

UNAFEI CONNECTION: THE IMPACT OF INTERNATIONAL TRAINING COURSES AND SEMINARS ON THE PROMOTION OF RULE OF LAW IN PARTICIPATING COUNTRIES

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I. INTRODUCTION

My first brush with UNAFEI happened more than twenty-six (26) years ago, in September of 1991, when I was sent to its 89th International Training Course with the theme “Effective and Innovative Counter-Measures Against Economic Crimes”. Since then, I have been invited to UNAFEI’s International Seminars as a visiting expert on various subject matters on criminal justice. These subject matters included among others: transnational organized crimes, firearms regulation, human trafficking, whistle-blower security and protection, and criminal trials. My humble contributions to UNAFEI in the form of at least seven (7) presentation papers now form part of its published resource materials.¹

In those twenty-six (26) years, I have certainly gained a great wealth of information and experience that have molded me into a more aware, concerned and passionate justice worker not only for my home country, the Philippines, but for the community of nations as a whole. I should say that UNAFEI played a big role in molding me into what I am now and for whatever I have contributed to my country, and to some extent, to the international community.

II. THE UNAFEI ALUMNI NETWORK

The 89th International Training Course I attended in 1991 was conducted for a good 13 weeks—from September 17 up to December 7. We were 28 in our class, consisting of 13 Japanese and 15 foreigners. In those more than two months of being together almost every day—from the classrooms, to the locations of our study tours, up to the living quarters—we undoubtedly became very close to each other. The exchange of ideas, local experiences and insights, both inside and outside the discussion rooms, were shared among the class. Those almost three months of my career spent at a UNAFEI training course must have been one of the most enriching learning experiences I have ever had in my professional life.

I can probably claim that our class during the 89th International Training Course in 1991 may be one of the closely-knit classes of UNAFEI. This is because two years ago, we celebrated our silver or 25th anniversary through a reunion of sorts that was held here in Japan on April 16, 2016. The reunion was very cordial, and besides having fun looking back at our times in UNAFEI Class, we shared our meaningful experiences since our first meeting twenty-five years ago, especially as they relate to our respective roles in our countries’ criminal justice systems.

One of the many benefits of being a UNAFEI alumnus is being in the loop of all its activities, trainings and

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¹ (1) “Extradition and Legal Assistance: The Philippine Experience”, Resource Material Series No. 57, 114th International Seminar, January 23, 2000 to February 10, 2000; (2) “The Current Situation of and Countermeasures Against Transnational Organized Crime in the Republic of the Philippines”, Resource Material Series No. 59, 119th International Training Course, September 10, 2001 to November 2, 2001; (3) “International Cooperation in Combating Trafficking in Human Beings and Smuggling of Migrants”, Resource Material Series No. 62, 122nd International Training Course, September 30, 2002 to October 11, 2002; (4) “The Philippine Experience in the –Investigation and Prosecution of Trafficking in Persons and Smuggling of Migrants, with Special Focus on Punishing the Traffickers”, Resource Material Series No. 73, 134th International Training Course, September 18, 2006 to October 6, 2006; (5) “Securing Protection and Cooperation of Witnesses and Whistle Blowers”, Resource Material Series No. 86 for the 149th International Training Course, September 5 to 14, 2011; (6) “Building a Criminal Case in the Philippines: Problems, Insights and Proposals” and (7) “Justice Delayed is Justice Denied: Ensuring Efficient and Speedy Criminal Trials in the Philippines”, Resource Material Series No. 95, 158th International Training Course, September 10 to 17, 2014.

seminars. Hence, from the time I became an alumnus, I have always received information about upcoming UNAFEI activities. On several instances, I was extended the privilege of nominating participants to its international trainings and seminars. Therefore, knowing the considerable amount of knowledge, experience and advantage that could be gained from UNAFEI's trainings and seminars, I readily endorsed the attendance to these learning activities of colleagues and some junior prosecutors in our office who I knew had the potential to make an impact in our institution after the training course or seminar. As of date, I would estimate having successfully nominated more or less ten (10) prosecutors to these trainings over the last twenty or so years.

