

UNAFEI 162nd CLOSING SPEECH

Your Excellencies,

Mr. HOSHI Hirofumi, Deputy Director-General of the Tokyo International Center of JICA

Mr. YAMASHITA Terutoshi, 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 was an amazing journey. For approximately thirty days we live in a period of great learning. I'm sure we will return home as better professionals, but also as better human beings.

Discussing multi-agency cooperation on community-based treatment of offenders through various academic activities and practical experiences was certainly the most efficient method of learning. We were able to learn through lectures, visits to various public institutions where we've always been very well received, the wonderful study trip to Hokkaido and also social activities, when we were able to experience and admire Japanese culture.

We are grateful to the Japanese Government, JICA and UNAFEI for such an invaluable opportunity. We are 21 participants from 11 different countries, including Japan. It was a great honor to represent our country and we tried our best, leaving a little of us in Japan and in other countries, through the great exchange of experiences and friendships built.

During the 162nd UNAFEI International Senior Seminar, the activities were planned and executed with perfection or very close to it. But not only that, we were able to feel the affection employed in the planning and realization of this seminar. Without a shadow of a doubt, we felt very welcome at all times. Thanks to the whole team at UNAFEI we felt at home. Home always from home.

Again, the feeling now is gratitude.

To Director YAMASHITA and Deputy Director MORINAGA WHO despite their busy schedules, have been with us whenever possible. In addition from great professionals, we discovered their skills in table tennis, singing Karaoke and playing the guitar. These men are people with a great level of ability and intelligence.

Also, a special thanks to our JICA and UNAFEI coordinators who have done an excellent job, have had patience with our mistakes and even took care of our health, when necessary. To all professors who have guided us since before our arrival in Japan. The entire staff of UNAFEI took great care of us, from the administrative staff to the chef and kitchen team as well as the nice ladies that cleaned our rooms. In particular, I would like to mention Mr. Ozawa, as a representative of the whole staff. Thank you very much.

We felt special being received by high authorities of the Japanese justice system, such as the Minister of Justice, a Justice of the Supreme Court and the Superintending Prosecutor in Hokkaido, among others. The social gatherings and receptions with the Vice-Minister of Justice, the UNAFEI Alumni, the Asia Crime Prevention Foundation members and others were also special moments.

Many things impressed us in the Japanese criminal justice system, such as its structure, organization and efficiency. Offenders pay for the crimes that they have committed, but are also treated as human beings who deserve a chance to be reintegrated into the community.

But within that system, surely we can highlight the work of the Volunteers Probation Officers. We had the opportunity to know them personally, including being received in their homes for a gracious lunch. They are people who perform this work because they want a better society, even having to make personal sacrifices to do so. Because of people like them, we can still believe in a better world.

We will take with us special memories; the emotion we felt upon our warm welcome at UNAFEI will be even stronger at the moment of our last goodbyes. These emotions are what is most beautiful in life.

We hope to receive you so well in our countries in a near future.

Japan, the Japanese people and the Unafei will be forever in our hearts.

Thank you very much!

Arigato Gozaimashita!

Thiago Ferreira de Oliveira