

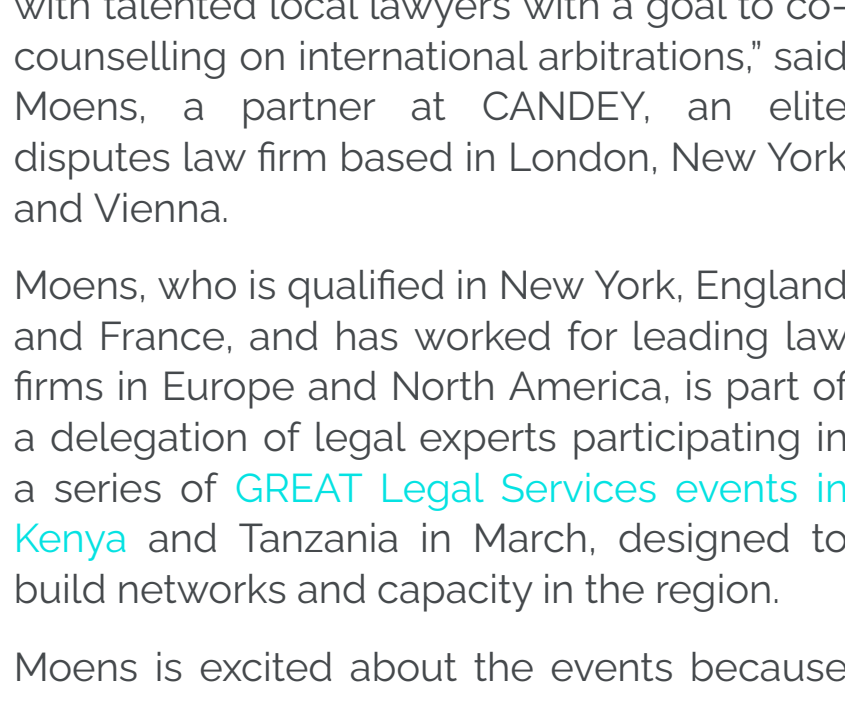


UK Government and Africa Legal: Capitalising on the value of local co-counsel

As the GREAT Legal Services campaign and Africa Legal visit to East Africa draws closer, Nairobi-based international arbitration expert and delegate Ellen-Louise Moens spoke to Craig Sisterson about the value of bringing local co-counsel to the table.

Feb 26, 2024 Craig Sisterson

[Share](#)



While international law firms rightly have their eye on East Africa as a dynamic region full of innovation and investment opportunities, they need to build stronger relationships with local firms, including as co-counsel on international arbitrations, says [Ellen-Louise Moens](#).

"Our approach to the African (Kenyan) market is founded upon cooperation with local firms, which we believe delivers the best results for our clients. My goal on the ground here has been to develop long-lasting relationships with talented local lawyers with a goal to co-counselling on international arbitrations," said Moens, a partner at CANDEY, an elite disputes law firm based in London, New York and Vienna.

Moens, who is qualified in New York, England and France, and has worked for leading law firms in Europe and North America, is part of a delegation of legal experts participating in a series of [GREAT Legal Services events in Kenya](#) and Tanzania in March, designed to build networks and capacity in the region.

Moens is excited about the events because East Africa is now her home territory; she is based in Nairobi after moving to Kenya a year ago for family reasons and intends to stay long term.

"Kenya is a very logical place for UK-based law firms to look to for growth in this region given that English law tends to be the governing law of contracts in international transactions, and international arbitrations tend to be seated in London. By default, this leads to the 'traditional model' where UK-based firms handle international arbitrations from London, and local counsel only get called upon to assist with discrete 'local elements' of the proceedings. The fact that Kenya is now my home has been an important factor in wanting the 'traditional' model to change. Often, local counsel are only asked to provide advice on contractual or regulatory matters in relation to M&A matters or investment due diligence."

While there is plenty of work for someone like Moens, she wants to reflect the desire of local counsel (which in some ways she now is) and break the 'traditional model' by forging closer collaboration between international firms and local counsel in a truly integrated manner where local counsel are involved in the arbitration from the beginning stages of the proceedings through to playing an active role during the hearing. This, in her opinion, lessens the degrees of separation between the tribunal and the client, and gets the best result for the client, which is everyone's goal.

"There are fantastic lawyers in Kenya," she pointed out. "They have local knowledge, understand the market and nuances of the culture, and understand the wants and needs of local clients better than any member of our team in London ever could. It makes sense for us to approach the market in this manner, and the fact that I'm on the ground here and able to develop this vision is exciting."

Delegates at the GREAT Legal Services roundtable events will be able to exchange knowledge and best practices. Among other topics, they will discuss the key sectors primed for UK-East African legal cooperation, collaborative efficiencies around fee splits and ensuring equity, use of technology and how to embrace it, and training of associates and retention.

Moens is looking forward to strengthening her network at the upcoming GREAT Legal Services events and to being a bridge between her international peers in attendance and local lawyers and stakeholders, while providing a unique perspective. "There's always a lot to learn from other lawyers from different UK-based firms who have an interest in the East African market. It will be very interesting to hear everyone's perspective and to share my own," she said.

Moens believes that as various sectors in Kenya and across East Africa grow – from fintech to oil and gas and renewables – disputes will likewise increase. "With this in mind, it's vital for continued local development that any disputes are managed well so that projects can proceed, and relationships between parties – including investors and governments – are not lost," she said.

To stay up to date on UK MOJ Legal Services events, follow [GREAT Legal Services](#). To hear more about the East African event series please contact Africa Legal by emailing admin@afrika-legal.com or read this [article](#).

To join Africa Legal's mailing list please click [here](#)

Copyright : Re-publication of this article is authorised only in the following circumstances; the writer and Africa Legal are both recognised as the author and the website address www.afrika-legal.com and original article link are back linked. A bio for the writer can be provided on request.

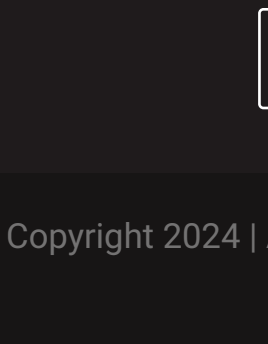
RELATED CATEGORY NEWS



EMBRACING THE POWER
[Read more](#)



OVERCOMING IMPOSTER
[Read more](#)



THE LEGAL KNOCKOUT
[Read more](#)

RELATED COUNTRY NEWS

KENYAN CHILD
[Read more](#)

WIN FOR WIDOWS IN
[Read more](#)

SEEING BEYOND
[Read more](#)

AFRICA LEGAL

PART OF THE
AFRICA PROFESSIONAL
SERVICES GROUP

Africa Legal

- [About us](#)
- [Contact Us](#)
- [Terms of use](#)
- [Privacy and cookies policy](#)

Members

- [Find a job](#)
- [Take a course](#)
- [Read news](#)
- [Terms and conditions](#)
- [Cancellations and refunds](#)

Clients

- [Terms and conditions](#)
- [Post a job](#)
- [Host a course](#)
- [Advertise](#)
- [Share news](#)

Connect with us

