

MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND TRADE PROMOTION OF MALTA ADDRESSES INTERNATIONAL WORKSHOP AT IMLI

The Honourable Carmelo Abela (Minister, Foreign Affairs and Trade Promotion of Malta) addressed the International Workshop on ‘The Role of Maritime Law in East Asian Maritime Relations’ held at the IMO International Maritime Law Institute on 5 March 2019.



The Honourable Carmelo Abela (Minister, Foreign Affairs and Trade Promotion of Malta) delivering the Opening Address

In his opening address, Minister Abela stated that Malta’s long, rich maritime history as an island State accounts for its interest in all matters concerning the sea and also for the reason why it is so proud to host the IMO International Maritime Law Institute. He said that IMLI, for over 30 years, continues to prove its amiable standing as a world-recognised center of excellence for training and education in international maritime law.

The Honourable Minister thanked the Institute for such a collaboration with the Japanese embassy in Malta and described the moment as exciting time for Japan and Malta. He described the relation between the two countries as an excellent ongoing bilateral relationship which is soon expected to be taken to a higher level as a result of his Government's decision to set up an embassy in Tokyo.

On the topic of the Workshop, Minister Abela said that the maritime domain in East Asia presents several challenges with prospects for either conflict or cooperation. He emphasized that Diplomacy has an important role to play in turning challenges into opportunities for cooperation through dialogue and confidence building.



Concluding his address, the Honourable Minister referred to Dr. Arvid Pardo's vision that categorized the oceans beyond national jurisdiction as a common heritage of mankind.

The Embassy of Japan to Malta jointly organised the Workshop with IMLI.

Other Speakers at the Workshop were Professor David Attard (Director, IMLI); Minister-Counsellor Hitomi Sato (Embassy of Japan to Malta); Professor Atsuko Kanehara (Professor at Sophia University, Japan and Governor, IMLI Board of Governors); Professor Clive Schofield (Head of Research WMU-Sasakawa Global Ocean Institute, World Maritime University); Professor Alessio Patalano (Reader in East Asian Warfare & Security Programme/Director, King's Japan Programme, King's College London); Ms. Elda Belja (Lecturer, IMO International Maritime Law Institute); Dr. Buba Bojang (The Nippon Foundation Lecturer on Ocean Governance); Mr. Sanjeet Ruhel (The Nippon Foundation Lecturer in International Maritime Security Law), and Dr. Ángeles Jiménez García-Carriazo (The Nippon Foundation Lecturer in International Maritime Law).

The Address of the Honourable Minister Carmelo Abela is reproduced below:

Distinguished Guests;

Vice President of the International Tribunal on the Law of the Sea and Director of the International Maritime Law Institute;

Dear friends.

As an island State in the centre of the Mediterranean, with a long and rich maritime history, it is only natural for Malta to have a vital interest in all matters related to the Sea. As a maritime nation, we are proud to host the International Maritime Law Institute (IMLI). This Institute has, for more than 30 years, maintained its standing as a world-recognised centre of excellence on International Maritime Law and has continued to flourish over the years under the excellent stewardship of Professor David Attard. Throughout these years, IMLI has produced an exceptional body of expert and qualified maritime lawyers who are now, collectively, making a very positive and valuable contribution in pursuance of international maritime Law around the world. Good work.

I would also like to thank IMLI for co-organising this event in collaboration with the Japanese embassy in Malta. This is an exciting time for Japan and Malta. The excellent ongoing bilateral relations between our two countries will soon be taken to a higher level, and our cooperation strengthened, as a result of my Government's decision to set up an embassy in Tokyo.

The opening of our embassy in Japan will happen hot on the heels of the entry into force of the EU-Japan Economic Partnership Agreement that is also expected to prove to be instrumental in enhancing further cooperation and commercial ties between Japan and Malta.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

As an outward-looking nation, Malta's foreign policy has, throughout the years, placed an automatic focus on seeking to contribute towards furthering the development of international Ocean governance. In 1967, Malta tabled a proposal at the United Nations. At the time, the late Dr Arvid Pardo, our first Permanent Representative to the UN, urged delegates to consider the resources of the oceans beyond national jurisdiction as the common heritage of mankind.

The aim behind that proposal was to protect the oceans from arbitrary appropriation and to efficiently administer their resources. In Dr Pardo's own words, this would provide [quote] "the unique opportunity to lay solid foundations for a peaceful and increasingly prosperous future for all peoples" [unquote].

This proposal inspired the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), which is the most far-reaching treaty ever negotiated under the UN's auspices. Since its adoption in 1982, UNCLOS has fostered the maintenance of global peace and security. Because of this initiative, Malta was considered to be a pioneer of the Law of the Sea, and since then Dr Pardo came to be known as "the Father of the Law of the Sea".

Today, the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea remains the overall legal framework for all activities concerning the Ocean. However, like any other legal instrument, it also faces contemporary challenges that need to be dealt with. As part of the international community, we are already engaged in discussions towards the establishment of an international, legally-binding

instrument on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction. However, we also need to start looking beyond this.

Today 's fragmented approach towards ocean governance, where different UN agencies deal with overlapping issues in a disjointed manner, needs to change if we want a secure and sustainable future for our oceans and seas. This is why Malta continues to advocate in favour of an integrated approach to international ocean governance and a holistic approach to the problems of ocean space.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

We are here today to discuss the role of Maritime Law in the East Asian Maritime Relations. Historically, the sea lanes in East Asia have been key for trade and remain economically vital for billions of people throughout the world. As we are all well aware, the policies pursued by regional powers have profound implications for regional – and global – security and stability. The maritime domain in East Asia presents several challenges with prospects for either conflict or cooperation.

Diplomacy has an important role to play in turning challenges into opportunities for cooperation through dialogue and confidence building; to promote common goals which could, in turn, promote positive effects on the overall relations between countries.

In this respect, we welcome the efforts of regional actors – including the co-host of today's workshop, Japan – to enhance maritime security. Other initiatives, such as the one taken by India in 2015 with the aim of fostering connectivity and the development of the blue economy, are also commendable.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Before concluding, I would like to revert to Arvid Pardo's vision – the unique opportunity that a view of the oceans beyond national jurisdiction as a common heritage of mankind provides us with to lay solid foundations for a peaceful and increasingly prosperous future for all. This vision continues to inspire us today. It encourages us to keep striving in our efforts to promote the peaceful use of our oceans.

I invite you to deliberate further about this vision. You will find that what inspired us years ago is still relevant today, across regions and continents.

I thank you for your attention and wish you a truly productive workshop.

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