



DIRECTOR OF IMLI DELIVERS THE WELCOME ADDRESS AT THE INSTITUTE'S 25TH ANNUAL GRADUATION CEREMONY

During the Institute's 25th Graduation Ceremony held on 7 June, 2014, the welcome address was delivered by the Director of the Institute, Professor David Attard. In his address, Professor Attard welcomed Mr. Koji Sekimizu (Secretary-General, IMO) and thanked him for consenting to preside over the Ceremony. He also warmly welcomed all the dignitaries present and the friends and families of the graduands.



*Professor David Attard (Director, IMLI) delivering the welcome address at the Institute's 25th
Graduation Ceremony*

Professor Attard noted that this is an important landmark in the history of IMLI, as it celebrates 25 years of academic and professional contribution to the training of lawyers, particularly from developing countries. This year's graduates will be joining the global network of a total of 683 students from 131 States and territories who have successfully undertaken studies in the Institute's programs and courses.

In addressing the graduands, he congratulated them and assured them that their praiseworthy accomplishments have opened up a world of opportunities not only for themselves personally but for their countries as a whole. He encouraged them to savour their success, for it is well deserved. He advised them to always be mindful that their future achievements will continue to consolidate the Institute's academic reputation. He reiterated that they should remember that they are now the Institute's Ambassadors, dedicated to serving the rule of international maritime law.

The welcome Address of the Director is recaptured below:

Your Excellency Secretary-General,
Honourable Speaker,
Honourable Foreign Minister,
President Emeritus,
Excellencies,
Permanent Representatives,
Members of the Judiciary,
Chairman, Transport Malta,
Graduands,
Distinguished Guests,

It is my great pleasure and honour to welcome you to IMLI's 25th Graduation Ceremony, which celebrates the academic success of our graduands.

I am particularly privileged this morning to welcome Mr. Koji Sekimizu, the IMO Secretary-General and Chairman of the IMLI Board of Governors, who despite his many commitments has agreed to preside over today's Graduation Ceremony. I would like to express my gratitude to him for his continuous and generous interest in the welfare of the Institute. I would also like to record my deep appreciation for the wonderful commemorative seminar he organized at the IMO Headquarters in London last April to celebrate IMLI's 25th anniversary wherein hundreds of delegates, dignitaries, and IMLI graduates (who now represent their countries in the IMO fora) attended. I take this opportunity to welcome Mr. Jo Espinoza-Ferrey, Director, Administrative Division of the IMO, who for many years has given his advice and support.

We are particularly pleased that the Honourable Speaker Dr Anglu Farrugia, and the Minister of Foreign Affairs Dr. George Vella who have both shown great commitment to IMLI and are with us this morning. Their presence here is a reflection of the long-standing support which the Institute has received since its establishment, from the Government and people of Malta.

I wish to recognize the presence of other distinguished personalities who have come to Malta to attend this morning's Ceremony:

[Mr. Mile Prangoski, Counsellor, Embassy of Macedonia, UK

H.E Prof. Joyce Kikafunda, High Commissioner of Uganda, UK

H.E. Mr Miguel Gaspar Fernades Neto, Ambassador of Angola, UK

H.E. Mr. Mal Berisha, Ambassador of Republic of Albania

Capt. Mustafa H Kanafani, Special Representative of Syrian Arab Republic to IMO

Capt. Ibraheem A Olugbade, Alternate Perm Rep of Nigeria to IMO

Mr. Otunba O. A. Lawal, Hon. Consul of Malta in Nigeria

Hon. (Dr.) Taiwo Afolabi (Nigeria)

Mr. Colin Young, Regional Maritime Adviser (Caribbean, IMO)

Carlos Salgado, Alternate Perm Rep for Chile to I.M.O.

and

Professor Francis Reynolds (Professor Emeritus of University of Oxford).]

