

## **Farewell Speech**

165<sup>th</sup> International Senior Seminar

*“Juvenile Justice and the United Nations Standards and Norms”*

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**Your Excellencies,**

**Mr. SENTA, Keisuke, Director of UNAFEI,**

**Mr. MORINAGA, Taro, Deputy Director of UNAFEI,**

**Honorable Members of the Diplomatic Corps,**

**Faculty and Staff of UNAFEI,**

**JICA Staff members,**

**Distinguished Guests,**

**Fellow Participants,**

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

It is time to say goodbye; it is time to say 'SAYONARA'!

First of all, I would like to express how deeply honored I am to be standing here today, to be delivering this farewell speech.

Representing all of the participants in this seminar carries three strong challenges for me. One, it is difficult to describe in a few words all our feelings about Japan during these entire five weeks: the Japanese people, culture, natural beauty, social environment are very rich and unique – impossible to forget! Two, it is very tough to say goodbye to ones we know could become great friends; to individuals we would always enjoy being close to, but knowing that, in most cases, half of the world is in between. Three, which is the most difficult, is that I'm not sure whether or not I am able to express enough gratitude and acknowledgement to the ones that made this experience possible.

So, here I stand, not because I am the best among all of the participants - which I do not intend to be. The truth is that each and every one could not have accomplished this training without all of you – all of us together; not only without the other fellow participants, but, especially, the idealizers, organizers, directors, professors, faculty and staff members of UNAFEI and JICA. The experience and the things we have learned together truly shaped and opened our minds to becoming better persons than we were before.

**Ladies and gentleman,**

It is time to say goodbye; it is time to say 'SAYONARA'!

Let me refresh your memories ...

The professional, yet kind, reception of the JICA staff was a precious relief after so many hours or even days of airports and airplanes. And then, another chapter began: UNAFEI. We were received by the directors, the staff and the professors with not only big smiles on their faces, but also with an amazing salute (waving at us) from outside of the building, despite the cold weather. We immediately felt the warming welcome and the anxiety instantly turned into a comfortable thought: well, for the next 30 days this place *might* become our 'home' (not a hotel). In a couple of days, UNAFEI surely became my 'home away from home, as described in the informative material; before, when I read this phrase back in December, I just couldn't understand its meaning. Now I know, it's a matter of feeling!

As part of the programme, we had lectures from experienced UNAFEI professors, Japanese authorities and visiting experts from South Africa, the USA, Italy, TIJ (Thailand Institute of Justice) and

HEUNI. We also had the chance to share the reality of our systems through individual presentations and group workshops.

We were given the opportunity to visit many institutions, including the Supreme Court, the Tokyo Probation Office and Family/District Courts; on our study trip, we visited the Hiroshima High Public Prosecutors Office, a halfway house and Kyoto Juvenile Classification Home and Medical Juvenile Training School. We were received by high-ranking authorities of the Japanese Justice System, such as the Minister and Vice-Minister of Justice and the Superintending Prosecutor of the Hiroshima High Public Prosecutors Office.

At this point, we wish to highlight our thanks to all the authorities that opened their institutions to receive us and to all the government officials who provided guidance and assistance during our visits.

We had social gatherings and receptions with the Vice Minister of Justice, VPOs, UNAFEI Alumni and the Asia Crime Prevention Foundation Members.

We especially extend our kind thanks to the VPOs, who shared their experiences with us here at UNAFEI and also dedicated one entire day to kindly show their community site and to receive us in their homes. Also, our sincere thanks to the ACPF, not only because of the fancy reception and of, perhaps, providing the funniest moment of our trip (the time we had to introduce ourselves in Japanese from the stage in front of a large audience; you can't imagine what came out!), but especially because of the importance of its work for crime prevention and more effective criminal justice policies and practices.

From Hiroshima we (and all humankind) learned that there must be no space in our hearts for revenge – only for peace –, that hope must never be lost and that it is always time to rebuild.

Indeed, we had so many unforgettable moments ...

## **Ladies and Gentleman**

It is time to say goodbye; it is time to say 'SAYONARA' now to Lounge B .... to all the gathering, laughing, singing, dancing ....

I really enjoyed karaoke; I guess we all did. As a wonderful surprise, we saw that Director Senta san can sing great songs; that Deputy Director Morinaga san plays the guitar and sings wonderfully; that Professor Hirano san loves the song "We are the world" and that we love joining him.

So many fun moments!

The table tennis tournament was a blast! I never thought I liked ping pong so much!

These memories are stories to be told to our children's children!

## **Ladies and Gentleman**

It is time to say goodbye; it is time to say 'SAYONARA'

To Director Senta san and Deputy Director Morinaga san, who, despite their busy schedules, have always been with us. In addition to Director Senta san's skills in table tennis, karaoke and even dancing, he has many professional skills in the international and legal area, certainly with a great level of ability and intelligence!

Thank you to all the professors – essential to the success of this programme. Professor Hirano san, our programming officer, and Professor Watanabe san, deputy programming officer, from the bottom of our hearts, we don't have words to express our deepest gratitude for all your and the other UNAFEI professors' dedication, for successfully orientating us throughout this seminar and for being our mates during this learning process.

Our warm thanks to the JICA staff, especially to Mr. Watanabe and to our two big sisters (Ms. Yamamoto san and Ms. Hisa san), that with kindness and humor, never hesitated in helping us.

All UNAFEI staff, please receive our most grateful and special thanks. I would love to list every single name here, expressing our tremendous gratitude, but unfortunately I don't have enough time. Your assistance was always offered with such promptness, plus a big smile.

Our utmost thanks to the Japanese participants. Even without knowing us, from the very beginning you have hosted us as if we were friends for a long time. You are awesome! Good fellows and warm hearted – your kindness and care overwhelmed us. Arigato Gozaimasu!

Finally, my fellow participants (including my now good Brazilian friends Duarte san and Pablo san), receive my grateful thanks for having the opportunity to meet you and spend time with you! By chance we met, by choice we became friends! And by choice we can still keep in touch!!! Don't forget, we're even supposed to keep in touch ... Thank God we have WhatsApp, Viber, Skype, e-mail; that we have technology – all with the help of the Japanese ....!

## **Ladies and Gentleman**

It is time to say goodbye; it is time to say 'SAYONARA'

We leave Japan with the certainty that there is a long road to follow, searching for fairer justice, always adapted to the needs and realities of each country. We will return to our countries, to our daily work, to our families, with many treasures from here. In our luggage, we take the shared experiences, success stories, new ideas and rich study material, on which we must pay careful attention. In our minds, we take great memories, beautiful images of this wonderful country, rich cultural learning, the peculiar ways by which each country deals with the same matters. In our hearts we take the friendships built here, that can last forever, if sown; in our hearts we also take a deep admiration and respect for these wonderful and special people who so lovingly welcomed and treated us as part of the great Japanese family. For this people, who made this Nation what it is and represents today for all humankind, we all bow in a sign of great respect and admiration and say:

**Kokorokara kansha to keii wo hyoushimasu. Arigatou Gozaimasu!!!**