

14th UNAFEI UNCAC TRAINING PROGRAMME

ON

“EFFECTIVE LEGAL AND PRACTICAL MEASURES AGAINST CORRUPTION”

CLOSING CEREMONY

09 NOV. 2011

Thank You Remark by Ms. Sharon Onyubeke Ogiri-Okpe from NIGERIA

Hon. Members of the Diplomatic Corps,

Mr. Tatsuya Sakuma; Director of UNAFEI,

Mr. Osamu Shimizu; President of the Research and Training Institute of Ministry of Justice,

Mr. Hisanao Noda; Deputy Director of TIC, JICA,

UNAFEI Faculty and Staff members,

JICA Staff members,

Distinguished guests,

Fellow Participants,

Ladies and Gentlemen

My task here tonight is very simple yet very heavy; I feel very honoured and privileged to stand before this elite gathering to make a remark, yet, I feel burdened what a paradox! This is because I am to give a vote of thanks on behalf of the participants of the 14th UNAFEI UNCAC Training Programme. Thank you speech comes only at the end of an event- therefore thank you speech tonight means “SAYONARA”. I hope you do understand my difficulties. I just wish to state in the beginning that we are not making this thank you speech as a mere formality but we

genuinely and deeply wish to express our gratitude to all people and organizations that made this course a success.

We want to first express our profound and sincere gratitude and appreciation to the Government of Japan, its people, JICA and last but not least UNAFEI for providing us with this unique opportunity for comparative study in the fight against corruption.

Distinguished ladies and gentlemen, this training course has 22 participants from 11 different countries, including Japan. We are also of different professional backgrounds such as the judiciary, public prosecution service, police, investigators from ACAs, etc. The diversity in nationality and professional background has broadened our views and enriched our knowledge and helped us in better understanding the response of criminal justice in its fight against corruption.

Leaving familiar environment to a new place always has a measure of apprehension. However, as participants arrived from different directions, we were met with efficient and friendly welcome provided by JICA staff at Narita International Airport and Tokyo International Center.

On arrival at UNAFEI, what a welcome party met us at the entrance, it was royal! Then later at night, we were introduced to the famous Lounge B. Ladies and gentlemen, Lounge B is an experience! If you have not been there, I recommend you make acquaintance with UNAFEI quickly so you can gain entrance in. The warmth and sincerity exhibited by the management and staff of UNAFEI immediately helped us to cast off our differences in culture, background etc and we began to sing and dance. This broke the ice and therefore created a foundation for bonding which is a key to networking.

The theoretical and academic aspects of the training course was covered by Individual Presentations, Lectures, Group Workshops and Report Back session, while practical learning was done by a carefully planned and executed Visits of Observation/Study tours. In particular, our visits to Tokyo District and Supreme Courts, Hiroshima High and District Prosecutors Offices, Kyoto District Public Prosecutors Office, Mine Rehabilitation Program Center, Tokyo Metropolitan Police Department and Kobe Customs. This visits deepened our understanding of what we learnt through the lectures. And also to appreciate practices employed by the Japanese criminal justice system.

Ladies and gentlemen, we must mention the awesomeness of the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum. Walking quietly through the many chambers of the museum, I had a glimpse of what the people of Japan went through as a consequence of war. The experience has enabled us to appreciate much more the need for peaceful coexistence and peaceful resolution of disputes. It is indeed very saddening to have seen what the people of Hiroshima and Nagasaki went through and it is our prayer it will never happen again to anyone. The world has a great deal to learn from the Japanese! We definitely cannot forget the breathtaking beauty of Miyajima Island. Nor can we forget the adventure with different Japanese dishes.

On behalf of the participants, I would like to take this opportunity to thank the ACPF again for hosting us to the first dinner party at UNAFEI and an elegant party at the gorgeous Meiji Kinenkan. We have also noted that ACPF has supported UNAFEI with a lot of equipment including some of the ones in our rooms. Mention must also be made of the hosting by Rotary

Club of Tokyo Fuchu at Tokyo Horse Race Course. We were delighted to be recipients of such wonderful hospitality.

It is a great honour and privilege to have you as our Director, Mr. Tatsuya Sakuma. We thank you, Sakuma san for your dedication to professionalism, friendship and quiet fatherly presence in all our activities including those at Lounge B. We are also thankful to the Deputy Director, Mr. Ukawa, a man of clean and crisp language, and a professional to the core, yet with a voice that can sing my pains away. To the rest of the Professors of UNAFEI, its amazing how you found time and joy to attend our lectures and also joined us in social activities including taking us out on sight-seeing. To you, we say “ARIGATO GOZAIMAS”!

Ladies and gentlemen, special mention must be made of our Programming Officers, Professor Harada and Professor Tada, who did not just work with the “letters” but also, with the “spirit” of the training programme. You helped us to take the first steps that have led to the immense success of this programme. Never tired to attend to the minutest issues concerning us. Professor Harada and Professor Tada, we thank you.

Professors Izumi and Yanaka, you were always at hand with your wise and caring attention. Thank you. Professor Sakonji and Ms Lord, we thank you.

Tani San, who went about her duties with brisk precision and gentleness. Thank you.

We wish to thank our professional photographers. Thank you for the so many cameras you had to handle at the same time.

Distinguished guests, permit me to mention our dear coordinator, Shimoda San for her patience and kindness which made us felt at home. A challenge whispered to her, was a problem

solved. When we went out on activities, Shimoda San together with Sasabe San or Tashima San would take a roll call thus: Aweh San... Thalib San...Katala San...Sumitomo San...and everybody would join in chorusing the names, but they would not stop until they were sure everybody was in the vehicle. Thank you Shimoda San, thank you

Because of the calibre of guests here tonight, it would be impolite to make long speeches, I am to make just a remark. Therefore do not feel less appreciated if your name is not particularly mentioned. We acknowledge and appreciate the kindness shown by all staff of UNAFEI. They made us felt special and loved. When we took trips out, they sent us like we were never coming back and yet received us back at the entrance with big smiles and a warm welcome no matter how late the time was. The Secretariat, Secretarial Staff, General and Financial Affairs, Training and Hostel Management Affairs, International Research Affairs, Interpreters and Catering Staff have done a wonderful job demonstrating the depth of Japanese hospitality. “ARIGATO GOZAIMAS” for the great selfless job done by each of you.

Permit me at this juncture to appreciate our Japanese colleagues with whom we have shared experiences these past four weeks. Each one of you is a wonderful caring person and we have cherished and enjoyed every moment spent with you. Thank you very much, friends, for all you have done.

Ladies and gentlemen, today, we stand between two moods; one, of joy and excitement, the other, of sadness. Joy and excitement because we have acquired so much knowledge on the best practices in combating corruption which is now a global concern. We can hardly wait to return to our respective countries to begin to lay the foundations that will bring transformations to our societies. On the other hand sad because the memorable days we have spent in UNAFEI as a

family have come to an end. However, we would like to make a commitment that the tolerance, respect, cooperation and friendship that we have shared for the past four weeks will not end here. The Laughter and happiness we shared will remain in our hearts forever. As we know, corruption is an offence without borders. Therefore, we need to strengthen our ties, cooperation, share information and broaden our knowledge to meet the future challenges we will face. The fight against corruption is definitely not an easy one, but with commitment, determination and collaboration, near zero level corruption can be achieved in our societies!

Let's stay in touch and remain friends for the rest of our LIVES!

Thank you very much!