

The world is a family,
 and all humankind are brothers and sisters.



WMU: The Road to Swedish Accreditation

The world of education, just like the maritime world, is international in its nature, and has become more so over the last 25 years. The mobility of students, international recruitment to professional positions in most industries, and the global nature of research are all contributing factors.

The signing of the Bologna Declaration in 1999 accelerated the process. Education systems across 49 European countries adopted the same qualifications framework and agreed on the mutual recognition of the degrees. Increasingly, countries outside Europe then adopted the same recognition process: a degree would be recognised if it is accredited by the appropriate authorities in the country in which a university is situated.

The difficulty with this for WMU was that, as an international university and a part of IMO, a United Nations agency, WMU did not fit into this emerging system. The University decided to engage with the authorities in Sweden in order to seek a solution to the issue.

We were confident that our academic programmes were of a high academic quality. In the interval a Quality Assurance System was sought and an annual assessment was carried out by External Examiners. WMU believed, however, that it was important to launch the process of ensuring that our programmes met the European requirements in terms of structure and documentation. As of the Class of 2013, the University decided to use the Bologna-standard Diploma Supplements and documented the programmes in the required manner, with Intended Learning Outcomes developed for each subject in each programme.

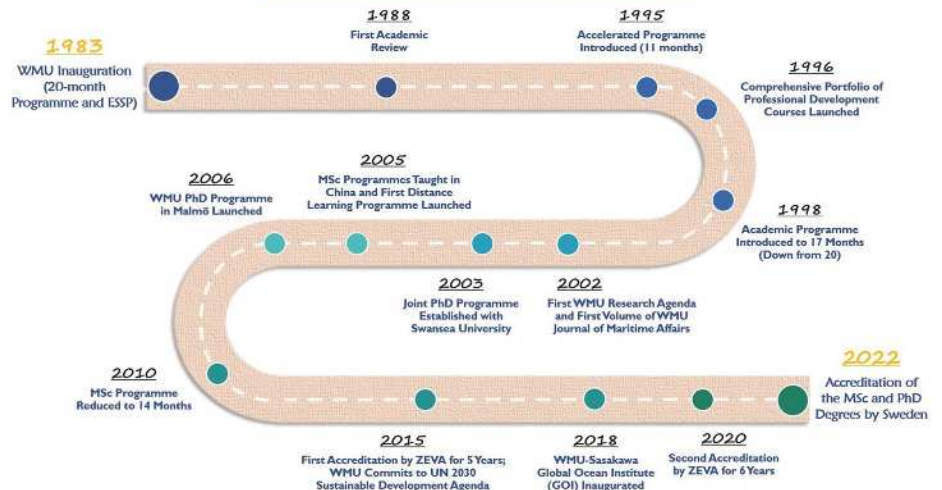
In 2013, the Board of Governors approved the funding necessary to undergo a European

accreditation assessment by the German accreditation agency ZEvA (Zentrale Evaluations- und Akkreditierungsagentur Hannover/ Central Evaluation and Accreditation Agency Hanover). A self-evaluation report was submitted to ZEvA in 2014, and an Expert Panel visited WMU in early 2015. In mid-May WMU received ZEvA's decision accrediting both the PhD and the MSc programmes, accrediting WMU's programmes unconditionally until 30 November 2020.

In June 2015, I took up the position of President at WMU. I was delighted to know that the first major step towards general recognition of our degrees had been accomplished. My first priority was to take forward the matter of accreditation by the Swedish authorities. At the same time, I began discussions with the Governments of

IMO member States to consider whether national legislation which insisted on accreditation by the appropriate authorities in the country in which a university is situated could be waived in the unique case of the World Maritime University. While I had some considerable success, the process was so time-consuming that it was not a viable alternative to accreditation by the Swedish authorities. On this matter, I had tremendous support from both the Board of Governors and the Executive Board, and with the help of the Swedish Governor, I was able to engage in fruitful discussions with members of the Government, particularly the Minister for Infrastructure, Mr. Tomas Eneroth, who championed the University throughout this process, and his colleagues at the Ministry of Education and Research.

The Road to Accreditation Timeline



Between 2016 and 2019, I met with politicians, civil servants, and members of the academic community. Across the board, I was met with warmth, support, advice, and assistance, and I would like to thank everyone involved from the bottom of my heart.

