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Investiture doctor honoris causa of Professor Dinah Shelton

LAUDATIO

András Zs. VARGA

Your Eminence, Your excellencies, *Magnifice Domine Rector*, members of the university community, colleagues, ladies and gentlemen!

It is a great honour and privilege for me to present Professor Dinah Shelton for the conferment of an honorary doctorate by the Péter Pázmány Catholic University. She deserves this award for her human qualities and scientific contributions.

Professor Shelton graduated from University of California and Boalt School of Law (Berkeley). At the beginning of her career, she worked at a law firm (Kent, Bready, Burns, Kaplan and Williams) then as an attorney at different important posts, e.g. at the US Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit. Parallell to this, she became professor at prestigious American universities and she was also invited by foreign universities. Later, she abandoned procedural law and turned back to her favourite research field, i.e. public international law.

She devoted herself to the teaching of international law at the Santa Clara University (1975-1996), Stanford (1993, 1994), San Diego (1994) and then at the University of Notre Dame (1996-2004) and finally at George Washington University (2004-2013).

She also taught in Europe (at the University Robert Schuman of Strasbourg and at the University Paris IX) and she became the member of the professoral staff of the International Institute of Human Rights of Strasbourg, founded by Nobel Peace Prize winner René Cassin. During summer university courses in Strasbourg she was the teacher of several young people from Central and Eastern European countries, before & after the collapse of the Berlin Wall. Some of them as professor colleagues at the Péter Pázmány Catholic University or at other Hungarian Universities are present in this room.

Professor Shelton attempted the impossible: to become world wide known not only in one but in two fields, namely human rights and environment protection. And she has succeeded...

Her books (1) *International Human Rights in a Nutshell*, (2) *Interamerican Protection of Human Rights*, (3) *Remedies in International Human Rights Law*, (4) *International Crimes, Peace and Human Rights, - the Role of the International Criminal Court* (5) *Encyclopedia of Genocide and Crimes against Humanity* or (6)

the recent *Oxford Handbook of International Human Rights Law* are most widely read all over the world.

But her other books (1) *Human Rights and Environment*, (2) *Manual of European Environmental Law*, which was also published in French or (3) the *Judicial Handbook of Environmental Law* cannot be ignored in questions related to the contemporary international legal status of Man and Biosphere.

She also published books on soft law, eg. (1) *The Role of Non-binding Norms in the International Legal System* or (2) on the classical question of the law of nations i.e. *International Law and Domestic Legal System*.

Professor Shelton also had the opportunity to face a great challenge of international law professors, namely how to put in practice their abstract knowledge in highly politicized, sensitive issues.

She was nominated by the American government to the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights and was elected to this post in 2010 by countries of the Organization of American States.

Hic Rhodus, hic salta – according to the old Latin formula.

As a member and also as the president of the Commission, till the end of her mandate in 2014, she succeeded to clarify situations, to find remedies or compensation for suffering and to prepare cases for sentencing by the Inter-American Court of Human Rights.

Professor Shelton has a special interests in our country, due also to her long friendship and professoral collaboration with the secretary general of the above mentioned International Institute of Human Rights, the late Alexandre Charles Kiss, born and educated in Hungary and since 1990 till his death, external member of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences.

During her professorship in Santa Clara, Mrs Shelton established contacts with the High School of Public Administration of Budapest. Then either from Notre Dame University or from George Washington University her network included the Eötvös Lóránd University, the Miskolc University and last but not least the Péter Pázmány Catholic University. She was our distinguished guest at several conferences and a promoter of international cooperation: she involved several colleagues hereby present into collective researches and common publications.

For all these reasons, *Magnifice Domine Rector*, it is with great pleasure that I present to you for admission to the degree of honorary doctor, Professor Dinah Shelton.