

IMLI *e*-NEWS

THE IMO INTERNATIONAL MARITIME LAW INSTITUTE OFFICIAL ELECTRONIC NEWSLETTER

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IMLI DIRECTOR DELIVERS THE WELCOME ADDRESS AT THE 34TH GRADUATION CEREMONY OF THE INSTITUTE

Professor Dr. Norman A. Martínez Gutiérrez (Director, IMLI) delivered the Welcome Address to the distinguished guests and graduands at the Institute's 34th Annual Graduation Ceremony held on 30 June 2023.



Professor Dr. Norman A. Martínez Gutiérrez (Director, IMLI) delivering the Welcome Address during the Graduation Ceremony



In his Address, Professor Martínez welcomed His Excellency Mr. Kitack Lim (Secretary-General, IMO) and expressed his deepest appreciation and gratitude to him for the generous interest he has taken in the work and welfare of the Institute and for his consistent visits to the Institute since becoming Secretary-General. He acknowledged the presence of H.E. Dr. George Vella, President of the Republic of Malta and extended his appreciation to the Honourable Ministers, dignitaries from the IMO and other eminent personalities present.

In his address, Professor Martínez noted that though this is his first year as Director, he has had the privilege to work with 24 generations of maritime professionals at IMLI. He admitted that at the end of the academic year, each graduating class has taken a piece of his heart with them, but in return however, they have filled it ten-fold with the memories of so many experiences shared. He noted further that this current class is no different.

Professor Martínez was pleased to highlight that this year was one of many firsts and said *"It was the first class to receive in situ lectures after the pandemic; it was the first year for many members of staff in their current position (myself included) and I was so proud to see how everyone settled in their post and worked with the students to the best of their abilities;... Also today, for the first time, we are broadcasting live this graduation ceremony through different online channels to allow family members, as well as persons who could not attend this graduation ceremony in person, to follow it virtually. Moreover, building on the highest academic requirements previously set at IMLI, this was the first class that had to defend their dissertations or research projects viva voce."*



H.E. the President of Malta, Dr. George Vella, Mr. Kitack Lim (IMO Secretary-General and Chairman of the IMLI Governing Board), Professor Dr. Norman A. Martínez Gutiérrez (Director, IMLI), IMLI Faculty Members, Distinguished Guests and the IMLI Class of 2022-2023

Reproduced below is the Welcome Address delivered by the Director:

Your Excellency President of Malta,
Your Excellency IMO-Secretary General,
Honourable Ministers
Members of the IMLI Governing Bodies,
Excellencies,
Graduands,
Distinguished Guests,



It is my great pleasure and honour to welcome you to IMLI's 34th Graduation Ceremony celebrating the academic success of our graduands.

At the outset I would like to thank H.E. the President of Malta, Dr. George Vella, who has always supported IMLI. Such is his belief in IMLI's global mission that even in the height of the Pandemic, the President visited IMLI to deliver an online lecture to our students.

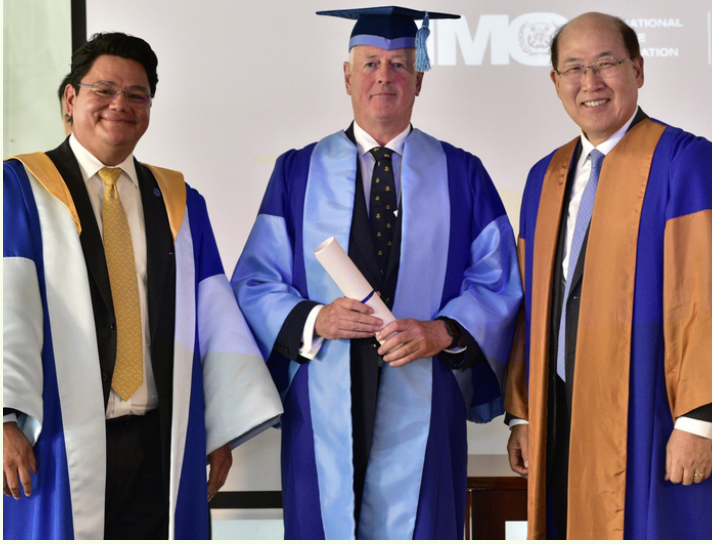
I am privileged to welcome H.E. Mr. Kitack Lim, the IMO Secretary-General and Chairman of the IMLI Governing Board who despite his heavy commitments has graciously agreed to be with us today and to preside over this ceremony which marks a milestone in the academic life of our graduands. Secretary-General, I would like on behalf of the IMLI staff and students to take this opportunity to convey our deepest appreciation for the generous interest you continue to take in our work and the welfare of the Institute.