In due course, we were told that we would be permitted to make an application for degree-awarding powers under the Swedish system. The complete applications were submitted on 14 October 2019, and on 28 May 2020, the University was formally informed that the applications had been sent to the Swedish Higher Education Authority (UKÄ). From this date onwards, things started to move quickly. On 8 July 2020, we received from the UKÄ the proposed constitution of the Assessment Panel and the information that a site visit by Zoom was planned for 13 and 14 October 2020. (I should also note here that an application to ZEvA for re-accreditation was made in parallel, and the programmes were unconditionally re-accredited for six years, until 2026.)

On 27 November 2020, the University received a response from the UKÄ indicating that the

Assessment Panel recommended that UKÄ had proposed to the Swedish Government that the World Maritime University be given permission to issue both a PhD and an MSc in the field of maritime studies. The two programmes were rated as “satisfactory” in each and every element of the assessment. On 23 December 2020, the recommendation for accreditation of both degrees was forwarded to the Government by the UKÄ – perhaps the best Christmas present ever received by the University!

At this point, the Government of Sweden moved forward with the change in the national legislation that was necessary in order that the UKÄ recommendation could be implemented. The legal amendment was drawn up and went through the consultative procedures required under the Swedish Constitution. On 1 December 2021, WMU accreditation was formally debated in the Swedish Parliament. The accreditation motion before the Parliament was passed with overwhelming support: 283 voted in favour of the amendment, with only 24 against it and 42 abstentions. The revised legislation permitted IMO, through WMU, to award degrees



At the inauguration of the WMU-Sasakawa Global Ocean Institute, 2018

accredited by Sweden from 1 January 2022.

This success was achieved only by the cooperation of the whole WMU community – staff and faculty, governing bodies, and senior management. It will have a significant impact on WMU students who will be able to obtain recognition for their degrees in countries all over the world. But most of all, I would like to thank the Government of Sweden, our host country, which gave WMU unprecedented support throughout the process. Heja Sverige – och tack så mycket!

Congratulatory Message from Chairman Sasakawa on WMU's Accreditation by the Swedish Government

On WMU's recently being granted accreditation by the Swedish government, I would like to offer my congratulations to you, the faculty and staff of the university, and WMU alumni around the world.

This accreditation recognizes WMU as a world-class postgraduate university, whose degree-granting powers are now recognized not only among developing and EU countries but throughout the world.

It is the result of untiring work on behalf of the faculty and staff to steadily raise academic research levels, the rapid enhancement of research and educational environments under your strong leadership since assuming the presidency, and the robust nature of your collaborative partnership with the chancellor.

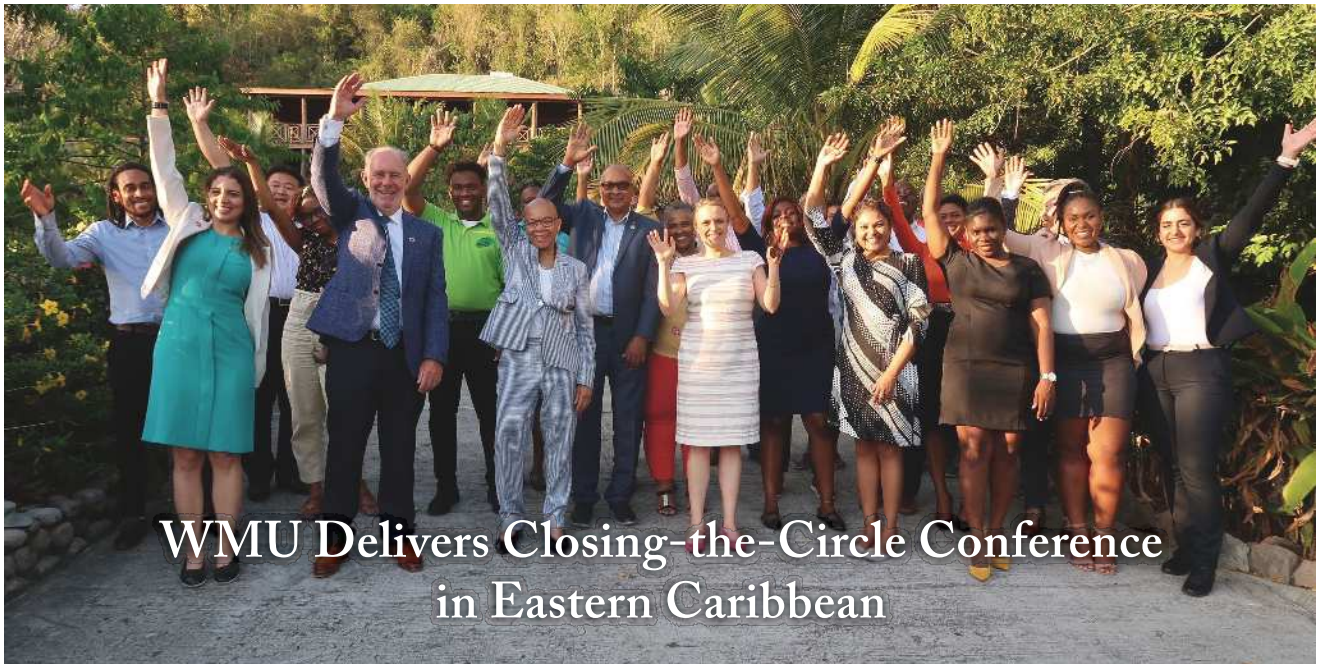
Looking back on WMU's earliest days, with its five courses, I remember having the impression that it would be a somewhat vocational oriented university for the training of maritime specialists and elite administrators. Now, as a university where the deepest investigations are carried out not only in maritime fields but on wider ocean issues as well, across ten specializations, it has become a unique institution of the highest research and educational standards.

