

**Welcome Address by the Director at the  
IMLI Graduation Ceremony, 9 June 2018**

Your Excellency Secretary-General,

Honourable Speaker,

Honourable Minister Mr. Abela,

Honourable Minister Dr. Borg,

Honourable Parliamentary Secretary Mr. Camilleri,

Honourable Parliamentary Secretary Dr. Debattista,

President Emeritus of Malta, Dr Ugo Mifsud Bonnici,

Distinguished Government Representatives from Brazil, Indonesia,

Panama, Uruguay Members of the Diplomatic Community,

Members of the Judiciary,

Members of the IMLI Governing Board,

Acting Director of the IMO Technical and Co-operation Division, Mr.

Juvenal Shiundu

Executive Director of The Nippon Foundation, Mr. Mitsuyuki Unno,

Lloyd's Register Foundation Chief Executive, Professor Richard Clegg,

Project Manager of the ITF Seafarer's Trust, Mr. Luca Tommasi,

Head of REMPEC Office, Mr. Gabino Gonzalez,

Rector of the Naval University of Mexico

Pro Rector of the University of Malta, Professor Tanya Sammut

Bonnici,

IMLI Visiting Professors,

Graduands,

Distinguished Guests,

It is my great pleasure and honour to welcome you to IMLI's 29th Graduation Ceremony celebrating the academic success of our graduands.

I am honoured this morning to welcome Mr. Kitack Lim, the IMO Secretary-General and Chairman of the IMLI Governing Board. I am grateful, for, despite having commitments, he has graciously accepted to preside over today's Graduation Ceremony.

Mr. Secretary-General, please allow me to take this opportunity to extend to you our deepest appreciation for the generous interest you have taken in our work and the welfare of the Institute.

We are particularly pleased that the Honourable Speaker Dr. Anglu Farrugia, who has over the years continuously shown great commitment to IMLI, is with us this morning. I extend my appreciation to the Honourable Ministers Mr. Carmelo Abela (Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade Development) and Dr. Ian Borg (Minister for Transport, Infrastructure and Capital Projects) both of whom we had the honour to receive at the Institute earlier this year. I also welcome the Hon. Mr. Clint Camilleri (Parliamentary Secretary for Agriculture, Fisheries and Animal Rights). Their presence today is a reflection of the long-standing support which the Institute has received from the Maltese Government and the people of Malta.

I wish to welcome two Members of the Institute's Governing Board – Mr. Jim Harrison and Ambassador Lino Vassallo - and thank them for their dedication to the Institute's welfare.

I wish to recognise the presence of Mr. Mitsuyuki Unno, Executive Director of The Nippon Foundation, who has over a decade believed in IMLI and its mission.

A warm welcome to Professor Richard Clegg, Lloyd's Register Foundation Chief Executive and Mr. Andrew Kennedy, Lloyd's Register Group Head of Dispute Resolution & Compliance.

Special thanks to Mr. Luca Tommasi of the ITF Seafarer's Trust, Mr. Branko Berlan of ITF, and Mr. Paul Falzon of the General Workers' Union for being with us today and for their efforts to revitalize our co-operation in the interest of the seafarers.

I am also very pleased to record the presence of Professor Francis Reynolds (Professor Emeritus of University of Oxford).

Distinguished guests,

IMLI is a small institution with a global mission: to train government officials and lawyers to serve the rule of international maritime law. I recall 30 years ago, when I was working with the then Secretary-General Chandrika Prasad Srivastava to set up IMLI, the main goal was for the Institute to develop national legal expertise to effectively implement maritime rules through national legislation. We are confident that today we have world class training programmes which develop the necessary skills. Over the years demand for IMLI training has grown tremendously – from the 19 students every year in the 1990s to the record number of 51 this year. For the forthcoming academic year, over 90 governments have nominated candidates and we will admit half of this number.

A fairly recent validation of IMLI's stature is its designation as the Food and Agriculture Organization's capacity-building partner. This summer, we shall hold a joint training course for officials from Africa, Asia and the Caribbean.

Distinguished guests,

The close collaboration between the Institute and IMO ensures that the IMLI programmes are responsive to the evolving needs of the international maritime community. Furthermore, the Institute collaborates with eminent professors from prestigious academic institutions around the world. This year we had the pleasure to welcome visiting professors from Harvard, Oxford, Sophia University (Tokyo), Ljubljana, Ankara, and Rome Tor Vergata.

