

The 180th International Senior Seminar
“Promoting Legal Aid for Offenders and Victims”

1. Duration and Participants

- From 13 January to 6 February 2023
- 22 overseas participants from 16 countries
- 3 participants from Japan

2. Seminar Overview

This seminar focused on promoting legal aid for offenders and victims. The participants made presentations about legal aid for offenders and/or victims in their respective countries. Through presentations and lectures, the participants learned from the participating countries’ experiences, practices and strategies with respect to legal aid for offenders and victims, with reference to recent international trends. In addition to enhancing their knowledge of effective measures, the participants established a global network for the exchange of updated information on the practices of the participating countries.

3. Contents of the Seminar

(1) Lecturers

The following experts from overseas and Japanese experts, as well as UNAFEI faculty members, gave lectures as follows:

- Experts from overseas
 - Mr. Vincent Cheng Yang (Online)
Senior Associate
International Centre for Criminal Law Reform and Criminal Justice Policy
(ICCLR, Vancouver, Canada)
Title of lecture: Criminal Legal Aid in Canada
 - Ms. Anika Holterhof (Online)
Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Officer & Focal Point for Legal Aid
Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Section, Division for Treaty Affairs
United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC, Vienna, Austria)
Title of lecture: Enhancing Access to Legal Aid in Criminal Justice Systems

(Joint lecture with Ms. Sonya Rahaman)

- Ms. Sonya Rahaman (Online)
Legal Consultant, the Access to Justice Team, Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Section, Division for Treaty Affairs, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC, Vienna, Austria)
Title of lecture: UNODC Technical Assistance on Access to Legal Aid for Suspects, Prisoners and Victims and Witnesses of Crime (Joint lecture with Ms. Anika Holterhof)

- Japanese Experts
 - Ms. KAMITANI Sakura
Lawyer
Sakura-Mirai Law Firm
Title of lecture: Support for Victims of Crime by a private practice lawyer in Japan

 - Ms. TOMITA Satoko
Head, International Affairs Office (Lawyer)
Japan Legal Support Center
Title of lecture: Legal Aid in Criminal Justice System in Japan

 - Mr. MUTOU Issei
Deputy Director, Crime Victim Support Office
National Police Agency
Title of lecture: Crime Victim Support Provided by the Police

 - Mr. HASEGAWA Kaoru
Head of the Crime Victim Support Office (Public Prosecutor)
Tokyo District Public Prosecutors Office
Title of lecture: Efforts of the Crime Victim Support Office of the Tokyo District Public Prosecutors Office

(2) Individual Presentations

All participants made presentations on the systems, practices, and challenges related to legal aid in their respective countries. In response to each presentation, many questions were asked by participants and a lively Q&A session took place. Participants

showed a strong interest in the systems, practices, and challenges of other countries.

(3) Group Workshops

Participants were divided into four groups, and discussions were held in each group on how to promote legal aid for offenders and/or victims. Each group decided whether it would discuss both forms of legal aid or just one. One group discussed legal aid for offenders, two groups discussed legal aid for victims, and another group discussed both.

In the discussions, the participants shared the systems and practices of their respective countries, identified challenges facing the promotion of legal aid based on the knowledge gained through the individual presentations and lectures, and discussed specific solutions to resolve those challenges. Participants were very serious and enthusiastic, so very active and constructive discussions were held. The good relationships that had been established before the discussions also contributed them.

Each group made presentations on the results of the discussion. In response to each presentation, participants in other groups asked many questions and a lively Q&A session was held.

4. Feedback from the Participants

Most participants made positive comments. They said that individual presentations, lectures, and group workshops were very helpful. In addition, some participants said that they were surprised at the discipline of the Japanese people, based on what they had seen and heard inside and outside the seminar.

5. Comments from the Programming Officer

Legal aid for offenders has long been one of the themes of great concern in many countries. On the other hand, legal aid for victims is a new area compared to legal aid for offenders. Therefore, when I prepared this seminar, I felt a little anxious about whether the participants would be interested in legal aid for victims. However, legal aid for victims was also of very high interest to participants, and active Q&A and discussions were conducted in terms of both forms of legal aid.

I learned a lot from the participants, including the systems, practices, and challenges related to legal aid in the participating countries. In addition, I was deeply impressed by the seriousness and enthusiasm of participants. I hope that the knowledge gained in this seminar will contribute to the development of the systems and practices in their respective countries.

UNAFEI's in-person training courses were suspended due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

However, this seminar was held in person, following the 24th UNCAC Training Programme that was held in November last year. I felt that face-to-face communication made it easier to actively exchange opinions and to build a good personal network among participants, and increased the quality of the seminar. I strongly hope that the personal network that was established during this seminar will continue for a long time to come.