



## CHAIRMAN OF THE IMO LEGAL COMMITTEE LECTURES AT IMLI

The Director, staff and students of the IMLI Class of 2014/2015 had the pleasure of welcoming recently Dr. Kofi Mbiah, Chairman of the IMO Legal Committee, who delivered a lecture on the topic: *The Work of the IMO Legal Committee: Challenges and Prospects*.



*Dr. Kofi Mbiah lecturing to the IMLI Class of the 2014/2015*

During his lecture, Dr. Mbiah provided the students with an overview of the history, mandate and structure of the IMO. He then went on to discuss the reasons for the establishment of the IMO Legal Committee and the mandate of the Committee, which is to deal with any legal matters within the scope of the Organization. Dr. Mbiah continued by outlining the work of the Committee, which include, among others, the promulgating of IMO conventions on safety,

security and liability and compensation. He also discussed the issues which need to be considered for new instruments.

Dr. Mbiah further reviewed the challenges and prospects of the Legal Committee. He concluded by noting that as this year's theme for World Maritime Day is "IMO Conventions: Effective Implementation", he can safely say that because of international conventions, the rules that have been put in place have led to the reduction of major health and safety risks.

Dr. Kofi Mbiah is a distinguished alumni of the Institute, having graduated with distinction in the 1990/1991 academic year (IMLI Class of 1990/1991). He was also the proud recipient of the IMO Secretary-General's Prize for Best Overall Performance.

In an interview with the Editor of the IMLI e-news, Dr. Mbiah expressed the pleasure and nostalgia he feels every time he is privileged to visit IMLI and lecture to its growing number of students. He also conveyed his satisfaction at the contribution of IMLI students to the IMO Legal Committee.

The full text of the interview is recaptured below.

***Since your days of being a student at the Institute, what developments have you noticed at IMLI?***

Since my days as a student, IMLI has clearly gone through a lot of changes. In physical terms, and I mean infrastructure, there is a better library facility, with consistent access to internet. The grounds are bigger and looking even better cared for. There are students from varied backgrounds. During my time, there were only about 20 students in my class, now I see more than 35 students from a wider range of countries and varying calibre. IMLI is covering the global spheres. I see a lot of enthusiasm in the students, which tells me quite clearly that they are eager to accomplish greater things.

***How dominant, in terms of numbers, are IMLI graduates at IMO?***

I myself have been very fortunate to have been at IMLI. Long before now, not many people at IMO knew of IMLI, even though it is an IMO creation. However, due to the leadership and vision of the able Director of the Institute, Professor Attard, IMLI has emerged at the forefront of IMO matters. We have greater participation of IMLI graduates in the work of the IMO Legal Committee. Our numbers have increased. When we finish a meeting and gather together as IMLI graduates, we are more than 15-20 in number, from various parts of the world, representing our countries. In the early days of the Institute, one could count only 2 or 3 IMLI graduates in this capacity.



*Professor David Attard (Director, IMLI) introducing the students of the IMLI Class of 2014/2015 to Dr. Kofi Mbiah (Chairman, IMO Legal Committee)*

***How significant is the contribution of IMLI graduates at IMO?***

As I said before, in the early days there were few IMLI graduates and their contributions were not that significant. However, today there are more graduates and they are very confident in taking on debates. Their participation in IMO's affairs have greatly increased and they have enriched the debates in various Committees with their knowledge acquired at IMLI.

***Being active yourself in your country and in the region in maritime related issues and having visited several Member States, how progressive, in your opinion is the participation of IMLI graduates in their individual countries?***

I cannot speak for all countries but to those countries that I have been to, it becomes quite clear that before their arrival on the scene, not much attention was given to the domestication of international maritime law rules. My own perception is that they have become a very important part of the process of translating international rules into local legislation. They also play active roles in advising their governments with respect to rules of international law.

***How solid is the future of IMLI graduates, not only at IMO but also in the international sphere?***

I was very privileged to read the valedictory speech on behalf of my class at our graduation ceremony and I did say that in a decade or beyond, the world would begin to see the fruits of the creation of IMLI. Now I can see going forward beyond its 25 years of rich history, IMLI graduates would be playing even more significant roles, not only within the IMO but generally in the international body politic. They would also be at the forefront of advising their governments with respect to maritime matters and ensure that an appropriate legal framework is created for the acceptance and implementation of international rules and regulations. I have no doubt in my mind that very soon we would be seeing many more IMLI graduates at the apex of various international organizations.

***What would be your advise on further developments of the Institute?***

I do not really know what the vision of the Institute is or how it hopes to develop in the future, but it would be my view that having for 25 years served in the rule of international maritime law, IMLI should be looking at a new vision that makes it relevant and formidable in the next 25 years. A vision that challenges it to go beyond its present success and harness the potential of new technology.

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