

UNAFEI

153rd International Senior Seminar

Closing Ceremony 7th February 2013

Farewell speech by SSP Olivia L.A Onyango- Israel

From Kenya

Honorable members of the Diplomatic Corps,

Mr. Tatsuya Sakuma; Director of UNAFEI,

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

Faculty and staff of UNAFEI,

JICA staff members,

Distinguished guests,

Fellow seminar participants,

Ladies and gentlemen,

To be asked to make a farewell speech following such a wonderful and exciting seminar is not only exceptionally humbling but highly challenging. The first challenge is deciding whom to thank profusely, yet every single individual, every single department and all the organizations involved in this seminar performed far beyond our wildest expectations.

Secondly, speaking on behalf of over twenty-two (22) participants drawn from different countries, with diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds, calls for the use of the best adjectives to express the shared feelings.

The above notwithstanding, allow me, on behalf of my fellow seminar participants, to express our deepest and most profound gratitude to the government of Japan, JICA, UNAFEI, ACPF and all the people and organizations who have made our experience in this 153rd International Senior seminar a wonderful and quite enriching one.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Our seminar involved over twenty-two (22) participants from different countries and professional backgrounds ranging from the justice departments, the police, human rights organizations, correctional institutions to probation and aftercare services. The seminar theme of the "Treatment of Female Offenders" across the criminal justice system was explored in-depth through lectures, individual presentations, visiting experts, ad hoc lectures, group activities, plenary sessions, observations and visits.

By the end of the Seminar we were equipped with better lenses, having deciphered the topic within the leitmotifs of the Bangkok Rules and the acceptable best practices round the globe.

In light of the foregoing, ladies and gentlemen, we discussed the corpus of best international practices and developed joint strategies for future handling of the same in our respective countries. Further, through the seminar we have now established a strong international network determined to implement and share the lessons learned in our respective countries.

In a nutshell, the seminar, in our very sincere opinion, achieved its core objectives, that is sharing experiences, exploring challenges, adopting the best-practices approach and setting up a strong network to further the very ideals and principles of these lessons learned around the world.

These objectives, ladies and gentlemen, would not have been possible were it not for the meticulous work done by the excellent team of professionals led by the humble Director, Mr. Tatsuya Sakuma. We keenly observed your credible coordination, your spirited and serene leadership style; you were always present with us, not only during the seminar but sometimes at Lounge B. Your leadership style is worth emulating!! Congratulations, Director.

Of special mention, ladies and gentlemen, our hats go off to the following:

HRH Princess Bajrakitiyabha of Thailand for her very articulate and informative keynote address on the Bangkok Rules. Later we were treated to a sumptuous dinner supported by the government of Thailand which left many of the

participants, like Oliver Twist, yearning for more — this time because it was so good;

Dr. Patricia Van Voorhis from the University of Cincinnati, an expert on the treatment of female offenders in the USA;

Ms. Piera Barzano from the UNODC's Vienna office offering the valuable information on implementation of the Bangkok Rules;

Dr. Nathee Chitsawang, the Deputy Director of the Thailand Institute of Justice, offering Thai perspectives on the treatment of female offenders;

Programming officer, Professor Akiko Tashiro, Deputy Programming officer, Professor Koji Yoshimura and your very able and patient Assistant Shinichi Yamamoto, your efforts and organizational skills which ensured the success of this seminar have not gone unnoticed.

Our indefatigable JICA Coordinator, Miki Yamamoto-san, you have the patience of a saint; your high sense of humor came in just at the right time to make the difference. All the professors, support staff, individuals and organizations who contributed towards the success of the 153rd UNAFEI International Senior seminar
KUDOS to you all!!

Our sincere, special gratitude goes to the Japanese participants, without whom our lives would have been rather difficult. However, everyday has been extremely interesting through spontaneous interaction, weekend tours and going an extra mile to give us explanations on all we cared to enquire about, assisting us while shopping, ordering meals, (ooh!) taking numerous memorable scenic photos of the beautiful land of Japan, you were all smiles with excellent attitudes towards us. And-----

Just when we were about to start feeling home sick, you came up with brilliant idea of the Table Tennis Tournament — even the Director participated! Although medals were won, most important was the great time we had together. Always remember you have to widen your horizon of friends across the globe, all of you were wonderful! For us it was

Watashitachi-wa

Minasama ni Aete Hontohni Yokatta-desu!!

Ladies and gentlemen,

This address would be incomplete without reserving special mention and the expression of our very sincere gratitude to the JICA officials and staff for their hospitality, courteous care, orientation of the participants and corresponding lectures about the Japanese way of life. Everything moves with mechanical

precision, and this enabled us to acclimatize quickly and to go through the seminar with ease.

On arrival at UNAFEI the whole team led by none other than the Director himself braved the freezing winter and made a beeline to receive us the Japanese way. If we thought this was just a one-off event, then we were in for a very rude shock, discovering in all our trips that this was the norm and not the exception. Truly, we have learned from the Japanese the value of not shedding the gowns of ancestry for rags of modernity and the society.

Ladies and gentlemen,

The many study trips, the institutional visits, the sports tournaments, the dancing parties, the Hiroshima experience and the visits to the Temples, the snow experience — all served to underscore one historical quote: “*Veni vidi vici*”. But in our case we came, we saw and we became transformed and inspired to serve the world!

GOD BLESS YOU ALL

ARIGATO GOZAIMASU!!

Olivia L.A.Onyango-Israel