

IMLI^e-News

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NIPPON FOUNDATION EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT DURING THE 2006 IMLI GRADUATION CEREMONY

IMLI and the Nippon Foundation launched during the academic year 2003/2004 their joint “*Human Resources Development Project for the Advancement of a More Effective Legal Order for the Oceans*”. An important feature and integral part of this Project is to provide scholarships for deserving lawyers from developing countries, mostly from the Asia Region, to study at IMLI.



Mr. Masazumi Nagamitsu (Executive Director, Nippon Foundation) addressing the audience at the 2006 IMLI Graduation Ceremony.

Since the establishment of the Programme 25 lawyers from all over the globe have been awarded the Nippon Foundation Scholarship, which allowed them to graduate in International Maritime Law at IMLI.

The *Sasakawa Prize for the Best Performing Nippon Foundation Scholar* was created as part of the Project, and is awarded every year to the Nippon Scholar who has the best overall performance in IMLI's LL.M. Programme. This year's Sasakawa Prize was presented on the occasion of the 2006 Graduation Ceremony by Mr. Masazumi Nagamitsu (*Executive Director, Nippon Foundation*) to Mr. Yongsheng Cai (*China*)

**Address by the Executive Director of The Nippon Foundation, Mr. Masazumi Nagamitsu at the 2006 IMLI Graduation Ceremony
(13 May 2006)**

"Let me begin by offering my heartfelt congratulations to all of you graduating fellows. I believe that this degree marks a significant step in your life, both for your academic and professional careers, as well as for your families, friends and teachers. It is a privilege to be present here with you today and to share this special day.

The oceans are a blessing for the people of all nations. They are a common heritage of humankind. They are our common property and our shared responsibility.

However, the oceans today face many problems: not only natural ones such as earthquakes and tsunamis, but man-made challenges, such as pollution, maritime accidents, piracy and the delimitation of continental shelves. To solve these problems it is essential to view our oceans, not on a national basis but as something connecting the whole of humankind. We must eliminate sectionalism, and promote international cooperation. We must establish a new form of coordination. One that goes beyond national interests and cultural differences, to the global-level. There is a limit to what can be done to tackle the diverse issues of the sea if one cooperates only with those who have common objectives.

This new global approach needs capable and experienced personnel who can act as leaders in the various maritime fields; people who have this strength: "the strength to

cooperate with others." However, we still lack human resources that are capable of contributing to such an approach on an international level. The Nippon Foundation regards the development of such human resources as the most important undertaking of the maritime field. This is why we have been supporting this IMLI scholarship program.

At IMLI, you have acquired education and knowledge. You have built close ties with your fellow students. You have gained a sense of accomplishment. And through your interaction with various people, you have been able to nurture such feelings as kindness, strength, and an understanding of the suffering of others. I believe that these experiences will serve as a solid basis for the strength that I just described: "the strength to cooperate with others." I am positive that when you become the leaders of the international maritime community in the future, you will be blessed with such power.

Today, you have reached one destination port, and are embarking on a new voyage, one that will be yet more eventful. No doubt you have been extremely busy just before departure. May I wish you a most successful voyage—a voyage that will take you beyond the horizon to wonderful ports of call, where you will encounter new landscapes, people and knowledge. I look forward to the near future, when you will be reunited for the purpose of fulfilling your aspirations. When you will be able to talk with each other about just how much you have done and how close you are to achieving your goals. IMLI and the Nippon Foundation are looking forward to helping you reach yet higher goals.

IMLI has already produced many exceptional leaders. I sincerely respect the international reputation that this school has built up in recent years under the strong leadership of Director Attard, as well as the assistance of Secretary-General Mitropoulos of IMO and the Government of Malta. Further, I would like to both pay my deepest respect and appreciation to the families of the graduating fellows for your support and to extend my gratitude to the teachers, staff and alumni who, with great enthusiasm for education, have given the students a wonderful learning environment.

Finally it is my hope that you graduates will maintain your pride as IMLI graduates and not only continue to learn, but also work to open up a new era for the maritime world. I wish you a very lively and successful future."

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