So far, I have not had any regrets in the nominations I have made. Most, if not all of these prosecutors from our office who had the privilege to participate in the international training programs and seminars of UNAFEI are now successful justice workers in the Philippines – some of them are now chief of our local or field prosecution offices who are doing very well in their respective posts, another one spearheads the Philippine's efforts in addressing human trafficking issues as head of our anti-trafficking secretariat, while some had become upstanding members of our judiciary as trial court judges and appellate justices. I have no doubt therefore, that the rich experience they gained from attending UNAFEI's courses has helped and continue to guide them in their individual work as stakeholders in our criminal justice system.

A. The Asia Crime Prevention Foundation (ACPF)

For my part, the UNAFEI alumni network paved the way to my membership in the Asia Crime Prevention Foundation (ACPF). The ACPF is a non-governmental organization founded and based in Japan which provides support to UNAFEI activities and helps enhance international cooperation. It lives by its slogan, "Prosperity Without Crime". As an organization, ACPF believes that while it is impossible to have a completely crime-free society, this aspiration may be put into action by contributing to the activities of the United Nations in the field of crime prevention and criminal justice. Although based in Japan, ACPF is active worldwide through its cooperating organizations in several countries, and the UNAFEI alumni network becomes its gateway to these countries. In the Philippines, for example, ACPF's local counterpart is the Crime Prevention Practitioners' Association of the Philippines, or CPPAP, which is mainly composed of Filipino UNAFEI alumni.

ACPF provides added value to and further enriches, the international trainings and seminars at UNAFEI by locally exposing participants to criminal justice offices in Japan and initiating cultural interactions.

B. Philippines-Japan Halfway House

My membership in the ACPF is especially highlighted by my having met and associated with the then eminent Mr. Minoru Shikita, ACPF's former Chairman. For those who have not heard about him, Mr. Shikita was a former prosecutor of Japan who was instrumental in the founding of the International Association of Prosecutors (IAP) in 1995. His strong advocacy for international cooperation among public prosecutors started when he was the Chairman of the United Nations Committee on Crime Prevention and Control in Vienna, Austria, from 1987 to 1989, and at the same time the Head of the Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Branch of the United Nations Office in Vienna. As you may read further about the history of IAP, Mr. Shikita eventually became its first Vice-President and played a very important role in strengthening cooperation and support among prosecutors throughout the world.

Mr. Shikita was a driving force by himself. His presence and wisdom were a fount of inspiration to people around him. I, for one, am a testament to his powerful influence to take initiatives particularly in the field of criminal justice improvement and reform.

In one conference in 1996, Mr. Shikita casually asked me if I would be interested in putting up a halfway house for prisoners in the Philippines, which would provide programs and opportunities that will help them adjust to family and community life once they are released from prison. Knowing that we do not have such kind of facility in our national penitentiary, I immediately said yes. Thus, he asked me to formalize a request for assistance from ACPF regarding the putting up of a halfway house in the Philippines. I did not lose time. I requested my wife, who was a physician by profession, and who joined me then in Japan for the conference, to put together a concept note about the project while I was delivering my lecture. Before leaving the conference, we handed the document to Mr. Shikita.

It did not take time for Mr. Shikita to succeed in soliciting the help of one of ACPF's supporters – the Nagoya West Lion's Club of Japan – to finance the construction of the halfway house. In November 1996, with the seed donation of eight million pesos from the Nagoya West Lion's Club of Japan, the Philippines-Japan Halfway House was constructed inside the National Bilibid Prison Reservation Compound in Muntinlupa City, Philippines. A few months thereafter, the center was turned over to the Department of Justice and the CPPAP.

For two decades now, the Philippines-Nagoya Japan Halfway House has served as a temporary home for both pre-release and released prisoners where they receive support for their physical, social, spiritual, and economic growth. Its programs prepare its clientele of reformed prisoners to be reintegrated into society through counseling, skills trainings and job placement.

