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**Introduction to the Oregon Review of
International Law's Fourth Annual
Symposium:
"New Voices in Economic Reform: Making
Room at the Table"**†

We have converged here today to discuss the important and timely topic of economic reform. I won't explain how we ended up here as that is for our distinguished guests. And I won't offer any insight into where we go from here. That, too, is for our distinguished guests. But I will tell you what I know and have observed about the global financial market over the last few years and what ORIL, as a journal, seeks to do.

We will talk more about what led up to what we now refer to as the financial crisis, but by 2008 it was apparent we were in it. There were different indicators and quickly many commentators. We learned that there was a liquidity shortfall in the U.S. banking system. We witnessed large financial institutions collapse, stocks plummet, the housing market struggle, and unemployment go up. We lost confidence in the financial market and its stability. Banks responded, businesses took action, people reacted, and even our own government answered with its various bailouts. That was just here in the United States. This crisis, however, spread across the globe and eventually brought us here today.

Many of the students participating today have been in law school for a portion, or nearly all, of this. We are just one of the many examples of small pockets that have been impacted by the economic

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crisis. Over the last few years we have felt the tightening of available credit from the business world to our personal lives. We have experienced ourselves or watched others struggle in the housing market. And don't even ask a recent law school graduate or current student about the job market. You will likely get an answer full of frustration. Some firms have cut their summer programs, other offices have stopped hiring, and government budgets have been reduced. Basically, many of us entered law school in one world and will return to another.

As a result of this economic crisis, things are changing and will continue to change. That is why the *Oregon Review of International Law* has brought our speakers here in this forum to talk publicly about economic reform. Following this discussion we will work to keep this conversation alive as we prepare and eventually publish the resulting articles. We know that the first step to any action is talking. We recognize the importance of not just talking about what happens within the United States, but what is happening and needs to happen in the global context. But we know that before we can really talk, we must understand what we strive to talk about. And in order to really understand this topic, we must make room at our table for many different voices. We welcome our speakers and look forward to adding to our growing volumes from what we learn today and the process that will come with producing Volume 12, Issue 2, *New Voices in Economic Reform: Making Room at the Table*.