

**INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION OF THE ASIA CRIME PREVENTION
FOUNDATION (ACPF) AND THE CRIME PREVENTION PRACTITIONERS
ASSOCIATION OF THE PHILIPPINES (CPPAP)
FOR THE ENHANCEMENT OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE**

*Severino H. Gaña, Jr.**

It gives me great pleasure to congratulate the Asia Crime Prevention Foundation (ACPF) Chairman Mikinao Kitada, ACPF Vice Chairman Terutoshi Yamashita, ACPF Programme Management Bureau Director Hiroyuki Yoshida, Members of the ACPF Board of Directors, Staff and Supporters of the ACPF on the occasion of our milestone 40th Anniversary, as well as, to the United Nations Asia and Far East Institute for the Prevention of Crime and Treatment of Offenders (UNAFEI) Director Taro Morinaga, Deputy Director Irie Junko, UNAFEI Professors and Staff on its 60th or Diamond year. My heart is happy with pride for having been a part of UNAFEI and ACPF's productive years in the field of crime prevention and treatment of offenders.

As mentioned in the introduction, I have been a Public Prosecutor of the Department of Justice in the Philippines, for 35 years. During that period, I handled many cases and endeavours, several of which I am very proud of, related to international cooperation for the enhancement of criminal justice, such as:

1. The development of the Philippines-Japan Halfway House in 1996;
2. Activation and Enhancement of Volunteer Probation Aides with the assistance of UNAFEI;
3. The conviction of Kosumi Yoshimi in Japan for murder and arson;
4. The conviction of Chow On Park alias Haruhiko Arai in Japan for Abandonment of a Corpse;
5. The rescue of Filipino women trafficked in Malaysia and the eventual conviction of the accused Singapore National Eugene Beng Hua Lim a.k.a Alfred Lim in Malaysia for Human Trafficking.

Some of you may wonder, "How did I, a humble public prosecutor in the Philippines, contribute to the success of the above-mentioned projects and cases?"

It started about 31 years ago, when I graduated from UNAFEI's 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 Trainings and Seminars, as a visiting expert on various subject matters on Criminal Justice and subsequently at important events of ACPF. My membership and involvement in ACPF as one of its International Directors, is borne out of my association with UNAFEI. The bond goes long and is prolific.

At UNAFEI, I was able to discourse on important subject matters including that of transnational organized crimes, firearm regulation, human trafficking, whistle-blower security and protection, and criminal trials. My humble contributions to UNAFEI in the form of at least (10) presentation papers now form part of its published resource materials.

In those thirty-one (31) years, I have certainly gained a great wealth of information and experience that have moulded 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 moulding me into what I am now and for whatever I have contributed to my country, and to some extent, to the international community.

* Attorney, Manila, Philippines.

I. THE PHILIPPINES-JAPAN HALFWAY HOUSE (PJHH)

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 that led to the creation of the first Halfway House in the Philippines, the Philippines-Japan Halfway House (PJHH) in 1996, which was constructed inside the National Bilibid Prison Reservation Compound in Muntinlupa City, Philippines. Japanese Architect Tadao Ando, a Pritzker Awardee, also donated his services and designed the facility. The PJHH is a cooperative venture between the Philippines and Japan, made possible through the help of the Asia Crime Prevention Foundation (ACPF) –Tokyo. The benevolence of the Asia Crime Prevention Foundation was coursed through its Filipino sister organization the Crime Prevention Practitioners Association of the Philippines (CPPAP).

After the construction of the facility in 1996, the ACPF and the Nagoya West Lions Club continued to donate resources and supported the implementation of programmes in the PJHH. Equipment, a vehicle and tools were acquired. Another 180-square-meter structure was built for the training and workshop and completed in November 2000 with funds provided by Nagoya West Lions Club, where regular training, workshops and vocational courses are being held.

Since 1997, the facility has been able to service 608 clients. Programmes and services include casework and counselling, productivity training, medical and health services, homelife services, skills training and vocational education and therapeutic community modality application modules.