Three kinds of clientele avail themselves of the services of this Halfway House, namely: (1) live-in clients, meaning those who have been released by the Bureau of Corrections but are homeless or have encountered hardships, and those who are expected to be released within a period of four to six months; (2) live-out clients, or probationers who are interested and willing to avail themselves of its services, as well as new parolees and pardonees; and (3) minimum security inmates, or prisoners who are still serving sentences at the Minimum Security Compound of the National Penitentiary.

In summary, the following programs and services are given to Halfway House clients:

1. Casework and Counseling Services

This is the intensive process of working with pre-release or released offenders from the time of admission up to the completion of their rehabilitation program, to include information, options, individual counseling, social services, referrals, support and opportunities to enable them to reintegrate to society.

2. Productivity Training

Skills training and vocational education are provided as a major component of the project. These aim to develop positive work habits and attitudes, and for the clients to acquire basic skills in preparation for employment.

C. Medical/Health Services

This entails the referral of the clients to government as well as private agencies that provide medical and dental services.

D. Homelife Service

Another component of the project is the provision of a well-balanced, organized and non-formal program of activities that approximate homelife. Through this service, team leaders chosen by the clients from among themselves implement these activities under the supervision of the Halfway House's Housekeeping Counselor or a hired Center Coordinator. All activities are geared towards providing therapeutic intent and impact on the clients, including the provision of food and clothing, religious and social activities, and work assignments.

E. Placement Service

Finally, assistance is provided to the clients for possible job placement or referral to entities who are willing to give employment.

To date, the Philippines-Nagoya Japan Halfway House has provided services to more than 600 clients since its establishment in 1996. The ACPF continues to send its support to the Halfway House annually, which support is complemented by the assistance from various non-governmental organizations in the Philippines, like the Muntinlupa City Lions Club, Makati Golden Lions Club, Makati Gems Lions Club, and the Rotary International, Dasmariñas, Cavite Chapter.

As I speak, the Philippines-Nagoya Japan Halfway House continues to help reform criminal offenders and turn them into responsible, peaceful and productive members of our society. This is one important legacy that I am proud to have contributed to the cause of the rule of law, and it is one that I could not have done without my UNAFEI and ACPF connections.

III. ACTUAL CASES OF MUTUAL LEGAL ASSISTANCE

UNAFEI was not only established to be a hub for learning in this part of the globe. It was also envisioned to be an institution that will promote mutual cooperation among members of the United Nations, especially among developing countries in the Asia and the Pacific region. In the case of the Philippines and Japan, for instance, these countries have yet to have an extradition or mutual legal assistance treaty. However, the absence of this formal agreement has not prevented us, the Philippines, from lending our needed cooperation on matters that involve enforcement of the law in Japan. I, for one, can attest to several instances in the past where I, in my official capacity as an official of the Department of Justice, rendered assistance to the government of Japan in some investigations being conducted here, but where witnesses and some other forms of evidence were in the Philippines and must be secured in order to help in the investigation. And perhaps because I had been a constant visitor of the Japanese embassy in Manila, and our office knows me to be somehow associated with Japanese matters—like UNAFEI—these requests from the government of Japan were usually referred to me for appropriate action. I have previously discussed these instances in one of my lectures here in UNAFEI, but allow me to mention them again today.

A. The Kosumi Yoshimi Case

The first time I was directed to intervene in connection with a request for assistance from the government of Japan was on March 25, 1996, when I received a formal directive from our then Secretary of Justice to assist Japanese prosecutors in conducting an interview of a person in connection with a case that was being prosecuted in Nagoya, Japan. The person to be interviewed — Joemarie Baldomero Chua — was to be found in a Southern province of the Philippines.

It appeared that the person that we were supposed to interview, Joemarie Baldomero Chua, was involved in the killing of Kosumi Shozaburo, the father of Kosumi Yoshimi, one of Chua's three cohorts, along with two other Philippine nationals, namely Pablito Franco Barlis and William Gallardo Bueno. The incident happened on January 18, 1993 in Nagoya-shi, Japan.

