

IMLLe-News

The IMO International Maritime Law Institute Official Electronic Newsletter (Vol. 12, Issue No.45) 4 August, 2015

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE NIPPON FOUNDATION VISITS IMLI

Mr. Mitsuyuki Unno (Executive Director, The Nippon Foundation, Japan), attended the 26th annual Graduation Ceremony of the Institute held on Saturday 30 May 2015, at the *Aula Magna*, University of Malta Valletta Campus in Valletta. Mr. Unno was accompanied by Ms. Yukiko Kuwata (Program Planning & Strategy Team, Ocean & Maritime Affairs Department, The Nippon Foundation, Japan).



Mr. Mitsuyuki Unno presenting the Prize for the Best Nippon Scholar to Ms. Anoushka Kishtoo (Mauritius), at the Graduation Ceremony

In 2003, The Nippon Foundation and the Institute launched a joint Project under the Human Resources Development Project for Advancement of a New Legal Order on the World's Oceans. The Project offers post-graduate study and research opportunities in international maritime law to deserving candidates. For this purpose the Institute was charged with providing its academic and technical expertise and The Nippon Foundation generously agreed to provide financial

contribution which would enable such deserving candidates to pursue their studies in international maritime law at the Institute.

For the academic year 2014-2015, ten students were awarded scholarships under the project. This group of students will join the total of over 100 lawyers who have returned to their respective countries, where they are gainfully involved in the development of the maritime sectors in those countries.

After the Graduation Ceremony, Mr. Unno had a short meeting with the graduands who were recipients of this scholarship. At the end of the meeting, Mr. Unno also visited the Institute's premises. During his visit he was interviewed by IMLI's e-news Editor.

Mr. Unno welcome to IMLI! How does it feel to be back after so many years?

I am very honoured to be here at the IMLI premises. My last visit must have been ten years ago. I must say that this is definitely not the IMLI I left some years ago. There have been tremendous changes. When last I was at IMLI, this building now hosting the reception area, the library and the common room did not exist. Being shown around the premises, I am impressed with the many structural and technological improvements that I have seen.

I am very much fascinated with the library. Not just in the number of books, which in itself is outstanding, but how systematically they have been placed. It is clearly evident that a lot of work and thought have been put into its organisation. In this way, not only has it been made easy for students to access materials but they would also be in the position to get the most out this reservoir of resources. I am indeed very impressed.

I am not only impressed by the structural changes that I have seen, but also, the academic staff of IMLI never fails to impress me. When I was being shown around the premises by Norman and Elda (Lectures, IMLI), the questions which I asked were answered by them like true educators. I have visited other fellowship partners and met with other researchers, coordinators etc. and it is my belief that all researchers must also be educators. Coming to IMLI, I realize that the academic staff is endowed with all of these attributes. Most interestingly however, I realize also, based on the interaction that I witnessed between you all and the students, that you also fill the role of parents. I am really delighted with the parent/teacher/student relationship that I see. It was touching to be able to witness the Institute's love, commitment and affiliation with the students. This experience at IMLI is in a way very unique.

How pleased are you with how well the students that the Nippon Foundation have sponsored have done, not only in the academic field, as was seen today at the graduation ceremony, but also in making positive impacts both within their Governments and the world at large?

I am simply happy about this. Even more so that they have not only been content with what they have achieved here at IMLI, but that they go on to be more successful and benefit not only themselves, but their governments as well with the knowledge and training that they have received.

At this stage, I implore them to encourage and nurture the younger generation to follow in their footsteps and enhance capacity building, thus giving an opportunity, like the one that have been given to them by the Nippon Foundation through IMLI, to stimulate interest in maritime affairs in young minds and keep the cycle going.

In my short meeting with the graduands, I told them that they need to keep themselves in communities with inspiring people, to be continuously inspired by others and thereby developing themselves. I believe, that placing oneself in such an environment is the best way of building ones capacity. I emphasise this when I meet other students and I am confident that our IMLI students will bear that in mind. For this reason, the IMLI-NF Alumni Network which created a formidable network of over 100 international maritime lawyers from all over the world, contributing successfully to the promotion, adoption, and effective implementation of UN and IMO international maritime conventions on a global basis, becomes very important and a very appreciated initiative by IMLI.

Do you have any comments regarding the fruitful cooperation between IMLI and The Nippon Foundation?

We are very pleased with our cooperation with IMLI and we are honoured to maintain the status quo of our fruitful cooperation. IMLI is doing extremely well in training students. The IMLI-Nippon Alumni is also doing well. In my estimation the faculty and staff of the Institute are doing an excellent job and I am very pleased with what I have seen so far. It is indeed a pleasure for the Nippon Foundation to be contributing towards this success.

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