We are particularly proud of our close co-operation with IMLI's sister institution, the World Maritime University (WMU) under the leadership of its President, Dr. Cleopatra Doumbia-Henry. This co-operation has

led to the launch of the joint programme of Master of Philosophy (M.Phil.) in International Maritime Law and Ocean Policy. In cooperation with Queen Mary University of London, IMLI has established a two-year Master's programme on International Maritime Law and Immigration Law. IMLI also provides teaching support to the Master's programmes organized by the University of Malta.

Distinguished guests,

An important feature of teaching at IMLI is the focus on practical training and networking. This academic year, we were assisted by some 40 visiting experts and practitioners who on a voluntary basis visited IMLI and developed professional contacts with our students.

Distinguished guests,

In expanding its efforts to contribute to the development of international maritime law, the Institute values research, publications and symposia. The Institute has published with Oxford University Press its three-

volume work entitled “The IMLI Manual on International Maritime Law” which represents today an authoritative statement of the law. I am pleased to announce that this formidable trilogy has become a sought-after resource by universities and maritime administrations.

This year, we are proud to announce another academic achievement namely, the publication by Oxford University Press of the three-volume “IMLI Treatise on Global Ocean Governance”. This groundbreaking work was inspired by a speech given by Dr. Yohei Sasakawa, Chairman of the Nippon Foundation, to the IMO whereby he called for a holistic and integrated approach to global ocean governance.

Distinguished guests,

None of these achievements would be possible without the support of our generous donors who believe in IMLI’s mission and the effective methods it employs to achieve the same. Our gratitude extends to the Government of Malta, as well as the University of Malta, which has



hosted the Institute since its inception in 1988, thus supporting the professional training of hundreds of government officials through the years. I am pleased to recall that the teaching activities for the year 2017-2018 concluded with the visit of Her Excellency President of Malta, Mary-Louise Coleiro Preca.

Distinguished guests,

As an institution for the specialized training of international maritime law experts, we are especially proud of our alumni. Since 1988, the Institute has trained over 900 students, mostly working for government agencies, particularly maritime administrations, in 140 States and territories. I am pleased to record that this year Cambodia and Canada will benefit for the first time from the quality of the IMLI training. I welcome today's graduands to this elite network of international maritime law specialists, numerous members of which now occupy significant positions in their respective fields. Let me give a few examples: A member of IMLI Class of 2001, Mr. Iakoba Italeli is

presently the Governor-General of Tuvalu. Ms. Nancy Karigithu of IMLI Class 1994 is the Principal Secretary, State Department for Shipping and Maritime Affairs of Kenya. The Marshall Islands has Mr. Filimon Manoni, a graduate of the year 2007 as its Attorney-General. A number of IMLI alumni have likewise risen through the ranks in their respective maritime administrations such as Mr. Juan Carlos Rivera García who graduated from IMLI in 2005 and is currently the Director General of the Merchant Marine of Honduras.

IMLI alumni serve in various crucial capacities within the IMO. Dr. Kofi Mbiah from Ghana - an alumnus of the IMLI Class of 1991 - served for many years as the Chairman of the IMO Legal Committee. Dr. Dorota Lost-Sieminska from Poland - a graduate of the class of 2006 - is the Head of the IMO Legal Affairs Office. Ms. Josephine Uranza an alumna of 2005 from the Philippines, is the IMO Regional Co-ordinator for East Asia, covering 16 countries in the region. Mrs. Azara Prempeh, a graduate from Ghana of the year 2000, is currently the Chair of the

Meeting of the Contracting Parties of the London Convention / London Protocol. More recently, Mr. Ivane Abashidze, a graduate from Georgia of the year 2014, has been elected recently as Vice Chairman of the International Mobile Satellite Organisation (IMSO) Advisory Committee.

Distinguished Guests,

At this point, I would like to express my appreciation for the sterling work of the Institute's academic faculty: Professor Norman Martínez, Professor Malgosia Fitzmaurice, Ms. Elda Belja, Ms. Ramat Jalloh, Dr. Buba Bojang, Mr. Julius Yano and Ms. Catherine Panaguiton, as well as to the Administrative staff for their unwavering support.

Dear Graduands,

Please remember that your participation in the IMLI programmes is an opportunity granted to a few well-chosen professionals. This privilege carries with it a responsibility which I am confident you will bear with

great pride. Indeed, through your training, IMLI contributes - in its small way - to the IMO's promotion of safe, secure and efficient shipping on clean oceans.

Dear Graduands,

I wish you further success in your respective professional careers. Your praiseworthy accomplishments today open up a world of opportunities for you and the countries you come from. Do savour your success, for you deserve it! And lest you forget, your future achievements will continue to consolidate the Institute's academic reputation. Remember you are now IMLI Ambassadors, dedicated to serving the rule of international maritime law. I wish you well in your endeavours. We are proud of you and I am confident that you will make IMLI proud!