Records of the case disclose that Kosumi Yoshimi, Joemarie Baldomero Chua, Pablito Francis Barlis and William Gallardo Bueno, helped each other knock down the victim — Kosumi Shozaburo — on his back, pushed bedding against his face, tightened an electrical cord around his neck and stabbed him in the neck with a sharp blade, which therefore caused Shozaburo to die from excessive bleeding. But that was not all, the four cohorts also sprinkled kerosene coming from the heater in the living room and into the bedding and ignited them with a lighter that one of them was carrying. Then, they allowed the fire to spread through a Japanese foot warmer (*kotatsu*) onto the house, causing the entire house to burn down.

Kosumi Yoshimi, Pablito Franco Barlis and William Gallardo Bueno were charged for murder under Article 199 of the Penal Code of Japan, as well as for arson of an inhabited structure under Article 1087 of the same Penal Code. Joemarie Baldomero Chua, was also charged as an accomplice to those crimes but had fled to the Philippines and settled in a sleepy town in the southern part of the country. Japanese police, with the help of our Philippine National Police and the International Criminal Police Organization (ICPO), had previously interrogated Joemarie Baldomero Chua in February of 1994, and succeeded to get his version of the incident. However, during the course of the trial proceedings of the case in Japan, Joemarie Baldomero Chua's account conflicted on the following crucial matters with that of his cohort, William Gallardo Bueno, namely:

1. The time when the conspiracy to commit murder and arson was formed;
2. The details of the conspiracy;
3. The person or persons among the three (3) Filipino accomplices who actually murdered Shozaburo by winding and tightening an electrical cord around his neck and by stabbing him in the neck with a sharp blade; and
4. The person who sprinkled kerosene from a heater to set fire to the house.

The discrepancies in Joemarie Baldomero Chua's and William Gallardo Bueno's narration of events, specifically as regards the details of the actual execution of the crime, the particulars and circumstances of the conspiracy to commit the murder and arson, as well as the matters as regard the reward, made it difficult for Japanese authorities to determine the truth about the incident. Thus, Japanese prosecutors deemed it

necessary that a prosecutor in the Philippines again interrogate Joemarie Baldomero Chua in their presence, in order to clarify the discrepancies.

The day after I received the directives from the Secretary of Justice, I, together with the Japanese prosecutors, immediately flew to Iloilo City in the Southern Philippines. I personally conducted the questioning on Joemarie Baldomero Chua in the presence of his counsel, a lawyer from the Philippine Public Attorneys' Office, and the Japanese public prosecutors. During the interview, I was able to clarify the matters which the Japanese authorities believed were crucial in trying to prove the culpability of Kosumi Yoshimi and his two (2) Filipino cohorts. Aside from cooperating in the interview or questioning, Joemarie Baldomero Chua also executed a written sworn statement, which the Japanese prosecutors brought with them back to Japan.

At the conclusion of the trial proceedings in their cases, all three (3) accused were found guilty for the murder of Kosumi Shozaburo and the burning down of his house. Kosumi Yoshimi was sentenced to life imprisonment, while Pablito Franco Barlis was sentenced to thirteen (13) years' imprisonment with labour, and William Gallardo Bueno was sentenced to fifteen (15) years of imprisonment with labour. When I wrote my paper in 2001, both judgments in the cases of Pablito Franco Barlis and of William Gallardo Bueno had become final, while that in the case of the principal accused, Kosumi Yoshimi, was pending appeal before the Supreme Court of Japan.

B. The Akira Fujita Case

On October 8, 1997, an official of the Japanese Embassy in Manila requested my assistance for the immediate arrest of Akira Fujita, a Japanese national who has been convicted and sentenced in Japan in 1990 for conspiring with a Yamaguchi-gumi (Yakuza) member, Hironori Takenouchi, in smuggling handguns and ammunition to Japan. Japanese authorities had information that Akira Fujita departed Japan on October 7, 1997 on board a Pakistan Airlines flight bound for Manila.

Without wasting time, I got in touch with the Chief of the Intelligence Division of our Bureau of Immigration and gave them the information relayed to me by the Japanese Embassy official about Akira Fujita. Barely a day after I received the request for assistance, or on October 9, 1997, Akira Fujita was arrested by Philippine immigration agents. One week thereafter, Akira Fujita was deported back to Japan.

