection. The conference also examined the incorporation of international standards into Canadian domestic law and policy as well as the contribution of Canadian Aboriginal law to legal developments outside Canada. The conference was co- chaired by Peter Hutchins of Hutchins, Soroka and Grant and Mary Cornish of Cavalluzzo, Hayes, Shilton, McIntyre & Cornish. Conference attendees included practitioners, negotiators, academics and government legal counsel. Key speakers included Wilton Littlechild, Delegate to UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, the Honourable Warren Allmand, Violet Ford, Inuit Circumpolar Conference, Art Manuel, Indigenous Network on Economies and Trade, Madam Justice L'Heureux- Dube and Brian Tittlemore, Inter-American Commission on Human Rights.