H.E. the President of Malta, Dr. George Vella, Mr. Kitack Lim (IMO Secretary-General and Chairman of the IMLI Governing Board) and Professor Dr. Norman A. Martínez Gutiérrez (Director, IMLI).

I also wish to express my sincere appreciation to The Honourable Dr. Aaron Farrugia (Minister for Transport, Infrastructure and Capital Projects), The Honourable Mr. Stefan Zrinzo Azzopardi (Minister for Public Works and Planning), Mr. Christopher Cutajar (Permanent Secretary, Ministry for Foreign and European Affairs and Trade), and Mr. Ivan Sammut (Permanent Representative of Malta to the IMO). Their presence today reflects the continuing commitment which the Government of Malta has extended to IMLI since its inception.

I would also like to recognise the presence of Mr. Jim Harrison (Vice-Chairman of the IMLI Governing Board) and Professor Doctor Marko Pavliha (Member of the IMLI Governing Board) who have been involved with IMLI and its work for over two decades and have dedicated time and efforts to serve the Institute. We shall honour them today by awarding them the Degree of Doctor of Laws in International Maritime Law Honoris Causa. The award of this Degree is an expression of Institute's appreciation for their tireless work towards IMLI, its graduates and the international maritime community as a whole.



Dr. h.c. James T. Harrison (Vice-Chairman, IMLI Governing Board and Chairman, IMLI Financial and Human Resources Committee)



Professor Dr. Dr. h.c. Marko Pavliha (Head of Law Department, University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Maritime Studies and Transportation, Slovenia, and Member, IMLI Governing Board)

We are also honoured to welcome distinguished supporters of IMLI who have flown into Malta even if it is for a few hours to be with us on this important day.

Distinguished Guests,

Though this is my first year as Director, I have had the privilege to work with 24 generations of maritime professionals at IMLI. I must admit that at the end of the academic year, each graduating class has taken a piece of my heart with them. However, in return, they have filled it ten-fold with the memories of so many experiences shared.

This class is no exception, and as we discussed with them recently, this was a year of firsts. It was the first class to receive in situ lectures after the pandemic; it was the first year for many members of staff in their current position (myself included) and I was so proud to see how everyone settled in their post and worked with the students to the best of their abilities; considering that our state-of-the-art lecture hall was being refurbished, we had to re-purpose some areas of the premises, which thanks to the funding provided by the ITF Seafarers' Trust became two lecture halls that have hybrid teaching facilities and which enabled the Institute to expand its global outreach. Also today, for the first time, we are broadcasting live this graduation ceremony through different online channels to allow family members, as well as persons who could not attend this graduation ceremony in person, to follow it virtually. Moreover, building on the highest academic requirements previously set at IMLI, this was the first class that had to defend their dissertations or research projects *viva voce*.

Notwithstanding all this, the students of this class always showed motivation, determination, and dedication. Their hard work was evident when we saw their growth and transformation into maritime experts who will no doubt become the maritime leaders of tomorrow.

Through the IMLI training, the Class of 2023 has demonstrated the capacity to think independently, to intellectually challenge the status quo for the benefit of all, and due to the family environment of the Institute they enhanced qualities of character which include tolerance, compassion, and empathy. As Professor Pavliha has said in the past: At IMLI we don't only train minds, we also train hearts!

Ladies and gentlemen,

The world at large knows WHAT IMLI does. But sometimes we tend to forget WHY the Institute was established. IMLI is a small institution with a global and UNIQUE mission: IMLI has become THE world centre of excellence where maritime professionals are trained to serve the rule of international maritime law. Our main goal is to develop national legal expertise to advise Governments on the incorporation and effective implementation of IMO conventions and prescriptions through national legislation.

The successful delivery of the Institute's mission is reflected in the substantial contributions that IMLI graduates are making around the world. I am proud to note that many graduates hold the highest positions in their respective countries, and I am always delighted to see the increasing number of graduates who are representing their countries at IMO. Since 1989, the Institute has trained over 1500 students, mostly working for government agencies, particularly maritime administrations, in over 150 States and territories.