C. The Case of Chow On Park alias Haruhiko Arai

On November 28, 1997, Ho Ji Chong alias Hiroshi Matsuda shot and killed Haruo Nishikawa in Kadomashi, Osaka. Thereafter, his cohort, Chow On Park alias Haruhiko Arai placed the dead body of the victim into the trunk of his own vehicle and drove the car to the parking lot of Hoshigaoka Kosei Nenkin Hospital located in Hirakata-shi, Osaka, and left it there. For having done that, Chow On Park received from Ho Ji Chong alias Hiroshi Matsuda on the same day a cash reward of around 30 million Japanese yen.

After receiving the reward, Chow On Park instructed his wife, Marucilla Park Ruby Cristina alias Ruby Arai, to go to the Philippines and bring along with her the 30 million yen reward for abandoning the corpse of Haruo Nishikawa. While in the Philippines, Ruby Arai asked her cousin, Marilou Bernardo, to keep the money in two separate safe-deposit boxes in Philippine banks, namely: 5.48 million yen at Westmont Bank, and 19 million at China Banking Corporation, or a total of 24.48 million yen.

In the meantime, Chow On Park was prosecuted in Japan for violation of Articles 60 and 190 of the Penal Code of Japan, for abandonment of a corpse. In connection with the prosecution of this case, Japanese prosecutors needed to seize and confiscate the reward for the criminal act. Thus, they had to go to the Philippines to recover the money.

In September 1998, Mr. Hideo Iida, the Chief Public Prosecutor of the Osaka Public Prosecutors' Office requested the Philippine government for assistance in connection with the criminal cases against Chow On Park, specifically for the recovery of the reward money kept by his wife in two Philippine banks. At the same time, two Japanese prosecutors were dispatched to the Philippines to attend to this matter.

The Japanese prosecutor's request was referred to me for action. Accordingly, I sought the assistance of our law enforcement offices in the Philippines to locate Chow On Park's wife, and we succeeded. Modesty

aside, we did not only succeed in locating Ruby Arai, but I also persuaded her to turn-over the money she kept in the banks with the help of her cousin. I personally received these moneys in the total amount of 24.48 million Japanese yen and delivered them to the Philippine Department of Foreign Affairs, which in turn transmitted them to the Japanese Embassy in the Philippines. The money was finally used in connection with the pending criminal proceedings in Osaka against Chow On Park, who was eventually convicted and sentenced to suffer imprisonment for the crimes he has committed.

D. The Akihito Ishiyama Case

Sometime in March of 1999, our office received another request for assistance from Mr. Norio Ishibe, the Chief Prosecutor of the Akita District Public Prosecutors' Office, in connection with an investigation of Akihito Ishiyama, a former postmaster of the Tokiwa Post Office in Akita, Japan. It appeared that Akihito Ishiyama, being the postmaster, administered the cash at the Tokiwa Post Office as part of his duties and responsibilities. However, in October 1998, Akihito appropriated for his own personal use, cash amounting to more than 32 million yen. When he was investigated, Akihito Ishiyama disclosed that he went to the Philippines bringing along with him cash in the amount of 33 million yen, and that while in the Philippines, he gave portions of this cash to some Filipinos.

Thus, the request of the Japanese government was to locate those Filipinos who supposedly received money from Akihito, to confirm his assertions, and to ascertain how the money he brought to the Philippines was spent. Two prosecutors from the Akita District were dispatched to the Philippines to interview the Filipinos named by Akihito Ishiyama. I personally accompanied these Japanese prosecutors to the place where these persons were found and in my presence, they freely and voluntarily gave their statements to the Japanese prosecutors. Back in Japan, the Japanese prosecutors utilized the sworn statements in connection with the trial proceedings against Akihito Ishiyama. After the trial, Akihito was found guilty of violating Articles 235 and 253 of the Penal Code of Japan and was sentenced to imprisonment with labour of four years and six months.

