



## **PACIFIC REGION IMLI ALUMNI**

IMLI Alumni from Pacific Island Countries and Territories (PICT), with the assistance and under the auspices, of the Secretariat of the Pacific Community Regional Maritime Programme (SPC-RMP) which recently merged under new SPC – Economic Development Division – Transport (SPC-EDD-Transport) as of January 2010, have organized themselves to form the Pacific International Maritime Law Association (PIMLA), which was set up in July 2005.

PIMLA is the principal forum for international professionals in the maritime sector of the PICT. Its main objectives are to: discuss and pursue maritime issues of concern to the region; give advice to regional and national governments and other organizations in enhancing the uniformity and harmonization of maritime practices; and promote and enhance maritime capacity building.

PIMLA aims to promote legal maritime interests within the region through advocacy roles and dissemination of information to relevant legal counterparts in the region. The main purpose of the Association is to assist the SPC-EDD-Transport and other regional organizations as well as national institutions in the implementation of obligations under international maritime conventions. SPC-EDD-Transport is the focal point for coordinating the approved action plan. PIMLA has been involved in legislative review and drafting legislations that incorporate amended IMO Conventions and Codes since 2006 and it is interesting exercise where select PIMLA members within the region are brought in for a week to review and draft legislations.

PIMLA has also been involved in small projects like a study on Flags of Convenience and its impact on the region, Legislative Gap analysis on the implementation of MLC 2006 funded by ILO. PIMLA has also been engaged by SPC-EDD-Transport in the past to deliver maritime legal assistance to select PICTs and in March 2010, Mr Tufuga Fagaloa Tufuga, Regional Maritime Legal Adviser, SPC-EDD-Transport and Ms Kerry Kwan, PIMLA Executive Council Member have been delivering maritime legal assistance to North Pacific countries including Palau, Federated States of Micronesia and Marshall Islands. Both are IMLI graduates and have promoted PIMLA and encouraged potential lawyers in the North Pacific to consider applying to IMLI.

The last Ministerial Meeting of Pacific Transport Ministers, May 2009, in Tonga has highly commended work by PIMLA in the region and encouraged to continue. PIMLA has put in place

a Plan of Action (POA) for 2009 – 2011 to address concerns of the region as confirmed through Ministerial Communiqué 2009.

Regular membership in PIMLA is principally composed of graduates of IMLI from Fiji Islands, Marshall Islands, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu; but the roster of regular members is not limited to IMLI graduates and also includes other lawyers working within the maritime sector in the Pacific region. Associate membership extends to any maritime professional who applies in writing to the secretary of the Association and whose application is accepted and approved by the Association.



*Mr. Fred Amoa (President, PIMLA / IMLI Graduate) presenting at the Pacific Maritime Conference in May 2008*

Indeed, membership has grown to 50 and includes also non IMLI lawyers. It is hoped such membership to increase as this is one source of funding through subscriptions. PIMLA is recognized by IMO, and has observer status with Pacific Islands Law Officers Network (PILON), Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (Tuna Commission). In 2009 PIMLA received an invitation by the Maritime Law Association of Australia and New Zealand (MLAANZ) to make presentation on the Association. Members of PIMLA have been privileged to be offered scholarships from well known Australian Universities to undertake Ph.D. studies and this certainly lifts the profile of the Association as well. PIMLA is the maritime legal think tank for the region and continuously encourages potential lawyers in the region to enroll at IMLI's training programme. Ms. Peleni Emeline Talagi (Niue) is currently attending this year's course. PIMLA started as a small organization but with sure steps towards the future as it endeavors to drive the harmonization of maritime law in the region.

The initiative by the SPC-EDD-Transport to organize IMLI Alumni, which gave rise to the creation of PIMLA, is an excellent example of a regional effort to utilize human resources available and for capacity building for the benefit of the general maritime sector in the region.

The effort of PIMLA to provide their expertise to the maritime transport sector of the PICT is remarkable because it perfectly encapsulates IMLI's raison d'être. PIMLA has succeeded in congregating like-minded persons to work and contribute towards a common goal: the better governance of the sea, albeit within a regional context. This undertaking underscores the importance for IMLI graduates to remain in touch and to share their respective experiences and expertise towards this common goal. This, in essence, is the role that the global network of IMLI graduates are called to fulfill.

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