While this recognition will of course increase even further the pride of WMU graduates around the world in their alma mater, I am sure it will also serve in future as a prime motivating factor for each country's most promising students to apply for entry.

In fullest agreement with your university's mission of finding solutions to ocean problems and sharing them with the world, along with increasing international understanding through the fostering of friendships among your students, it is my fervent wish that WMU continue its successful development, informed by these high-minded ideals.

Yohei Sasakawa
Chairman, Friends of WMU Japan

April 15th 2022



WMU Delivers Closing-the-Circle Conference in Eastern Caribbean

From 4-7 April, a high level Conference took place in Dominica on the topic of Identifying Regional Challenges and Opportunities to Address the Issue of Marine Debris, Sargassum and Marine Spatial Planning. The conference also explored the special needs of Small Island Developing States in light of the global pandemic, biodiversity loss and the climate emergency.

The Conference was delivered by the World Maritime University (WMU) - Sasakawa Global Ocean Institute (GOI) and conducted in partnership with the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) and with the generous support of The Nippon Foundation. This inter-sectoral Conference brought together senior key stakeholders in the region including the President and the Prime Minister Commonwealth of Dominica who delivered keynote speeches, the International Maritime Organization (IMO), the International Oceanographic Commission (IOC) the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP), other UN Funds, Agencies and Programmes as well as regional organizations, academic institutions and civil society.

The President of Dominica, H.E. Charles Savarin formally opened the Conference at the Jungle Bay Ecological Retreat (see picture). Within the context of WMU's climate resilience initiatives, he welcomed the focus on the protection of our oceans and the need to preserve the abundance of life within it to secure the socio-economic wellbeing of future generations. He particularly welcomed home, Dr. Cleopatra Doumbia-Henry, the President of the



World Maritime University, who is a daughter of the soil and a distinguished Dominican.

The formal proceedings were set in motion by H.E. Roosevelt Skerrit, Prime Minister of the Commonwealth of Dominica, who delivered the opening keynote address and welcomed the focus on the conservation of the oceans and the need to conserve the profusion of life within them to ensure the socio-economic well-being of future generations. He also discussed several ways to identify the regional challenges that small island countries face and spoke passionately regarding the developmental agenda for future action and collaborations.

The Conference sessions followed four thematic strands of research and engagements, namely: Science and Technology, Blue Green Responses, Societal Awareness, and Blue Skies and Clean Seas. The conference also featured keynotes by Dr. Carla Barnett Secretary-General of CARICOM, as well as by Dr. Didacus Jules, Director General of OECS.

The second day of the Conference was opened by the distinguished medical doctor and politician, Dr. Kenneth Darroux, Minister of Foreign Affairs, International Business and Diaspora Relations. In his address, he spoke about the threats posed to small island communities by the loss of marine biodiversity, the climate emergency and the COVID-19 pandemic. He welcomed the work underway at the World Maritime University (WMU) - Sasakawa Global Ocean Institute.

In her address, President of WMU, Dr. Cleopatra Doumbia-Henry, expressed her appreciation and pride regarding the conference being hosted in her home country. She said that facing a future, the only certainty of which is change, means that Small Island Developing States will continue to be confronted with challenges and difficulties – some intrinsic and timeless, others extrinsic and new. It will be necessary to make progress towards sustainable living and sustainable development. However, small island countries have a record of thriving in challenging times. She ended her address with these words:



"This tremendous Conference has given me great hope. With initiatives such as this, I am very positive that we can change our ways and behaviors for a better future. I am confident that this new generation of PhD scholars and experts who we are training from the region will have the knowledge and skills to meet the existential challenges the countries in the region are facing".