Furthermore, I wish to note the presence of Mr. Hashimoto Tomoyuki of the Nippon Foundation in Tokyo. We are proud of The Nippon Foundation's long standing support; in fact this year marks the 10th anniversary since together with Mr. Mitsuyuki Unno I set up our Programme of co-operation entitled *Human Resources Development Project for the Advancement of a More Effective Global Legal Order for the Oceans*. Since the Programme's inception 96 lawyers from 48 States, primarily from Asia, have graduated from IMLI. Today's graduands will bring these numbers to an impressive of 106 graduates from 50 States who will now join the growing and influential network of Nippon Scholars. I am proud to announce that after a rigorous evaluation process that was undertaken by a delegation from Japan last February, The Nippon Foundation has decided to continue to support IMLI in the future years.

I also wish to welcome friends and family of the graduands who have travelled from all over the world to attend this momentous event.

Distinguished Guests,

This year is an important landmark in the history of our Institute, as we celebrate 25 years of academic and professional contribution to the training of lawyers, particularly from developing countries. Today 32 lawyers from 25 States will be graduating from the Institute's LL.M. programme and 5 students will be graduating from the Advanced Diploma programme. These graduates will be joining the global network of a total of 683 lawyers from 131 States and territories who have successfully undertaken studies in the Institute's programmes and courses. This year we are particularly pleased to have, for the first time, lawyers hailing from Israel, Portugal and Kiribati, graduating from the Institute's LL.M. programme.

Distinguished Guests,

It gives me great satisfaction to look at our graduands, newly-crowned with academic success, and to congratulate them for having succeeded despite the magnitude of their task.

For the past months they have undertaken an exceptionally intensive and comprehensive programme covering the full spectrum of international maritime law. Their task should not be underestimated. The subject matter covered is vast. Our academic standards are very demanding, as confirmed by the external examiners. It is therefore a great pleasure to be able, on this important day, to honour their academic success.

The cornerstone of any academic institution is its reputation. At IMLI we are conscious of the need to ensure that our training and teaching conform to the highest standards required by IMO. These need to be maintained if we are to preserve our reputation as a centre of excellence. I must emphasize that the Institute's academic success is the result of various practices that have been put in place, such as its close co-operation with senior IMO officials, the appointment of independent external examiners, and our cooperation with leading academics from such Universities as: Bonn, Bremen, Kobe, Ljubljana, London, Malta, Oxford, Queen Mary, and Rome "Tor Vergata".

Further, the Institute maintains extensive links with national maritime law associations such as the British Maritime Law Association, the French Maritime Law Association, the Slovenian Maritime Law Association, the Spanish Maritime Law Association, the Maritime Law Association of Singapore and the Maltese Maritime Law Association.



Professor David Attard (Director, IMLI) conferring the Degree of Master of Laws in International Maritime Law during the Institute's 25th Graduation Ceremony

Whilst the resident faculty is responsible for the teaching of the programme, visiting fellows are invited to lecture on the latest developments in the field of their expertise. In this academic year we had the privilege and pleasure of welcoming over 40 distinguished academics and eminent practitioners from all over the world. At IMLI we are conscious that most of our graduands are senior legal government officials and therefore have already important roles in their administrations. Consequently, the teaching programme at IMLI, whilst focusing on academic excellence, also focuses on developing professional expertise. In this respect considerable importance is given to the networking of our graduates with distinguished and eminent practitioners.

The importance of IMLI's contribution to the study and knowledge of international maritime law is reflected in the Institute's academic publications. To celebrate our 25th anniversary, together with Oxford University Press, IMLI will produce a monumental three-volume work entitled

“IMLI Manual on International Maritime Law”. The manual will adopt for the first time in the English language an all-encompassing approach to the subject of international maritime law. Volumes I of the Manual will be dedicated to the Law of the Sea, Volumes II to Shipping Law and Volumes III to Marine Environmental and International Maritime Security Law.

The Manual will be written and edited by 78 academics and practitioners who are leading specialists in their respective areas.

Volume I of the Manual is expected to be released in September 2014.

I am also pleased to announce the second volume of the “IMLI Studies in International Maritime Law”, entitled “Extension of Coastal State Jurisdiction in Enclosed or Semi-enclosed Seas: A Mediterranean and Adriatic Perspective” has been published by Routledge in London and New York.