For more than 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, including economic growth. Its programmes prepare its clientele of reformed prisoners to be reintegrated into the society through counselling, skills training and job placement.

II. ACTIVATION AND ENHANCEMENT OF VOLUNTEER PROBATION AIDES WITH THE ASSISTANCE OF UNAFEI

In the Philippines, the treatment of offenders and individuals who are in conflict with the law is undertaken by the government through the Department of Justice (DOJ), the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG), and the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD). Through the Board of Pardons and Parole (BPP) and the Parole and Probation Administration (PPA), the DOJ formulates, implements and monitors programmes and activities for offenders on probation and parole. Enlistment and training of then Volunteer Probation Aides (VPAs) started in 1977, while the PPA was preparing for the operationalization of the national probation programme. Towards 1980, the VPA programme dwindled from around 2,123 VPAs to only 100, due to budgetary limitations in the reimbursement of travelling expenses.

Providentially, Japan, through UNAFEI, came to their rescue. Consistent with its objectives, UNAFEI intensified and enhanced its training programme on the prevention of crimes and treatment of offenders. The Philippine-Japan Joint Seminar on "Enhancing Community Involvement in Crime Prevention" which was held in Manila, in consultation with a visiting professor from UNAFEI, submitted to JICA a proposal on the project "Revitalization of the VPA System in the Philippines". Beginning in 2003, through the technical and financial assistance of UNAFEI, PPA revitalized its VPA system with due consideration of its past experience. Thereafter, UNAFEI through the facilities of JICA-Net, started a series of seminars involving Probation Officers in the Philippines that were further developed in a project called The Holistic Approach in the Treatment and Rehabilitation of Offenders. From then on, several trainings were conducted by UNAFEI and JICA in support of the project which lasted until 2010, benefitting hundreds of participants in the Philippines. The establishment of the local and national level VPA organizations is of vital importance for the effective promotion, utilization and sustainability of the VPA programme. The vision is to have an empowered VPA organization that will eventually be able to function independently and provide for their own needs.

VISITING EXPERTS' PAPERS

This remarkable initiative has revitalized Volunteer Probation Assistance (VPA) in the Philippines which signifies the indispensable role of Japan, with the cooperation of UNAFEI and ACPF, in the development of sustainable treatment of offenders in the Philippines.

III. THE CPPAP

The Crime Prevention Practitioners Association of the Philippines (CPPAP) is a private association established to institutionalize the involvement of the private sector in crime prevention in the Philippines and to act as a conduit for professional, technical and logistical assistance from the Asia Crime Prevention Foundation (ACPF) in Tokyo. It was created upon the invitation of the ACPF-Tokyo to Philippine alumni of UNAFEI in order to establish an ACPF affiliate in the Philippines.

One of the programmes of the CPPAP is the management of the Philippines-Japan Halfway House (PJHH). This programme is jointly being managed by the CPPAP with the Department of Justice through the Bureau of Corrections and the Probation and Parole Administration.

IV. OTHER CPPAP PROJECTS

Aside from the management of the PJHH, the ACPF and CPPAP have branched out to other projects to include providing regular donations to the Correctional Institution for Women (CIW). Through their benevolence, hygiene kits (toiletries), basic medicines and vitamins were provided to senior clients of the CIW. The livelihood products of the CIW are also being sold during the month of March (women's month) in selected private and government offices.

In 2019, the ACPF and CPPAP intensified their partnership by branching out to different activities. On March 22, 2019, twenty-six (26) members of ACPF visited the selected criminal justice agencies to further assess the support they provide to persons deprived of liberty (PDL). It is noteworthy that most members of the delegation were Volunteer Probation Officers (VPOs) in Japan who helped facilitate the rehabilitation of offenders as well as the acceptance of the offender by the community. The group visited the Bureau of Corrections, the National Police Commission, the Parole and Probation Administration and the Correctional Institution for Women.

Currently, CPPAP and ACPF are conducting joint programme enhancement to heighten awareness in crime prevention, crime reporting and enhancing coordination with government authorities. To kick off the project, CPPAP and ACPF started the Crime Prevention Seminar for Japanese Businessmen in the Philippines which was conducted in cooperation with the Japanese Chamber of Commerce and Industry of the Philippines (TJCCIP).