Dr. Doumbia-Henry also paid tribute to the entire team at the WMU-Sasakawa-Global Ocean Institute led by Professor Ronán Long, as well as the Closing The Circle Research Group under the direction of Dr. Aleke Stöfen-O'Brien. The Conference was delivered in hybrid format on site in Dominica at the Jungle Bay Resort with a world leading team of experts from the region and the WMU-Sasakawa-Global Ocean Institute and a global virtual audience of 222 registered participants from over 40 countries representing a wide range of sectors as Governments, Academia, Industry, UN entities and intergovernmental organizations (IGO), non-governmental organizations (NGO) as well as Philanthropic Foundations, and Civil Society. The gender representation of the speakers and audience was close to 50/50.

In his closing remarks, Dr. Hide Sakaguchi, President of the Ocean Policy Research Institute of the Sasakawa Peace Foundation (SPF), said that he would convey the immense success of the programme and the key messages from the conference, with a view to taking them forward in other global processes concerned with Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea.

World Maritime University Staff

Our Hopes, Our Thoughts, and Our Resolve Towards Our Ocean Conference 2022

The Our Ocean Conference (OOC) is an international conference initiated in 2014 under the leadership of John F. Kerry, then-U.S. Secretary of State under the Obama administration. Governments and non-governmental organizations, including NGOs, international organizations, and private sectors, each deliver their voluntary commitments toward the conservation and sustainable use of our ocean and engage in dialogues around six key thematic areas: the ocean and climate crisis, sustainable fisheries, blue economy, marine protected areas, maritime security, and marine pollution.

The sixth OOC took place in Norway in October 2019. The seventh meeting was supposed to take place in Palau in August 2020; however, this was repeatedly postponed due to COVID-19. It was finally held in Palau on April 14 and 15, 2022, in a face-to-face format. More than 600 people from 70 governments and 150 non-governmental organizations gathered in Palau, a small island developing state with a population of less than 20,000. The Nippon Foundation and the Sasakawa Peace Foundation have been cooperating since the former President of Palau, Thomas Remengesau Jr's administration, helping to renovate infrastructure and develop the programs to ensure the success of the conference.

This OOC held in Palau was unique in three ways: 1) Balancing economic recoveries from the COVID-19 and ocean conservation; 2) Climate crisis measures and actions that utilize the ocean and the coast; and 3) The presence of youth leaders. For small island states and developing coastal countries, where ocean-based tourism and fisheries are important sources of income, the impact of the prolonged pandemic on tourism has worsened the economic situation, and discussions were centered on how to increase production from the sea to protect people and their livelihoods, as well as preserving the ocean. The phrase "protect, produce,



Youth Leadership Summit participants together with members of the Sasakawa Peace Foundation.

and prosper" was used several times, in line with the main theme of the conference: Our Ocean, Our People, Our Prosperity.

Amid calls for urgent action in response to the climate crisis, the importance of the conservation and restoration of blue carbon ecosystems and coral reefs was raised as a priority by islanders. This will lead to climate change mitigation and adaptation, and the strengthening of the resilience of coastal communities through these efforts were emphasized as the foundation towards a sustainable blue economy, especially for the island and coastal countries on the frontlines of the climate crisis.

The Youth Leadership Summit was attended by nearly 50 young people from Palau and around the world. Unlike previous cases, this conference was unique in that youth were able to participate in the plenary sessions, and one youth participated as a panelist on many of the six main thematic areas. One of the youth delegates made a strong statement that a task force will be formed to pass the torch from past Youth Leadership Summit participants to future participants of the conference.

In addition to the Our Ocean plenary session, the Sasakawa Peace Foundation hosted the Pacific Island Blue Economy Roundtable with the Gov-

ernment of Palau on April 11, and collaborated on the Small Island Developing States Global Business Network Forum 2022 organized by the government of Palau and UN-OHRLS on April 12. We believe that the discussions and collaboration with the Government of Palau, including President Surangel Whipps Jr. and many other partners, which made the conference possible, will be of great asset to SPF staff in the future. On the other hand, it is our task to continue discussions on how we can translate what we have discussed into action, and what kind of research is needed to achieve this.

We hope that this article will give you a glimpse of the Our Ocean Conference. You can watch the plenary sessions at <https://ourocean2022.pw/>, which provides you with material for discussion with your friends and colleagues around you. We hope that you will join us in working together for the conservation and sustainable use of the oceans and the realization of a Blue Economy.