Distinguished Guests,

It is a matter of great pride to announce that the United Nations General Assembly has for six consecutive years recognized the importance of our Institute’s work. The latest Resolution (A/Res/68/70) adopted during its sixty-eighth session, on 9 December 2013, entitled “Oceans and the law of the sea” states *inter alia*, that the General Assembly:

“Recognizes the importance of the work of the International Maritime Law Institute of the International Maritime Organization as a centre of education and training of Government legal advisers, mainly from developing States, confirms its effective capacity-building role in the field of international law, and urges States, intergovernmental organizations and financial institutions to make voluntary financial contributions to the budget of the Institute.”

Distinguished Guests,

The Institute’s success is a direct result of its establishment by our founding fathers – C.P. Srivastava and Dr. Joe Fenech - within the framework of IMO. IMLI’s institutional linkage with

IMO provides us with access to the most competent expertise in the maritime field. With IMO's assistance, IMLI continuously seeks to fine-tune its syllabus to reflect the latest developments in international maritime law.

Our institutional linkage with IMO is best reflected by the fact that since the very first years of IMLI's establishment, the Chairmanship of its Governing Board has been held by the Secretary-General of IMO.

In this respect we are particularly honoured to read the Secretary-General's view on IMLI's role within the IMO family:

It is a well-known fact that the true value of IMO legal instruments is reflected in the effective, thorough and uniform implementation throughout the world. Indeed, this year's World Maritime Day theme is "IMO conventions: effective implementation". It therefore seems befitting that the same theme is used to underscore the fundamental role of IMLI. Since its inception, the Institute has been one of the cornerstones of IMO's mission to enhance and build global capacity within the maritime sector. By providing a steady influx of highly trained legal professionals, IMLI has been instrumental in the effective implementation of international instruments and has thereby played a central role in helping to establish the solid legal foundations needed for the maritime sector to thrive.

IMLI's contribution towards the objectives of the IMO is best reflected in the work of its graduates as they in turn contribute towards the implementation of international maritime standards in their respective countries.

What is of great significance is that today graduates of the Institute occupy senior positions in their countries' highest institutions. IMLI graduates have gone on to become Heads of State, Ministers, Chief Justices and senior Members of the Judiciary (both national and international), Attorneys-General, Ambassadors and high-ranking officials in Maritime Administrations.

The Institute is especially proud to note that its female graduates have contributed immensely to its international accreditations by holding senior international positions and demonstrating

excellent proficiency in international affairs. In this respect I wish to record the election of Ms. Fatou Bensouda from the Gambia and the prosecutor of the International Criminal Court, a position of great importance and sensitivity.

Distinguished Guests,

The success that the Institute enjoys is also largely due to the financial support received from many sectors of the international maritime community.

I am particularly grateful to IMO, to The Nippon Foundation, to the Lloyd's Register Foundation, and to a number of Governments for their generous contributions in providing scholarships. The Governments of Malta and Switzerland deserve special tribute for their unwavering, constant support to the Institute's funding, as does the CMI.

I would also like to express my appreciation for the sterling work of the Institute's academic faculty: Professor Malgosia Fitzmaurice, Dr. Norman Martinez, Ms. Elda Belja, Mr. Riyaz Hamza and Ms. Ramat Jalloh, as well as to the Administrative staff for their unwavering support.

Dear Graduands,

Please remember that your participation in the IMLI programme is an opportunity granted to a few well-chosen lawyers. This privilege carries with it a responsibility which I am confident you will bear with great pride. You have now been endowed with the knowledge and skills required to assist your Governments in adopting and implementing international maritime rules, measures and standards. Indeed, through your training, IMLI contributes - in its small way - to the IMO process of encouraging and facilitating the global adoption and implementation of legal instruments designed to promote safe, secure and efficient shipping on clean oceans.

In concluding I wish to augur further success to our graduands in their respective professional careers. Graduands, 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 the Institute Ambassadors, dedicated to serving the rule of international maritime law. I wish you well in your endeavours. We are proud of you!

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