



THE GOVERNMENT OF MALTA AND IMLI COMMEMORATE THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF MALTA'S INITIATIVE ON THE LAW OF THE SEA

The Ministry For Foreign Affairs and Trade Promotion of Malta in conjunction with the IMO International Maritime Law Institute (IMLI) held an International Symposium entitled "Perspectives on Global Ocean Governance: Where do we stand and where do we go from here?" at the Aula Magna, Valletta Campus, University of Malta on 15 December 2017. The dual-purpose Symposium served to commemorate Malta's significant contribution at the United Nations on the International Law of the Sea and to begin a constructive discussion on the future of Global Ocean Governance. The theme of the symposium anchored on Dr. Arvid Pardo's famous speech at the United Nations General Assembly in 1967, in which the concept of the Seas and Oceans as the "Common Heritage of Mankind" was first introduced before eventually turning into a doctrine that ultimately led to a fifteen year process culminating with the adoption of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS).



(centre) Professor David Attard (Director, IMLI) and Mr. Carmelo Abela (The Honourable Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade Promotion, Malta) with the Symposium Speakers and Panelists

The Symposium started with a video message from the His Excellency Dr. Joseph Muscat (Prime Minister of Malta) in which he gave examples of Malta's efforts in continuing Dr. Pardo's legacy "of ensuring that the oceans remain the preserve of our shared future." These efforts, he said, include the promotion of the "blue economy", the registration of a voluntary national commitment designating 30 percent of all the water under Malta's jurisdiction as Marine Protected Areas, and commitments to reduce waste that degrade the marine environment, among others.

In his opening remarks, The Honourable Carmelo Abela (Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade Promotion, Malta) echoed the Prime Minister's message on Malta's support of maritime initiatives, particularly the protection of the marine environment. He added that Malta does not only wish to assist States in the protection of the marine environment but also aspires to be a leader in pushing for these initiatives in the international arena. The Honourable Minister also informed the audience that Malta's foreign policy efforts would continue to be geared towards the further development of international ocean governance, maritime security, blue growth, and the protection and promotion of marine biodiversity via a two-track multilateral approach: the United Nations and the European Union.



A Cross-section of the IMLI Class of 2017-2018 attending the Symposium

In his keynote address, Professor David Attard (Director, IMLI and Vice-President of the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea (ITLOS)) reiterated the importance of Malta's first diplomatic initiative on the oceans and the international law of the sea which continues to be relevant with worldwide ramifications, 50 years on.

Other eminent speakers included Mr. Karmenu Vella (European Commissioner for the Environment, Maritime Affairs and Fisheries) who also delivered his speech through a video link and Mr. Mitsuyuki Unno (Executive Director, The Nippon Foundation) who gave his Foundation's endorsement of the theme of the Symposium.

The Panel's discussion that followed was chaired by Her Excellency Professor Simone Borg (Malta's Ambassador for Climate Change). The discussants on the Panel were Dr. Awni Behnam (Honorary President of the International Ocean Institute), Professor Philippe Gautier (Registrar of ITLOS), Professor James Kraska (Chairman and Howard S. Levie Professor of International Law at Stockton Centre for the Study of International Law, United States Naval War College and Professor of International Law at Harvard), and His Excellency Ambassador Judge Emeritus Helmet Türk (former Judge and Vice-President of ITLOS and Former President of the Assembly and Chairman of the Review Committee of the International Seabed Authority (ISA)).



The Panel discussants (left-right) His Excellency Ambassador Judge Emeritus Helmet Türk, Professor James Kraska, Professor Philippe Gautier, Dr. Awni Behnam and Penal Moderator, Her Excellency Professor Simone Borg

The Symposium was part of a series of events organised by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and Trade Promotion of Malta to commemorate Arvid Pardo's 50-year legacy and to reaffirm Malta's prominent role in international maritime affairs. It represents Malta and IMLI's unwavering resolution to keep Ambassador Arvid Pardo's legacy alive.

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