

THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE PHILIPPINES TO THE IMO LECTURES AT IMLI

Mr. Gilberto G.B. Asuque (Deputy Chief of Mission and Permanent Representative of the Philippines to the International Maritime Organization (IMO) and other Related Inter-Governmental Organizations) visited the Institute on 27 October 2017 and delivered a lecture on *'The Role of Permanent Representatives and IMLI Graduates in the IMO Member State Audit Scheme (IMSAS)'* to the IMLI Class of 2017-2018.



Mr. Gilberto G.B. Asuque (Deputy Chief of Mission and Permanent Representative of the Philippines to the IMO and Professor David Attard (Director, IMLI) and the IMLI Class of 2017-2018

In introducing Mr. Asuque to the class, professor Attard referred to him as an outstanding IMLI graduate who does not only reflect what IMLI is all about but also reflects the fact that developing countries can exert far more influence than their size if their representatives are well equipped.

Mr. Asuque, in his reply, stated that he was pleased to be back to his *Alma Mata* and thanked Professor Attard for inviting him to discuss with the students about the role of the permanent representatives and IMLI graduates in the mandatory IMO Member State Audit Scheme. He told the class that he had chosen this subject because he considers it timely and relevant to their studies in IMLI. Mr. Asuque further informed the class that their courses on the full spectrum of international maritime law, especially in its commercial aspects, and the knowledge and expertise attained upon the completion of the programme would be vital when their respective countries undergo the mandatory IMO Member State Audit Scheme. He also explained in detail the work of a permanent representative to IMO and the procedure for the conduct of accreditation of such representative.

In an interview with the IMLI E-news Editor shortly after his lecture, Mr. Asuque described the role of IMLI in the service of the rule of international maritime law.

The rule of international maritime law is a very broad topic because it covers all our surroundings including the atmosphere and not just the seas. It has moved to cover areas that were initially not covered. For example, Annex VI of MARPOL deals exclusively with Greenhouse emission produced by ships. To this extent, IMLI helps the student to focus his/her attention on key issues that will help address a particular issue that concerns his/her country. IMLI empowers its students to help their administration and countries comply with the obligations they have undertaken. Protection of the marine environment has taken a global perspective. It is an obligation on all States and all sectors to contribute to it. IMO had to develop its strategy in order to meet the Sustainable Development Goals especially the protection of the marine environment. So IMLI enables the student to navigate through the wide open ocean of the rule of law in international maritime law, but one does not just go to the ocean without knowing how to plot one's course or how to go from berth to port. IMLI will help you on that, and that was what helped me to navigate through the complicated discussions at the IMO. Furthermore, since the IMO addresses technical issues that have an impact on the marine environment, IMLI provides us with that focus on very complex and wide issue as the rule of law in international maritime law.

On his advice to the current students, Mr. Asuque had this to say:

On the practical side, when the students graduate from IMLI, they have to go to their administrations or to the private sector. The mandatory IMSAS regime would make them focus on their work because they have to help their administrations address the compliance issues under the audit scheme. I really welcome this invitation from Professor Attard to discuss with the students

the mandatory audit scheme because I know this will be an opportunity to provide a focus or direction for the students, none of whom can ever escape the audit which is intended to help the Member States to achieve compliance. Here too, IMLI plays a critical role in relation to IMSAS, and I hope that in the course of their studies, they will be sensitised on the importance of this exercise for their administrations and for their contribution to the global maritime industry and the marine environment.

Mr. Asuque obtained Master of Laws (LL.M.) Degree (with Distinction) in International Maritime Law from IMLI in 2004. He is currently the Deputy Chief of Mission and Permanent Representative of the Philippines to the International Maritime Organization and Other Related Inter-Governmental Organizations. He is also a Board Member of the Maritime Law Association of the Philippines.

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