Sulang and thank you!

Dr. Atsushi Watanabe
Senior Research Fellow, SPF

Dr. Masanori Kobayashi
Senior Research Fellow, SPF

Chairman Sasakawa's Video Message

Alii, Good afternoon, Your Excellency, Surangel Whipps Jr., President, Republic of Palau, Your Excellency Steven Victor, Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries, and the Environment, The Honorable John Kerry, United States Special Presidential Envoy for Climate, Excellencies, distinguished delegates and participants and dear friends of Palau. I would like to express my admiration to the outstanding leadership of President Whipps and Former President Remengesau, and the total commitment of the people of Palau and all involved in hosting this important "Our Ocean Conference", as an in-person event, despite the difficulties of having to confront COVID-19 pandemic.

The ocean which is a public asset of mankind is facing serious problems such as acidification,

contamination by chemicals, and ocean debris. I believe that the ocean crisis is none other than a crisis of the survival of humankind. In the past, these global ocean issues were handled mainly by the big powers. But, to our delight the Republic of Palau, one of the first island nations to be affected by the worsening ocean environment, has now been asserting significant leadership. It is Palau that has proposed extraordinary ideas such as the development of sustainable blue economy and the creation of marine sanctuary for the preservation of the ocean and now hosts the seventh Our Ocean Conference. I am very happy to see that the presence of Palau is gaining importance in the world.

The oceans must be leveraged with discipline and in a peaceful manner so as to pass on sustainable



and healthy oceans for thousand years into the future. For that, The Nippon Foundation will continue to cooperate with Palau, a country tightly bonded like brothers both with Japan and through history. Thank you very much.

Insights from Jordan: COVID-19 Measures in the Maritime Sector of My Country



Enas Nadi Al-Mahariq
(Jordan, 2019)

The COVID-19 pandemic has revolutionarily changed our lives. Everyone wishes to restore their lives to how they were before. However, some fundamental questions that remain chronically in people's minds are: Will the post-COVID era have remnants of the past? Will the pandemic be over anytime soon?

In terms of working in maritime administration, my organization (Jordan Maritime Commission), located in Aqaba City, south of Jordan, has reacted to the pandemic effectively. Since 18th of March, 2020, the Jordanian government activated the National Defense Law and imposed a complete lockdown. We were told to work remotely, and we had many emergency plans as back up in case of business failure.

It was necessary to look on with a positive view in response to all these expeditious changes and in complying with emergency plans. Moreover, I had to think about how I can contribute as a head of planning and institutional performance development unit to support my organization, and to the benefit of the Jordanian maritime sector.

In respect to seafarer crisis during the pandemic – I was actually inspired by the guidelines provided by

the international maritime community for seafarers and the port community, based on international guidance such as the circulars that were issued by the International Maritime Organization (IMO) and the International Chamber of Shipping (ICS).

I prepared a series of guidelines. The first one was for the actions taken by JMC for all workers in the maritime transport sector in Jordan as well as for seafarers onboard ships flying the Jordanian flag for the year 2020. The second one was the guidelines for precautionary COVID-19 procedures for all workers within the maritime transport sector in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, and onboard ships flying the Jordanian flag in 2020.

These initiatives had a good impact and healthy regime on the work environment of JMC that followed next on JMC in cooperation with related entities (Jordanian Maritime Stakeholders). This diligent work has continued on as we completed the issuance of a series of protocols, such as a protocol for organizing procedures and addressing the pandemic. Another example is the protocol to be followed in cases there are suspicions of COVID-19 infections onboard a ship calling to the Port of Aqaba. Finally, in response to IMO calling to resolve the seafarer crisis, JMC has issued a protocol that deals with crew change in the Port of Aqaba.

Nevertheless, how do we coexist with the COVID-19 pandemic as well as we can, while not hiding from it? The world adapted with technology, so resilience has happened. In the maritime education and training aspect, the days of being physically present for studying or training are gone. This is exactly how the Jordan Academy for Mar-



itime Studies (JAMS) aimed to coexist with the pandemic. JAMS has launched its electronic platform for remote maritime education and training, holding lectures digitally to avoid physical contact and keep the applicants for maritime studies (seafarers), who are preparing for their requirements, as safe as possible.

For this reason, I considered now the perfect time to seize a fundamental opportunity, and applied for a part-time lecturer job. Then, JAMS recruited me as part-time lecturer to do Maritime Law remotely, far away from the academy. In my point of view, this is to become a significant milestone in my career.