V. THE KYOTO CONGRESS

It is with great honour and pleasure to recount that I was able to participate in the On-Line Ancillary Meeting during the 14th UN Criminal Justice (The Kyoto Congress) held in March 2021. This was made possible through the kind invitation of ACPF and UNAFEI wherein I reported "The Impact of International Training Courses and Seminars in UNAFEI for the Promotion of Rule of Law in Participating Countries".

The said Kyoto Congress adopted a "Declaration on Advancing Crime Prevention, Criminal Justice and the Rule of Law: Towards the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Sections 10 and 12 of the said Declaration, acknowledge the significance of the cooperation of the NGOs to enhance multidisciplinary efforts to prevent and combat crime, as well as through the provision of technical assistance and capacity-building in crime prevention and criminal justice.

Consistent with the 2021 Kyoto Declaration, the CPPAP and ACPF undertake to further enhance its programme by providing and organizing trainings, seminars, workshops and conferences related to advancing crime prevention, criminal justice and the rule of law through the cooperation and coordination between law enforcement and other criminal justice institutions, and other governmental sectors, as well as to support their work, by engaging in and fostering multi-stakeholder partnerships with the private sector, civil society, academia and the scientific community, and with other relevant stakeholders as appropriate.

VI. JICA

One of the biggest and major strategic development partners of the Philippines is the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) whose work in our country spans more than six decades of promoting economic growth, supporting socio-economic development, recovery or economic stability and addressing international challenges including achieving human security. The significance of the partnership is anchored on collaboration and cooperation under shared universal values including freedom, democracy, the rule of law, respect for basic human rights, and a free and open economy. In every challenge and issue faced by the Philippines, "JICA is always there to support and assist us". In fact, during the height of the Covid-19 pandemic, JICA was one of the leading organizations that helped the Philippines through its comprehensive assistance and holistic approach to fight the pandemic. JICA has also provided many opportunities to Filipinos to further their learning and development through trainings or study opportunities in Japan. Its training programme for young leaders benefited some 3,000 Filipinos over the years and, it is noteworthy to mention that JICA has provided support and assistance that paved the way to the attendance of more 330 Filipino participants to UNAFEI's courses. For this, my deepest and heartfelt gratitude to JICA.

VII. ACTUAL APPLICATION OF INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

UNAFEI has not only served as a hub for learning, it has created a formidable network for the promotion of cooperation among members of the United Nations, especially among developing countries in the Asia and 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 capacity as an official of the Department of Justice, rendered assistance to the Government of Japan in some investigations being conducted in Japan but where witnesses and some forms of evidence were in the Philippines and must be secured in order to help in the investigation. Let me cite three (3) actual cross-border cases I personally handled:

A. Kosumi Yoshimi Case

This is a criminal case of a Japanese son who had his father killed for insurance purposes. He conspired with three Filipinos in Japan. The incident happened in Nagoya-shi, Japan. The Japanese son together with the three Filipinos helped each other to kill and burn his father and his house. One Filipino fled to the Philippines. Japanese Prosecutor Hama of Nagoya requested me to interview and take the written statement of the Filipino who fled to the Philippines to clarify some discrepancies, which I did in Prosecutor Hama's presence in the Philippines. At the conclusion of the trial proceedings in their cases, all three accused were found guilty for the murder of the Japanese father and arson for burning his house. The son was sentenced to life imprisonment and the two Filipinos were sentenced for fifteen years with labour.

B. The Case of Chow On Park, alias Haruhiko Arai

This is a case of a Japanese man who shot and killed another Japanese man. His cohort placed the corpse at the back of a vehicle and drove it to a parking lot in Osaka and left it there. For having done that, he was paid 30 million yen. He instructed his Filipina wife to bring the money to the Philippines. She kept the money inside safe deposit boxes in two Philippine banks. The Chief Prosecutor of Osaka requested assistance for the recovery of the money and dispatched two Japanese prosecutors to the Philippines. I sought the assistance

of our law enforcement to locate the Filipina wife and we succeeded. I convinced the wife to return the money, and I personally turned over the money to the Philippine Department of Foreign Affairs to be sent back to Japan. The money was finally used as evidence in connection with the pending criminal proceedings in Osaka, and Haruhiko Arai was eventually convicted and sentenced to suffer imprisonment for the crime of Abandonment of a Corpse that he had committed.