V. HOW UNAFEI INTERNATIONAL TRAINING COURSES AND SENIOR SEMINARS HAVE CONTRIBUTED TO THE PROMOTION OF THE RULE OF LAW IN PARTICIPATING COUNTRIES

As all of us know, UNAFEI was established in 1961 primarily to serve as a training institute of the United Nations in the Asian region for criminal justice personnel from all over the world, including among others: judges, prosecutors, law enforcement officers, probation and correction officers. The agreement between the United Nations and the government of Japan relative to the establishment of this institute likewise provides that UNAFEI conduct studies and research in the field of crime prevention and the treatment of offenders, especially focusing on preventing juvenile delinquency and treatment of juvenile delinquents.

True to its mission, UNAFEI, has been able to organize hundreds of international training courses and seminars over its past 50 plus years of existence. This multitude of trainings and seminars translates to more than 7,000 criminal justice officials spread across 137 countries worldwide.

These training and seminar participants go back to their respective countries bringing along with them a fresh, rich harvest of ideas and learnings that eventually find their ways into these officials' conduct of their daily work. Most of these UNAFEI alumni take on lead roles in their fields, whether as prosecutors, law enforcers, or probation and corrections officers. They help give shape to their countries' criminal justice machinery and become instrumental in introducing best practices and innovations in the administration of justice and the rule of law.

Among the countries that participate in UNAFEI's training seminars, the Philippines ranks second (to Thailand) in terms of the total number of trainees or seminar attendees sent to UNAFEI. These participants from the Philippines come from diverse backgrounds — law enforcers, prosecutors, jurists or judges, corrections officers — or from the whole spectrum of the criminal justice system, in other words. The Philippines therefore, has been very fortunate for these opportunities given to its justice workers since their individual or separate efforts in their respective fields bear down on the vast landscape of law enforcement, crime prevention, and most importantly, the rule of law in the country.

For instance, one Filipino UNAFEI alumna I interviewed shared with me that her attendance in the training course which focused on the role of the public and victim's participation in having a more fair and effective criminal justice administration, paved the way for our principal law enforcement agency, the Philippine National Police, to develop a community-oriented policing and crime prevention strategy for the country. This program, called 'Community and Service-Oriented Policing System' or CSOP, focuses on transforming police officers into community leaders by shifting their mindsets from a reactive to a more proactive law enforcers in preventing and solving crimes, in ensuring public safety and in strengthening the capability of local government units to deliver basic services. This system now serves as the foundation of community-oriented policing and crime prevention strategy in the Philippines. It therefore contributes to the promotion of the rule of law in the country as it seeks to address one of its important aspects — societal order and security — which is key to the enjoyment of the people's rights and freedoms.

Another fellow UNAFEI alumnus I know, a ranking official in the corrections pillar, believes that the UNAFEI training course he attended immensely helped him in his efforts to strengthen and promote the rule of law through programs that ensure not only the reformation and rehabilitation of prisoners, but also programs that instill in their minds the dire consequences of breaking the law. He also ensures that parole and probation officers efficiently guide former prisoners to become productive and law-abiding citizens who will not repeat their mistakes. During his watch, both the reoffending and revocation rates of parolees and pardonees were very low, while the grant of parole and pardon had been high.

As a major stakeholder in the promotion of the rule of law in the Philippines, the National Prosecution Service has greatly benefited from UNAFEI trainings and seminars. Quite a number of our prosecutors are UNAFEI alumni, and most if not all of them are now in positions where they are capable of implementing programs that help to strengthen the rule of law in the Philippines.

For instance, our prosecutor who heads an inter-agency task force against trafficking in persons in the Philippines, and who had the opportunity to be sent to a UNAFEI seminar, finds that the seminar helped her promote the rule of law by ingraining good networking programs into the task force's strategic national action plan. Using this strategy, the task force conducts national and international events that result in stronger partnerships and better coordination among both government and non-governmental agencies that work together to fight trafficking in persons. The networks that are created through these events strengthen domestic as well as international cooperation in handling local and cross-border trafficking-in-persons cases. She thus believes that these initiatives greatly contribute to the promotion of the rule of law in the Philippines since all key areas on prevention, protection, and prosecution are being addressed. In fact, all these efforts helped the Philippines achieve a Tier "1" rank in the US Global Trafficking in Persons Report in 2016 and 2017.

