

Maria Vicien Milburn
Independent Arbitrator
Madrid · Lisbon · New York

mvm@vicienmilburn.com
www.vicienmilburn.com
+ 33 6 48 32 32 41



Maria Vicien Milburn is an international judge and arbitrator, and former senior official of the United Nations. She is a specialist in public international law with extensive dispute resolution experience in arbitration, conciliation and negotiation acquired through senior positions as General Counsel of UNESCO, Director of the General Legal Division of the United Nations, and Registrar of the United Nations Administrative Tribunal.

Ms Vicien Milburn currently acts as arbitrator in cases involving sovereign States, including under the auspices of the International Centre for Settlement of Investment Disputes (ICSID), the Permanent Court of Arbitration (PCA), and the International Chamber of Commerce (ICC). She is currently designated by the Kingdom of Spain to the ICSID Panel of Arbitrators (2026-2032). She served as Chair of the Sanctions Board of the World Bank, and is the Alternate Chair of the Enforcement Appeals Committee of the Asian Development Bank. She sits as judge of the Administrative Tribunals of the European Space Agency (ESA), the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). She formerly was a member of the Administrative Tribunal of the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB). She is a member of the list of panelists of the Dispute Settlement Body of the World Trade Organization (WTO).

During her thirty-five year career as an international lawyer at the United Nations and UNESCO, Ms Vicien Milburn provided legal advice on all issues relating to the operation of the two organizations worldwide. She oversaw all commercial contracting, directed the conduct of all litigation and arbitration, and advised on international treaties and conventions. Since retirement from the United Nations in 2014, Ms Vicien Milburn has continued to serve in multiple capacities as a special advisor to international organizations.

In her work as an arbitrator, she has adjudicated disputes in a wide array of sectors including telecommunications, real estate, procurement, and aviation. Trilingual in English, Spanish and French, she regularly acts in arbitrations in all three languages and involving parties in Europe, Latin America, the Middle East, and Africa. An active member of the arbitral community, Ms Vicien Milburn is an observer to UNCITRAL Working Groups II and III on international arbitration, a member of the ICC Arbitration Commission, and an advisor to the Board of the Arbitration Court of Madrid.

Ms Vicien Milburn is a graduate of the University of Buenos Aires Law School (Argentina) and received a Master in Laws from Columbia University. She is admitted to practice law in New York (non-active) and Buenos Aires.

Ms Vicien Milburn is a national of Argentina and Spain.

ARBITRATOR APPOINTMENTS

Since 2015, Ms Vicien Milburn has acted as an arbitrator in investment and commercial disputes, particularly those involving sovereign States. Representative matters include:

- Co-arbitrator appointed by the State in an investment arbitration administered by the PCA (confidential)
- Co-arbitrator appointed by the State in Imeks Insaat Makina Elektrik Konstrüksiyon Sanayi Limited Sirketi v. Turkmenistan (ICSID Case No. ARB/21/23)
- Co-arbitrator appointed by the State in Marko Mihaljevic v. Croatia (ICSID Case No. ARB/19/35)
- Co-arbitrator appointed by a West African State in an ICC Arbitration brought by a European claimant concerning a commercial contract in the aviation sector
- Co-arbitrator appointed by a Middle Eastern State in an ICC Arbitration brought by a Middle Eastern

- claimant concerning a procurement contract
- Co-arbitrator appointed by a State of the former Yugoslavia in an UNCITRAL arbitration under the auspices of the PCA brought by a German claimant concerning an investment contract
- Sole arbitrator in an ICC arbitration between Middle Eastern parties in a dispute in the telecommunications sector
- Sole arbitrator in an ICC arbitration between a European company and a North African company arising out of a procurement contract

JUDGE AND ADJUDICATOR APPOINTMENTS

Ms Vicien Milburn also currently serves as judge and adjudicator on multiple international tribunals:

- Since 2026, a judge of the Administrative Tribunal of the European Space Agency (ESA)
- Since 2024, as Alternate Chair of the Enforcement Appeals Committee of the Asian Development Bank
- Since 2022, a judge of the Administrative Tribunal of the International Monetary Fund (IMF)
- Since 2018, a judge of the Administrative Tribunal of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD)
- Since 2017, designated on the list of panelists of the Dispute Settlement Body of the World Trade Organization (WTO)

From 2019 to 2025, Ms Vicien Milburn served as a member of the Sanctions Board of the World Bank and acted as Chair of the Board from 2021 until the end of her tenure. From 2021 to 2026, she served as a judge of the Administrative Tribunal of the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB)

In her thirty-five year career within the United Nations System, Ms Vicien Milburn acted as in-house counsel in the context of dozens of disputes across the globe, including several major arbitrations involving UN organizations.