C. The Case of Singapore National Eugene Beng Hua Lim, alias Alfred Lim

On 30 June 2008, Marilyn Bagsit and Marilou Capistrano escaped from Eugene Beng Hua Lim a.k.a Alfred Lim agency office after enduring abuse and maltreatment. They asked the Philippine Embassy in Kuala Lumpur for assistance, and they were referred to the Department of Justice. Being the Chairman of the Human Trafficking Task Force, their case was assigned to me by our Secretary of Justice. I immediately contacted my good friend, whom I met in one of UNAFEI's training courses, then the Head of the Royal Malaysian Police, Police Inspector General Tan Sri Dato Musa Bin Hassan and also an officer of ACPF Malaysia. He acceded to my request for legal assistance, and I brought the two victims of human trafficking to his office in Kuala Lumpur. After hearing the testimonies of the victims, he immediately ordered the arrest of the said suspect. Malaysia's Attorney General's Chambers filed a criminal case against Lim in July 2009.

I personally brought the two victims to Kuala Lumpur during scheduled hearings. The High Court in Kuala Lumpur convicted Eugene Beng Hua Lim a.k.a Alfred Lim on two counts of human trafficking and sentenced him to 3 years of imprisonment for each count. I have also rescued three victims of human trafficking in Labuan, Malaysia, and one victim in Sabah through the cooperation of the Royal Malaysian Police Officials.

Ladies and Gentlemen, UNAFEI training courses and seminars that involve the participation of justice workers of diverse backgrounds, cultures and practices, are not only venues of discourse, learning, information 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 their distinct functions in the justice system but also inspire and motivate them to become better, if not the best, in their fields. The challenging times ahead in terms of crime prevention and solution demand that international cooperation and exchanges among countries, governments and civil or non-governmental organizations are sustained. For this reason alone, UNAFEI, with the support of ACPF, has been as worthwhile an undertaking as it is worth keeping.

VIII. CLOSING STATEMENT

In closing, let me assure you that CPPAP and your friends from the Philippines wish to convey the warmest felicitations and greetings for ACPF's and UNAFEI's anniversary celebrations. You will continue to be our avowed and treasured friends, and we would like to think that this celebration pays homage to the promotion of peace, friendship and good-neighbourhood. This occasion makes us realize that our areas of cooperation are beyond that of trade, commerce and economics. More importantly, we are exploring a long and binding partnership for the promotion of more humane treatment of offenders in both our beloved countries – Japan and the Philippines.

We are particularly appreciative of the continued support extended by the ACPF, particularly ACPF Nagoya, for the operation of the Philippines-Japan Halfway House and all the other projects for the rehabilitation of offenders. In all sincerity, we in the Philippines are so happy that the Japanese people have contributed towards enhancing the quality of life of our less fortunate members of society. We want to assure you that your effort has provided us with so much inspiration. We hope to see more of your kind in this world and pray that warm-hearted people like you have long and fruitful lives.

Lastly, collaboration among nations requires treaties and/or bilateral agreements such as extradition and mutual legal assistance. For those of you who are familiar with foreign relations, you know that these processes are costly and tedious. The institutions such as UNAFEI and JICA, and ACPF, a UN NGO in general consultative status with ECOSOC, are the silent facilitators for forging sustainable relationships

between nations. They are the cornerstones of partnership between countries, a bridge to cross-border relations, and a seed in which international cooperation blossoms.

For this, please accept our sincerest appreciation and thank you for inviting me to celebrate with you. This occasion will remain in my heart along with the treasures of my memories. Let me reiterate our gratitude to ACPF Chairman Mikinao Kitada for showing interest and concern to CPPAP in particular and to the Philippines in general.