

Resolution XIII
National Action Plan on Lawyer Conduct and Professionalism

WHEREAS, the Conference of Chief Justices expressed in a resolution adopted on August 1, 1996, its concern about the perceived decline in the professionalism of lawyers and the impact of that perception on the effective administration of justice; and

WHEREAS, in that same resolution, the Conference acknowledged the authority of state supreme courts to address concerns about lawyer professionalism and expressed interest in developing a comprehensive plan to deal with those concerns through the effective exercise of their authority; and

WHEREAS, the Conference authorized its Committee on Professionalism and Lawyer Competence to study the issues associated with lawyer professionalism and initiatives that states have undertaken to address those issues; and

WHEREAS, the Conference charged the Committee to present a report summarizing the study findings and recommending plans, models and standards for consideration by state supreme courts in the exercise of their regulatory authority over members of the bar and their supervisory authority over the courts within their respective jurisdictions; and

WHEREAS, the Committee fulfilled its charge by securing technical assistance from the National Center for State Courts and the ABA Center for Professional Responsibility (facilitated by a grant from the State Justice Institute) and by empanelling a Working Group of judges, lawyers, and other individuals with expertise on the topic of lawyer professionalism; and

WHEREAS, in the Fall of 1998 the Committee disseminated a draft of its National Action Plan on Lawyer Conduct and Professionalism to the members of the Conference and to a wide array of Judicial, legal and public interest organizations for review and comment; and

WHEREAS, public comment on the draft National Action Plan was overwhelmingly supportive both of greater involvement and leadership by state supreme courts in efforts to bolster ethical and professional conduct within the legal community and of the specific recommendations proposed in the National Action Plan; and

WHEREAS, the Committee has submitted the final draft of the National Action Plan to the Conference for its consideration;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that:

- The Conference hereby approves the report and National Action Plan presented by the Committee on Professionalism and Lawyer Competence.
- The Conference commends the dedication and diligence of the Committee members, the Working Group and all those who contributed to the task of fulfilling the mandate of Resolution VII.
- The Conference urges its members to present the National Action Plan to their respective courts for consideration and implementation of its recommendations as feasible and appropriate in their respective jurisdictions.

Adopted as proposed by the Committee on Professionalism and Competence of the Bar of the Conference of Chief Justices in Washington, DC, at the 22nd Midyear Meeting, on January 21, 1999.