UNITED NATIONS CAREER

Ms Vicien Milburn joined the United Nations in 1976, where she served as a Legal Officer, first at UNCITRAL (United Nations Commission on International Trade Law) and beginning in 1978 at the General Legal Division of the Office of Legal Affairs of the United Nations (UN) in New York.

In 1985, she joined the UN Administrative Tribunal (UNAT) as a Registrar. There she managed the Registry, was responsible for issuing more than 50 judgments per year and provided substantive, technical and administrative support to the UNAT judges in the adjudication of more than 500 cases.

Ms Vicien Milburn went on to serve as Deputy Director (1999) and Director (2005) of the General Legal Division of the Office of Legal Affairs of the UN where she managed and resolved a wide variety of commercial and construction disputes involving the UN through arbitration, conciliation and negotiation. She also negotiated major contracts between the UN and private contractors for the supply of goods and services to the UN; represented the UN in disputes related to the prosecution of fraud and the recovery of assets, which included supervising the conduct of internal investigations; and represented the UN in multiple jurisdictions to assert its privileges and immunities in the context of litigation instituted against the UN in national courts. In addition, she prepared the UN Secretary General's proposal of 7 December 2007 to the Security Council for a dispute resolution mechanism to resolve mass claims resulting from the "Oil-for-Food Program", a multi-billion dollar humanitarian program to ease the sanctions imposed on Iraq. As member of the UN Justice Council in 2008, Ms Vicien Milburn advised the General Assembly of the UN on the establishment of a two-tier UN Internal Justice system, which included arbitration.

From July 2009 until October 2014, Ms Vicien Milburn acted as UNESCO's General Counsel in Paris. She provided legal advice to UNESCO, its Member States and its governing bodies on all issues arising from UNESCO's activities, particularly with respect to the interpretation and implementation of international treaties relating to education, science, culture and sport. At the same time, she managed and resolved disputes involving UNESCO through negotiation, mediation and arbitration in the sales, supply of goods

and services, construction, and employment fields. She also provided advice on the establishment and implementation of rules of procedure for the resolution of disputes by mediation and conciliation under the auspices of the Intergovernmental Committee for Promoting the Return of Cultural Property to its Countries of Origin or its Restitution in Case of Illicit Appropriation.

In November 2014, Ms Vicien Milburn was one of the five individuals appointed by the UN Secretary General to the UN Board of Inquiry to investigate and report on specific incidents that occurred on UN property during the 2014 conflict in Gaza. The report was submitted to the UN Security Council in April 2015.

ACADEMIC PURSUITS

In 2003, Ms Vicien Milburn took a sabbatical from the UN to become a Visiting Fellow at Columbia University School of Law where she undertook research on the use of public international law in investment arbitration under the direction of Professors José Alvarez and Petros C. Mavroidis. She continues to work, publish and co-author articles in the field of commercial and investor-State arbitration.

In 2013, she received the Mayre Rasmussen Award for the Advancement of Women in International Law, granted by the International Law Section of the American Bar Association.

CONFERENCES, PUBLICATIONS & TEACHING

Conferences

- Panelist, “Arbitraje de Emergencia en el contexto de Arbitraje de Inversión”, Congreso Internacional sobre Arbitraje y Estado: Desafíos y Perspectivas, Cuzco, Peru, October 2025
- Panelist, “Echoes of Conflict: Legal Mechanisms for Restoring Stolen Cultural Property”, War & Peace and International Arbitration: The Prospects of Accountability for Violent Conflicts, Università Bocconi, Milan, Italy, May 2025
- Panelist, “Code of Conduct for Arbitrators”, Centre for International Legal Studies Arbitration Symposium, Salzburg, Austria, June 2024
- Chair, Seminar on Sanctions and their impact on International Arbitration, FIDE, Madrid, Spain, April 2024
- Panelist, “Use and Abuse of Nationality in International Arbitration”, British Institute of International and Comparative Law, London, UK, November 2023
- Panelist, “Covid-19 and standards of investment protection”, ICC webinar, July 2020
- Panelist, “Legal and contractual remedies involving force majeure and excessively onerous contract clauses: a practical vision from arbitration specialists” ICC webinar, June 2020
- Panelist, “UNICTRAL Model Law”, International Seminar on International Commerce Investment & Arbitration, Montevideo, Uruguay, March 2019
- Panelist, Centre for International Legal Studies Arbitration Symposium, Salzburg, Austria, June 2018
- Keynote Speaker, “The New York Convention”, Union Internationale des Avocats: keynote speech for the 60th Anniversary of the New York Convention, Bilbao, Spain, April 2018
- Panelist, “Corruption on Investment Arbitration”, V Seminar on ISDS Reform, Peruvian Institute of Arbitration, Lima, Peru, October 2017
- Panelist, “Transparency in Investor-State Arbitration”, Joint UNCITRAL-Ljubljana Arbitration Centre Conference on Dispute Settlement, Ljubljana, Slovenia, April 2017
- Panelist, Centre for International Legal Studies Arbitration Symposium, Salzburg, Austria, June 2016
- Panelist, “Interpretation of Contracts”, Institute for Transnational Arbitration Annual Workshop, Dallas, USA, June 2015