Another Philippine prosecutor who was a participant in a senior seminar on the prevention, prosecution, victim protection and promotion of international cooperation in trafficking in persons, believes that the UNAFEI seminar itself helped in the promotion of rule of law by enhancing the capacity of the participants to strengthen their respective justice institutions. For her part alone, she became a more impassioned advocate of anti-trafficking efforts in the Philippines, closely monitoring the investigation, and ensuring the successful prosecution, of cases involving trafficking in persons as well as illegal recruitment.

Another sector in the Philippines that has received tremendous benefits from UNAFEI is our Parole and Probation Administration (PPA). Through a partnership with UNAFEI and the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), the PPA has piloted an In-Country Training Program on the holistic approach to the treatment of offenders, with Volunteer Resource Development as its main component. This program empowers the community as a pillar in the justice system to be an integral part of the rehabilitation of offenders and gives it a role in crime prevention through treatment and management of offenders. This program has gained recognition not only in the ASEAN Region, but also in Japan, China and Korea. As a matter of fact, there has been an informal "exchange program" between the Philippine's PPA and UNAFEI, wherein volunteer probation officers from Japan visit the Philippines and together with our volunteer probation assistants, share knowledge and skills in handling non-custodial offenders. This meaningful exchange enriches the experience and broadens the horizons of both Japan's and the Philippine's justice workers.

Aside from the Volunteer Resource Development Program, the Philippine's PPA also implements a "Balanced and Restorative Justice Program", which emphasizes the importance of elevating the role of victims and the community members through more active involvement in the justice process, holding offenders directly accountable to the people they have violated, and providing a range of opportunities for dialogue, negotiations, and problem solving, which can lead to a greater sense of community safety, social harmony and peace for all. The implementation of this Program was enhanced further after the PPA head's attendance in UNAFEI's senior seminar on "The Enhancement of Appropriate Measures for Victims of Crime at Each Stage of the Criminal Justice Process".

VI. HOW PARTICIPANTS IN THE 168TH INTERNATIONAL SENIOR SEMINAR CAN BENEFIT FROM THE PROGRAM

Participants of UNAFEI training programs and seminars reap a great deal of benefits — starting from learning new information and ideas from lecturers, experts and fellow participants, to being exposed to local best practices here in Japan through study visits. From your interactions with fellow training participants, you will learn that there may be different ways of dealing with the same kind of criminal activity, and that there may be various strategies to address the challenges of your country's criminal justice systems. Thus, you have a distinct advantage of being able to 'shop' for new ideas that will help you when you return to your separate jurisdictions.

Best of all, as participants of this international training course, you become a part of a wide and diverse network of professionals throughout the world who carry out the same or similar mandate that you do in your own country. This network will certainly help you down the road, because the borderless nature of criminal activities nowadays entails that law enforcers and justice workers worldwide are inter-connected as well. This must have been one of the challenges of globalization to law enforcement and criminal justice. Take advantage then, of the network that you now have. Continue to be in touch. Compare 'notes', so to speak, for the situations and challenges in your jurisdictions may be the same but may be addressed differently. In other words, go out of your way to sustain the exchanges among yourselves in the months and years to come.

VII. CONCLUSION

UNAFEI training courses and seminars that involve the participation of justice workers of diverse backgrounds, cultures and practices, are not only venues for discourse, learning, exchange and international cooperation. They are in themselves powerful and effective occasions that promote and strengthen the rule of law not only in Asia, but the world over. They not only capacitate participants in the performance of their distinct functions in the justice system, but also inspire and motivate them to become better, if not the best, in their fields.

The rule of law is challenged on many fronts, that is why it is important that stakeholders from its various aspects are gathered together in common venues and occasions, like the ones we have in UNAFEI, in order to foster exchange of ideas and cooperation. The challenging times ahead in terms of crime prevention and solution demand that the international cooperation and exchanges among countries, governments and civil or non-governmental organizations are sustained. For this reason alone, UNAFEI has been a worthwhile undertaking as it is worth keeping.