



NIPPON FOUNDATION EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR PRESENTS SASAKAWA PRIZE FOR BEST PERFORMING NIPPON SCHOLAR

As part of its project with IMLI entitled “Human Resources Development Project for the Advancement of a More Effective Legal Order for the Oceans”, the Nippon Foundation awards annually the Sasakawa Prize for the Best Performing Nippon Scholar. The prize is given to the Nippon Scholar who has the best overall performance in the LL.M. Programme. This academic year, the Executive Director of the Nippon Foundation, Mr. Masazumi Nagamitsu, presented the prize to Capt. Zulkifili Bin Abu Bakar (Malaysia). In presenting the award, Mr. Nagamitsu delivered a speech, the full text of which is quoted below.



Mr. Masazumi Nagamitsu, Executive Director of the Nippon Foundation, presents the Sasakawa Prize for Best Performing Nippon Scholar to Capt. Zulkifili Bin Abu Bakar (Malaysia)

**Speech by Mr. Masazumi Nagamitsu, Executive Director, The Nippon Foundation
at the International Maritime Law Institute (IMLI) graduation ceremony on
Saturday, May 5, 2007**

Congratulations to all of you graduating today.

Your school, IMLI, is a truly impressive institution. In less than two decades, it has become one of the world's leading institutions for training maritime law specialists. Today, IMLI graduates can be found all over the world, actively engaged in their specialized field.

You are graduating from this fine institute, where you have pursued your studies under the kind tutelage of your professors, made friends and taken part in a variety of activities. While I am certain you have spent many happy days here, I am sure there must occasionally have been some tough times, as well. It is your hard work that has brought you to this day, and I am delighted to be here with you as you graduate.

I also offer my congratulations and gratitude to your families, for the encouragement they have given you. Finally, I sincerely thank the faculty, staff and graduates of IMLI for the passion that they have shown in supporting your education and creating a superb environment for your studies.

I applaud IMLI for the international acclaim it has garnered in recent years under the strong leadership of Professor Attard. And I offer my praise to Mr. Mitropoulos, Secretary-General of IMO, the Honorable Mr. C. Galea, Minister for Competitiveness and Communication of Malta, Dr. Y and the government of Malta for their support of IMLI.

The seas benefit the people of all countries. They are our common resources. We all own the world's oceans, and are all responsible for their protection. However, our oceans are plagued by many problems today – environmental pollution, accidents, piracy, terrorism and natural disasters such as earthquakes and tsunamis.

In recent years, we have witnessed a worsening of problems caused by climate change. Turn on the TV and you will see worrying stories about rising sea temperatures, sinking coastlines and melting glaciers. The problem was even taken up recently by Hollywood, in the Academy-award winning documentary, "An Inconvenient Truth," which gives many actual examples of the impact of climate change on the sea. The oceans cover about three quarters of our planet, and sea-related climate change now threatens our lives and the development of our nations.

In order to deal with this looming crisis, it is vital for us to examine our way of life, and to make necessary adjustments. Maritime activities represent a major part of human endeavor, but to date, we have not done much more than exploit the sea, impacting it negatively. It is now essential that we change our behavior. We must protect the sea and

rethink our activities in the context of the changes we are witnessing. For this to happen, we need people with experience, wisdom and sensitivity who can take the lead in the maritime field.

As time goes by, more and more information will become available to us. When processed, this raw information will become a part of our body of knowledge. Wisdom is the attribute required to use this knowledge correctly and to apply it in a practical way to solving problems. Consider the maritime knowledge you have acquired here, and the wisdom that stems from it, as the paint and brushes of your trade. You must use these tools to paint a picture of the world that we need to create.

The painting of such a picture demands a highly refined sensitivity. This sensitivity is the ability to coexist with others. You must not self-centeredly look at the sea from the viewpoint of the land. Your role, rather, is to think globally, looking at the entire world from the perspective of the sea, and to deepen your association with people the world over.

At IMLI, you have gained both wisdom and sensitivity. The knowledge imparted by your professors, and the insights gained from your classmates have created the ideal foundations from which to protect the sea and to guide humankind in the appropriate responses to the changes taking place. I am confident that you will capitalize fully on these attributes, as you become leaders in international maritime society.

Today, you start another voyage. Aided by your spirit of inquiry, I hope that you will overcome the challenges facing international maritime society, and that you will find your wisdom and gentleness enhanced by both the difficult and the rewarding experiences you will have on this voyage.

Commencement is a new beginning. Work hard, never be discouraged, and seize the possibilities that the future holds, with courage and hope. I wish you all the best.

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