Selected Publications

- The Carrot, the Stick and the Wrench: A History of Economic Sanctions and Their Obstacles to International Arbitration, with Felipe Rocha dos Santos, TDM Special Issue on “Sanctions and International Arbitration: Impact on Substantive and Procedural Issues” (2024)
- The Role of the Legal Adviser in UNESCO, with Chantal Claxton-Proust, Legal Advisers in International Organizations, Leuven Global Governance, Edited by Jan Wouters, EE Publishing

(2023)

- UNESCO's Role in the Resolution of Disputes Relating to the Recovery of Cultural Goods, with Asoid García-Márquez and Athina Fouchard, *Transnational Dispute Management Review*, Special Issue on Art and Heritage Disputes, Vol. 10, Issue 5 (October 2013)
- UNESCO and Global Administrative Law, in Bories, C (ed.), *A Global Administrative Law? Actes du Colloque*, 16 et 17 juin 2011, *Cahiers Internationaux* No. 28, p. 317 (Pedone, 2012)
- Testing the Procedural Limits of the ICSID Annulment Regime in Cases against Argentina, with Yulia Andreeva, *Yearbook of International Investment Law and Policy*, p. 291 (Oxford University Press, 2010)
- New Developments in the "Argentine Crisis" Jurisprudence: ICSID Annulment Standards in Arbitral Practice, with Yulia Andreeva, 39 *International Legal News* No. 2 (2010)
- There is Nothing More Permanent Than Temporary - A Critical Look at ICSID Article 52(5) on Stay of Enforcement in Cases against Argentina, with Yulia Andreeva, 15 *Arbitration News*, No. 1 (2010)
- Promoting the Rule of Law Within the United Nations, 43 *The International Lawyer*, No. 1, p. 51 (2009)
- Independence of the Tribunals, in Papanicolau K & Hishaki, M, *Int. Administrative Tribunals in a changing world*. 2008

Teaching

- Universidad Carlos III de Madrid. Lecturer: Law and Practice of International Organizations (November 2017 – 2024)
- Institut d'Etudes Politiques de Paris Law School (Sciences Po). Lecturer: Law and Practice of International Organizations (Fall 2017)

MEMBERSHIPS & AFFILIATIONS

- Appointed to the Panel of Arbitrators of the British Virgin Islands International Arbitration Centre (BVIIAC), June 2022
- Elected Member American Arbitration Association-ICDR Council, May 2022
- Member of the International Advisory Council of the American Arbitration Association (2019-present)
- Advisor to the Corte de Arbitraje de Madrid and member of its "Comisión de Recusaciones y Autorización de Intervención de Terceros" (2019 – present)
- Member of the International Centre for Dispute Resolution (ICDR) International Panel (2019 – present)
- List of Arbitrators, Corte de Arbitraje de la Cámara de Comercio Americana del Perú (AmCham)
- List of Arbitrators, Centro de Arbitraje de la Cámara de Comercio de Lima (CCL), Perú
- Official Observer at the UNCITRAL Working Groups II and III (Arbitration/Dispute Resolution and ISDS Reform) in New York and Vienna (2008 – present)
- Acted as expert for UNCITRAL, including on matters pertaining to current and future work
- Member of the IBA Sub-Committee on Investment Arbitration (since 2016)
- Argentine Member of the ICC Commission on Arbitration (2010 – present)
 - Task Force on Controlling Time and Costs in Arbitration
 - Task Force on the Probative Value of Witness Evidence
 - Task Force on the Revision of ICC Rules as Appointing Authority in UNCITRAL or other Ad Hoc Arbitration Procedures
 - Task Force on Resolving Climate Change Disputes through Arbitration and ADR
 - Task Force on Addressing issues of Corruption in International Arbitration
- Member of the ICC Institute of World Business Law (2011 – present)
- Director, Columbia Law School Alumni Association (2002 – 2012)
- Director, American Foreign Law Association (1976 – 2010)
- Member, New York City Bar Association, Committee on International Commercial Dispute Resolution (2003 – 2009)
- Member, New York City Bar Association, Committee on Foreign and Comparative Law (1999 – 2001)
- Member, New York City Bar Association, Committee on International Law (1996 – 1998)
- Vice-Chair, Program Committee of the International Law Weekend (1994 – 2001)