In conclusion, due to so many similarly difficult circumstances, it is never easy – especially when you are trying to contribute effectively to your work environment, your country, and the international maritime sector, all in balance with developing your career, which sets the bar high and makes thing even more challenging! However, I intend to do nothing but the best.

Undervaluation of Seafarers and the Way Forward for the Maritime Industry



Peter U. Ohagwa
(Nigeria, 2022)

Maritime transportation is an essential instrument for global trade as it connects producers, manufacturers, and consumers internationally (Cicek et al., 2019). The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) 2019 stated: “Over 90% of world commerce takes place through the ocean.” Suffice it to say that the majority of activities surrounding world trade are being made possible through maritime transportation; thus the maritime industry's importance cannot be overemphasized.

The maritime industry needs to address the undervaluation of seafarers due to poor visibility of the shipping industry in the world, also known as sea blindness. According to George (2013): “Ship-



Maritime industry overview. Source: Northeast Maritime Institute (<https://www.northeastmaritime.com/blog/what-is-the-maritime-industry/>)

ping is an invisible industry which brings you 90% of everything.” For example, people can recognize a company like Microsoft Corporation faster than they can recognize Maersk Line, which is one of the oldest and biggest shipping companies in the world. Behind shipping are dedicated human beings who work tirelessly and mostly in unfriendly conditions to ensure the success of global trade, and whose contributions are not properly recog-

nized and appreciated.

The non-recognition of seafarers as key workers by most countries is a big challenge. This was evident at the peak of the COVID-19 pandemic, when most countries shut their borders to seafarers. As of May 2021, out of the 174 International Maritime Organization (IMO) Member States, only 55 States have recognized seafarers as essential workers (Bailey et al., 2021). This is

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proof that seafarers' contributions are not properly recognized yet, and could impair the human sustainability efforts of the maritime industry. There seems to be more attention on the business aspect of the maritime industry than on the human aspect—especially the seafarers, whose role is crucial. The plight of seafarers does not attract much public attention when compared with their aviation counterparts. Swift (2013) stated: "Sailors suffer extreme violence at the hands of pirates but the root of their problem is less headline-grabbing".

ACTIONS NEEDED FROM THE MARITIME INDUSTRY AND STAKEHOLDERS

SHORT-TERM:

It is high time the MLC 2006 and STCW Conventions are reviewed so as to recognize seafarers as key workers who are essential to Member States. This will go a long way in addressing the issue of undervaluation and underestimation of seafarers.

MID-TERM:

The resources allocated for the security, safety, wellbeing, development, and rights of people engaged in the maritime industry, especially sea-



Seafarers working onboard. Source: Odomankoma Maritime News Portal (<https://odomankoma.com/2022/04/15/ilo-and-imo-call-for-urgent-action-on-seafarers-stranded-in-ukraine-following-russian-aggression/>)

farers, should be monitored by maritime industry stakeholders, particularly IMO. This is very important because some maritime entities/companies take undue advantage of workers due to poor enforcement of rights and inadequate monitoring.

LONG-TERM:

The issue of poor visibility of the maritime in-

dustry should be addressed through the creation of sufficient awareness by industry stakeholders via their respective governments. Suffice to say, "Shipping IS world trade - no shipping, no world trade." We have a sector that is absolutely essential to the world; accordingly, the people inside should be visible and properly recognized.

Greetings from Norway

Sadaharu Koga (Japan, 2015)

Hi, this is Sadaharu Koga, a Japanese Sasakawa-Fellow from the Class of 2015. After graduating from WMU in 2015, I returned to Tokyo and resumed my career in the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism.

Since then, I had been involved in jobs in a variety of international fora, such as negotiations for regulations on environmental protection in IMO as well as for bilateral Economic Partnership Agreement between Japan and the EU. My experience in WMU has helped me greatly in these roles.

In May 2020, in the middle of the COVID-19 pandemic, I moved from Tokyo to Oslo. This was when I started my life as a diplomat in the Japanese Embassy in Norway, with Oslo becoming my second Nordic hometown after Malmö, Swe-



Cross-country skiing in snowy mountains

den.

While the population is just over five million, Norway is economically blessed thanks to the income from its fossil fuel resources extracted from its continental shelf. That being said, both the Norwegian government and the private sector are actively investing in clean energy and aiming to take a leading role in the global green transition. Fisheries are another major industry of this country. In fact, a large proportion of the salmon and mackerel consumed in Japan are imported from Norway.