Mr. Ivan Sammut (Permanent Representative of Malta to IMO and Member, IMLI Governing Board) and Professor Dr. Norman A. Martínez Gutiérrez (Director, IMLI)



Mr. Luca Tommasi (Grant Manager, ITF Seafarers' Trust), Mr. Paul Falzon (International Transport Workers Federation (ITF) Inspector in Malta), and Professor Dr. Norman A. Martínez Gutiérrez (Director, IMLI)

This in turn has led to a rise in the requests of IMO Member States to have their finest officers admitted to the Institute's programmes. From its modest beginnings, with circa 19 participants every year in the 1990s, IMLI has grown into welcoming the 2023 Class, 53 members of which will graduate today from the Institute's Masters programmes. I am pleased to announce that this path to success will continue in the next academic year, as the Institute has received a large number of government-nominated applications for its Masters programmes.

The Institute's contribution to the international maritime community has been repeatedly recognized by the United Nations General Assembly, through its annual resolution on Oceans and the Law of the Sea. I am proud to record that similar recognition has been received from numerous IMO bodies and other international organizations. This process, we feel, has consolidated IMLI's status as a renowned centre of training serving the rule of international maritime law. In fact, it gives me great joy to inform you that our Master of Humanities (M.Hum.) programme in International Maritime Legislation, after a rigorous process of assessment, is now officially recognized by the Maltese authorities, which paves the way for the international recognition of this Degree.

The Institute is further strengthening its efforts to consolidate its academic reputation, through the promotion of research, publications and international seminars. In this respect, I am pleased to record that the Institute's latest publication is the book entitled "Sea Level Change and Maritime Boundaries" by Dr. Antoine Grima which was published by Routledge on 23 June under the book series "IMLI Studies in International Maritime Law".

Allow me to also inform you that IMLI expanded further its global outreach, especially through the delivery of its online specialised courses, in which, despite its limited resources, the Institute offers one free seat to each of the IMO Member States.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

A graduation ceremony, like the one of today, is an occasion for celebration but above all, it is about gratitude!

Allow me first to pay tribute to IMLI's founding fathers and all those who were involved in the setting up of the Institute in Malta. Their foresight and hard work constituted the cornerstone upon which the Institute was built.

Throughout the years we lost some of our strongest supporters and this year I wish to pay tribute to Prince Bola Ajibola of Nigeria who was instrumental to the development of IMLI in its early years. He acted as a Member of the IMLI Governing Board and was Patron of the IMLI Graduation Ceremony in 1992. This was before my time, but I still could see the effect of his hard work and contribution towards the work of IMLI.

On a more personal note, I wish to pay tribute to another IMLI Governor who we lost a couple of weeks ago. Frank Wiswall was one of IMLI's greatest supporters. For many years he contributed to the work of the Institute as a Member of its Governing Board and as a Member of the Institute's Academic Committee. Frank shaped the course on history of maritime law and maritime legislation drafting. His lectures were extremely engaging, with him not only displaying vast academic knowledge but also making use of his ample experience in the field. I remember fondly how his wife Libby used to attend all his lectures and invariably asked the first question, which set the discussion going. He will be sorely missed.



Mr. Kitack Lim (IMO Secretary-General and Chairman of the IMLI Governing Board) receiving a token of appreciation from Professor Dr. Norman A. Martínez Gutiérrez (Director, IMLI) for his relentless support of the Institute during his tenure as Secretary-General

Ladies and gentlemen,

The Institute's success is also the result of the institutional links it maintains with many organizations. I wish to refer in particular to the Institute's institutional linkage with IMO, which provides it with substantial support.

Secretary-General, I am extremely grateful to you for all the support you have given IMLI throughout your tenure as Secretary-General and Chairman of the IMLI Governing Board. I believe that even in your first year you in office had broken the record of most visits by any previous Secretary-General to IMLI. Your commitment to the IMLI's Mission has been remarkable. I wish to record that through your intervention, the Government of Korea has provided generous funding that will allow the Institute in the coming weeks to refurbish the student accommodation offering a more comfortable working environment.

My sincere appreciation goes to the IMO Technical Co-operation Division which, through the Integrated Technical Cooperation Programme, has enabled over the years access to quality training to over 200 government nominated candidates who are now proudly serving their countries. Thanks to the assistance of the Director of the Technical Cooperation Division, Mr. Xiaojie Zhang who is with us today, and officers of the Division like Mr. Jonathan Pace (Deputy Director, Subdivision for Programme Management and Coordination Technical Cooperation Division), the Institute welcomed

this year numerous IMO officials, including IMO Divisions' Directors, who delivered lectures within the extensive programme of IMO's Operational Aspects, thereby giving our students a unique insight into the extensive work of the Organization.

