

# IMLLe-News

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## CHAIRMAN OF THE NIPPON FOUNDATION ADDRESSES THE INAUGURATION OF THE GLOBAL OCEAN INSTITUTE

The WMU-Sasakawa Global Ocean Institute was inaugurated on 8 May 2018 in the presence of many dignitaries who included Mr. Kitack Lim (IMO Secretary-General), Ms. Isabella Lövin (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for International Development Cooperation and Climate, Sweden), Dr. Yohei Sasakawa (Chairman, The Nippon Foundation), and Dr. Cleopatra Doumbia-Henry (President, World Maritime University). Established in partnership with The Nippon Foundation and with generous support from the Governments of Canada, Norway, Sweden and the City of Malmö, the Institute, in the words of Dr. Sasakawa, ‘will be the vessel that will guide humanity to achieve sustainability for our oceans and our future generations.’



*Dr. Cleopatra Doumbia-Henry (President, World Maritime University), Dr. Yohei Sasakawa (Chairman, The Nippon Foundation), Mr. Kitack Lim (IMO Secretary-General) and Ms. Isabella Lövin (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for International Development Cooperation and Climate, Sweden) cut a cake commemorating the inauguration of the WMU-Sasakawa Global Ocean Institute (photo credit: Leo Erdfelt)*

In his opening remarks, Dr. Sasakawa recalled the continuous challenges our oceans are facing. While acknowledging that ‘The IMO, maritime industries and other stakeholders have been taking various measures to reduce its negative impact on the oceans and seas,’ he expressed his concern that ‘the levels of cross-sector collaborations have been insufficient to lead to any sustainable solutions.’

He drew the attention of the audience to the recently concluded IMLI Report on ‘Ocean Governance: Security, Stability, Safety and Sustainability’ which has also indicated the limitation of the current fragmented approach in ocean governance. The IMLI Report is compiled under the leadership of Professor David Joseph Attard (Director, IMLI) and includes the contributions of 58 leading experts who were chosen on the basis of their eminence and expertise in the various areas covered by the Report.

Reminding everyone in attendance of the Seventh Generation of Stewardship Principle, Dr. Sasakawa called for its application in every decision, be it personal, governmental or societal so that our oceans and humanity head toward the right direction. He concluded his address by reiterating that ‘[w]ith all our consolidated efforts, I am confident, that there will come a day when our oceans shall no longer suffer in silence. Let us all do our part now for our dear oceans, and for our future generations.’

The address of Dr. Yohei Sasakawa is reproduced below.

“Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen, good morning.

It is with great pleasure that I stand here today to deliver my address for the inauguration of the much anticipated WMU-Sasakawa Global Ocean Institute. This institute will be the vessel that will guide humanity to achieve sustainability for our oceans and our future generations.

But before I start talking about the future, let me talk about the past, about the journey that we have taken to get us to where we are today.

1980s is about the time when The Nippon Foundation started programs to nurture ocean professionals. By then, Grotius’ principle of “freedom of the seas” had become a thing of the past, and the international community had come together to adopt the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea.

By introducing the common heritage of mankind principle, the convention established a legal regime for managing ocean resources beyond national jurisdiction. This, among other provisions such as the obligation to safeguard the marine environment, set humanity on a new path to govern the world’s oceans.

To support this newly established regime of ocean governance, and to nurture a new generation of ocean professionals, The Nippon Foundation partnered with dozens of specialized agencies and institutions to develop scholarship programs for young professionals around the world. We are very proud of the fact that the very first scholarship program that we established was with WMU.

Over the years, our scholarship programs have enabled over 1,200 individuals from 140 countries to excel in diverse fields such as oceanography, climate change, marine and fisheries resource management, and ocean governance.

When we turn our eyes to the world, we can see that a lot has changed over the last three decades. The world population rose considerably, and the global economy experienced exponential growth. This has, in turn placed a burden of unprecedented magnitude on our ocean environment.

It is shocking to know that about 50% of the world's marine life has disappeared over the past 40 years. Overfishing has affected not just the balance of life in the oceans but the well-being of coastal communities who depend on fish for their way of life. To make matters worse, global warming and climate change is leading to ocean acidification and rise in sea levels, both making a devastating impact on the ocean's complex ecosystem.

In terms of ocean governance, development of newly discovered deep-sea resources is marred with legal and political challenges. The management of the high seas, which cover two thirds of the oceans, is also a continuing issue. As countries assert their rights and interests, the oceans, "our common heritage", is being torn into pieces.

As you can see, challenges facing our oceans are becoming more and more serious. We must recognize the very fact that each of us, though we may not be aware, is taking part in the destruction of our oceans. If we choose to remain complacent, a time will come when human existence itself will be threatened.

The IMO, maritime industries and other stakeholders have been taking various measures to reduce its negative impact on the oceans and seas. But I am afraid the levels of cross-sector collaborations have been insufficient to lead to any sustainable solutions.

Let me be clear. The 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea was a major achievement. It recognized the need for a coherent and integrated approach to ocean governance. Regrettably however, the drafters of the Convention did not include effective provisions or mechanisms to ensure that all problems of ocean space are addressed through an integrated approach.

A recently concluded report by leading experts titled, "Ocean Governance: Security, Stability, Safety and Sustainability", also indicated limitation of the current fragmented approach. The work was compiled under the leadership of Professor David Joseph Attard, Director of the IMO International Maritime Law Institute.

To ensure that ocean issues are dealt with through an integrated approach, it is time for us to establish a new regime of global ocean governance. In it, we must incorporate the principle of the Seventh Generation of Stewardship. This is a principle that Native Americans have long used to govern their communities. It states that in every decision, be it personal, governmental or societal, must consider how it will affect our descendants seven generations into the future. If the international community can take this Seventh Generation Principle to heart and follow through, I am certain that our oceans and humanity will head toward the right direction.

To push this idea forward, we need to show a clear vision for the oceans for the next 1000 years, with a clear roadmap, and scientific evidence to support it. I believe that the WMU-Sasakawa Global Ocean Institute can take on this role.

We are fortunate to have WMU, our long-time partner in human capacity building, and an institution that has expanded its scope from maritime to oceans in recent years, as our partner. Together, we will nurture this research institute into a global hub that will bring together knowledge and expertise from industries, governments, and academia, and with the Seventh Generation of Stewardship serving as our guide, the institute shall lead humanity toward achieving sustainability for our oceans.

To Professor Ronan, the Director of the Institute who will be leading this maiden voyage, I have high hopes that the institute will attain its mission under your leadership.

With all our consolidated efforts, I am confident, that there will come a day when our oceans shall no longer suffer in silence. Let us all do our part now for our dear oceans, and for our future generations.”

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