In terms of my job duties, in the last two years, there were very limited opportunities to interact with people face-to-face due to the restriction measures against COVID-19. However, despite the restricted contact through online meetings, many of my Norwegian partners, who have made efforts to reach out and communicate with me constructively and amiably, helped ease my transition so I can comfortably work even through such difficult times.

It wasn't just my Norwegian friends who gave me a warm reception; the great nature of Norway welcomed me and my family with open arms. As you may already know, Norway is a country with



Family photo with a beautiful Fjord backdrop

a beautiful and breathtaking natural scenery. The most famous example, I believe, is the fjord landscape. Fjords are long, narrow coves with steep sides or cliffs created by glaciers. The colorful wooden houses lined up beside the water also add a charming touch to the view.

It is no wonder Norwegian people love their nature. In summer, they visit the beach (even though the water is too cold for me to swim in) and enjoy holding barbecues by the lake. In winter, they challenge the mountains in cross-country skiing adventures. As the snow is everywhere during this cold season, even people who live in the center of Oslo can partake in skiing by traveling a mere 20 minutes from home via train.

Now, the terrible threat of COVID-19 is about to be a past. After two years of patience, the vibrant Norwegian society is making its long-awaited return. I truly hope that that is the case in your country as well, and when it does happen, let us reconnect countries, joining hand-in-hand "physically."

Following My Father's Footsteps

Jean Ver P. Pia (Philippines, 2003)
Atty. Lamberto V. Pia (WMU1987)

There is an interesting research¹ on the importance of fathers and how they affect their daughters on their academic performance, and as a consequence affect career success and financial well-being. In retrospect, nowhere is this truer on how my father have a positive impact in my educational, vocational and career path. This is demonstrated below on how similarly our careers have unfolded.

My father has a bachelor's degree in Political Science and graduated from law school in 1970 and was the 13th placer in the 1971 Bar Examination. I also have a bachelor's degree in Political Science from the same university where my father studied and is a lawyer similar to my father.

Coming from a poor family, my father worked odd jobs to finance his studies. I was also a working student while I was in law school as my father's confidential secretary when he was Deputy Administrator for Operations at the Maritime Industry Authority (MARINA). This was my first work since 1994 and my father became my mentor in work. He served in the public sector for three decades with utmost diligence, excellence and integrity. This is something that I have tried to emulate ever since always remembering my father telling me that "our good name is our wealth".

My father studied at the World Maritime University (WMU) in Sweden graduating in 1987 with an MSc in Maritime Affairs (General Maritime Administration). His studies were funded

by Germany - Carl Duisburg Gesellschaft. He was given the honor of delivering the remarks on behalf of the graduating class of 1987 as Student Council President. On the other hand, I studied at WMU in 2002, fifteen years after my father graduated, funded by the Sasakawa Fellowship of Japan. I graduated in 2003 with an MSc in Maritime Affairs (Maritime Administration). I was Student Council Secretary. We might be the only father-daughter graduates in WMU; indeed, a rare occurrence. My father was considered an adopted fellow and always invited to Sasakawa Fellow events.

After my graduation in WMU, I was promoted to Legal Officer. After a few years, my father, having reached the mandatory age, retired in 2005. While I continued working at the MARINA as Attorney V, my father became a legal consultant at a shipping company. I continued to update my father in the developments in the office, and the work we do which is also helpful in his consultation work. Through the years, I became used to people who miss him asking how he is and conveying to him their good wishes and kind words.

Subsequently, I studied in Cardiff University, UK for my PhD funded by the Nippon Foundation. His wise advice to be like our national hero, Dr. Jose Rizal, made me overcome the difficulty of writing and to graduate in 2017. Of course, my proud dad witnessed the happy event in Cardiff.

As my responsibilities increased when I was



At Cardiff University on 21 July 2017 during my graduation.

appointed in 2015 as Director, my father continued to be an inspiration, always sharing what he did as Director in MARINA. Through the tough times, my father always reminded me "to aim high and to hit high" and to try harder. In his words, "If others can do it, you can do better."

On 12 June 2020, during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, I had been designated as OIC-Deputy Executive Director of the STCW Office and afterwards OIC-Deputy Administrator for Planning. This must be the closest I got to a high-level position in MARINA. My father was a political appointee serving three Presidents successively while my stint was only temporary.

Currently, I am appointed as Maritime Attaché and posted at the Philippine Embassy in London. My father is now retired at 85 years old and is still up and about, tending our mango and dragon fruit farm in the Philippines and taking care of his grandchildren.