I also wish to record with appreciation all the support that Mr. Frederick Kenney has provided the Institute throughout his tenure as the Director of the IMO Legal Affairs and External Relations Division, particularly as a Member of the IMLI Academic Committee. I am also proud to record that Dr. Dorota Lost-Sieminska, an IMLI Graduate, has been appointed as his successor.

None of the Institute's achievements would be possible without the support of our generous donors. We thus express our gratitude to the Government of Malta, which has hosted the Institute since its inception and continues to support its academic activities, including the construction of a state-of-the-art Lecture Hall which we will be inaugurating shortly.

We are grateful for our relationship with The Nippon Foundation, which over the past 20 years has produced a unique network of maritime professionals who are upholding the principles of IMLI and of The Nippon Foundation.

We are proud of our relationship with the prestigious Lloyds' Register Foundation which has over the years assisted IMLI through the funding of candidates and with which we are in discussions to further strengthen our bonds of cooperation.

I would like to recognize the invaluable assistance of the ITF Seafarers' Trust and its contribution to the training of government officials undertaking IMLI programmes, as well as the generous donation for the audiovisual equipment set up in the current lecture halls.

My sincere appreciation is also extended to the Governments of Nigeria, the Republic of Korea, the Philippines as well as the International Group of P&I Clubs and the International Chamber of Shipping, for their generous funding which enabled the studies of some excellent government officers.

At this point, I would also like to express my appreciation for the sterling work of the Institute's Resident Faculty: Judge Professor David Attard, Professor Malgosia Fitzmaurice, Ms. Elda Kazara-Belja, Dr. Sanjeet Ruhel, Dr. Murat Sumer, Ms. Ramat Jalloh, and Dr. Rafael Prado, as well as to the Administrative Staff for their unwavering support.

We are also grateful to all the eminent scholars and practitioners from prestigious institutions who form part of IMLI's distinguished Visiting Fellows Programme.

Distinguished guests,

Allow me to reserve my concluding remarks for today's graduands as their accomplishments are very important to us.

Dear Graduands,

Over this last academic year, from a group of strangers, you became a family and together you faced the challenges of what is perhaps the most rigorous programme in international maritime law in the world. In fact, if in this joyous day you wonder what has been more important, the journey or the destination? You may be forgetting the most important of all, which is "the company". You have forged bonds of friendship that in today's interconnected world the distance cannot break.

On behalf of IMLI, I extend our sincere congratulations you all. And today that you are completing an important stage of your professional career and are looking to the future, I wish to recall a story,

some of you may have heard it, if so, please imagine that you have not and allow me to share it with you.

Once there was a wise old man. He was so wise he could answer any question anyone ever asked him, no matter how difficult. One day, two young people made a bet, one of them, who thought he knew more than anyone else, said “I am going to fool that old man. I’ll catch a bird, and go to the old man, and say, “what do I have in my hands?” He will not know of course, but IF he does, I will ask him, “is it alive or is it dead?” If he says ‘Dead,’ I will let it fly and show him it is alive, and if he says, ‘Alive,’ I will crush it and show him it is dead. And so, they went to the wise man and arrogantly he asked: ‘Old man, what do I have in my hands? The wise man told him “Well, you have a bird”. He smirked to the other boy and then asked “Ok, is it alive or is it dead?” the old man looked at him with tenderness, he smiled, and said, “My son, it’s in your hands. You decide whether it lives or dies”.

Dear Graduands,

During this academic year you acquired a substantial amount of knowledge in the whole spectrum of international maritime law. What happens here on forth is in your hands.

Your participation in the IMLI programmes is an opportunity granted to a few well-chosen professionals. And you have proven that our donors made the right choice. You have become exceptional representatives of the Institute and I have no doubt that you will continue to serve as worthy ambassadors of the Institute by building upon our reputation for excellence.

I congratulate all of you, and I wish you all possible success in your respective professional careers. Please enjoy the day and savour your success, you worked hard for it and you certainly deserve it!

We are very proud of you!



*Professor Dr. Norman A. Martínez Gutiérrez (Director, IMLI)
with some members of the IMLI Class of 2022-2023*