

148th INTERNATIONAL TRAINING COURSE of UNAFEI

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On behalf of my fellow participants, allow me to express our most profound and sincere gratitude for having been granted the opportunity to participate in this 148th International Training course.

Now we have finally come to the end of our training after six weeks of gaining a great deal of knowledge, sharing our experiences, and discussing ways to overcome the challenges posed by drug offences and drug-dependent offenders. The main theme of the Course, “Drug Offender Treatment: New Approaches to an Old Problem”, was addressed through individual presentations, lectures by both Japanese experts and an international visiting expert, and observation visits to related institutions and organizations.

Indeed, on behalf of my fellow participants, we are very grateful to all lecturers, officials and organizations for their wisdom and insightful learning experiences presented to us through their contributions and the various field visits, such as the briefing and interaction at the Narcotics Control Department, the visits to Tokyo District Court, the Supreme Court, Yokohama Prison and Tachikawa Probation Office, and interaction with the Honourable Minister of Justice, the reception party hosted by the Honourable Vice Minister of Justice, and the discussions with the volunteer probation officers of Japan.

Furthermore, the visits to Kyoto and Hiroshima were experiences of a lifetime for us overseas participants, allowing us to have a first hand glimpse of Japan’s historical and cultural heritage, and the earnest efforts of the Japanese people to preserve it for future generations. The visits during the trip to Hiroshima Probation Office, Chugoku Regional Parole Board, Shimane Asahi Rehabilitation Programme Centre, and a halfway house named “With Hiroshima” helped us to have deeper understanding of Japanese criminal justice in actual practice.

Very special thanks go to JICA as well as to the Asia Crime Prevention Foundation for their cooperation, which supported every activity. I would like to express gratitude to the ACPF for their hospitality in hosting special dinners for us in the following cities: Tokyo, Yokohama, Hiroshima and here at UNAFEI.

We also enjoyed, and are very thankful for, interactions and parties in lounge B and lounge A that produced a strong bond of closeness among the participants and the

UNAFEI personnel. The home visits and tea ceremony, organized by local volunteers, were memorable experiences of Japanese culture.

My fellow participants and I would like to thank the people working behind the scenes who provided us with good accommodation, facilities and services to meet our personal needs and requirements; you would absolutely agree with me that the people who prepared our food for us deserve to be commended because of the delicious and nutritious meals we have had for the past six weeks.

Let me also thank our Japanese participants who have shared their time, treasures and talents in assisting us overseas participants studying in this foreign country; we felt as if we have been in our home countries because of your help. Here I would like to confirm that this past six weeks established a natural bond of friendship, respect, understanding, and cooperation that will not end, but will surely serve to form a network of practitioners in pursuit of the ideal of criminal justice. Let us coordinate and cooperate in order to achieve the goal.

I would like to be frank with you here.

When we heard of the enormous earthquake that struck Japan in March, most of us doubted if the Course would be really held. All of the news coming from Japan was tragic. However, after arriving at UNAFEI, we could see that people here were resilient, tenacious, and were serious in implementing the Course even at a time of great difficulty.

So, last but certainly not least, I would like to thank all the UNAFEI faculty and staff members for their commitment to the Course. Especially, many thanks go to Prof. Wakimoto, Prof. Sakonji and Ms. Sasabe as the organizers of this training programme and to Ms. Kita, JICA's coordinator; you have worked hard, have always been busy, but you were by our side all through the Course.

In conclusion, Sirs, Madams, and distinguished guests,

On behalf of my fellow participants, I would like to assure you that although the challenges remain with us, we feel more empowered, equipped and therefore equal to the challenges because of the training we received here. We will endeavour to translate this rich learning experience into reality in our respective jurisdictions.

May God Almighty bless this wonderful country and its people and bless us all.

Thank you very much.