From the above description of our parallel universe, the values that my father taught me encouraged me to pursue my professional development similar to his. Working together and participating in many activities together have truly forged a significant bond between us. When I asked my father to comment on our life adventures together, this is what he said:

"Of course, as a father, I feel proud and happy for my children's achievements - Ver John is a doctor, Ian Ver is a computer engineer and is now based in Alberta, Canada. My two daughters, Jean Ver and Jessehan are lawyers. I have 7 healthy grandchildren. I cannot ask for anything more.

"I am especially thankful for the schol-



During the celebration of the 50th wedding anniversary of my parents last 6 June 2021 at the Pia Farm.

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¹ Zia, et al (2015), "Father and daughter relationship and its impact on daughter's self-esteem and academic achievement", Academic Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies, Vol. 4, No. 1

Following My Father's Footsteps

arship given to Jean in WMU and Cardiff University by the Sasakawa and Nippon Foundation. She has reached her dream of attaining not only a masteral but a doctoral degree as well. We cannot afford to send her overseas for her post-graduate studies but she was given a once in a lifetime opportunity by the ever gracious and magnanimous Mr. Sasakawa. With heartfelt thanks and gratitude, my family is happy for what

your Foundation is doing to students coming from developing countries who deserve to be given a chance to enhance their knowledge and skill to be able to give back as improved service to our government. Jean is now appointed to a very prestigious position in the Philippine Embassy in London. Although we miss her company, we are very proud of her."



As you all know, the people of Ukraine are in a terrible situation. Ever since the conflict began, we, the Friends of WMU, Japan Secretariat, had been extremely worried about the wellbeing and safety of our 5 Ukrainian Sasakawa Fellows.

By May 3rd, we had heard from Ms. Victoria N. Radchenko (2001), Ms. Anna Rabotnova Dobrovynska (2012), Ms. Nadiya Serhiyivna Isikova (2012), Mr. Igor Pishenin (2013), and Ms. Svitlana Shestova (2021). Their emails included details of a very personal nature on their current situation, which we will refrain from disclosing in this Newsletter. Ultimately, we want to relay that as of May, we have confirmed that all 5 Fellows are safe. However, the current situation changes by the second. Therefore, we will try to keep in continuous contact with them.

The other day, Chairman Sasakawa wrote the following message for the people of Ukraine:

"I am deeply saddened by the current national crisis in Ukraine.

The Nippon Foundation, ahead of the Japanese Government, has launched a project to provide assistance to those in need in your country. We hope this effort can help in any capacity. Please see the following website for further information on this: <https://www.nippon-foundation.or.jp/en/news/articles/2022/20220328-69127.html>

I sincerely hope that you and all your loved ones are safe."

Lastly, Ms. Rabotnova Dobrovynska gave us information on the SUNRISE UKRAINE Charitable Foundation, an organization providing humanitarian help. We hope you will consider looking into and supporting their activities. <https://www.wmu-japan.net/global-data/20220614143147157.pdf>

When you feel the time is right, please send the Fellows your support and encouragement. You can find their email addresses on the Friends of WMU, Japan Directory.

Secretariat

Thank You for Your Cooperation!

We are happy to say that we have now moved on from sending reminders about the Newsletter survey. As of now, we have collected 135 responses, both by post and email. This is a very encouraging number and we were excited to hear so much feedback, whether they were supportive or critical. Please look forward to seeing the results in an upcoming WMU Newsletter. Until then, wonderful surveyees, please know you have our bottomless gratitude!

Editor's note

Hello readers! I am Koji Murai of the Tokyo University of Marine Science and Technology, and I am the newly appointed Head of the Friends of WMU, Japan Newsletter Editing Committee.

In assuming this role as Head of the Newsletter - a culmination of the efforts of the many people before me, including my predecessor, Dr. Yoshiaki Kunieda - I aim to work together with not only the Secretariat but all Friends of WMU to produce an even better Newsletter. I hope that I can ask for your continued support and cooperation moving forward.

Having met Professor Clive Cole and many other WMU professors and colleagues from around the world, albeit briefly, at ESSP2004, I feel a sense of familiarity with the University. In fact, I am still carrying out research and academic activities with friends I made from those days. With commemorative photographs of my professors, classmates, and myself from back then, I would like to officially mark the start of



my relationship with the Friends of WMU. I intend to do my best, and welcome the Newsletter's 100th commemorative edition as my eventual goal.

I look forward to working with you all.

Dr. Koji Murai

Tokyo University of Marine Science and Technology



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