

31<sup>st</sup> May 2015

*By Email*

Mr. Amit Acco

Chair, Scholarship Committee

**PAVITHRA NAVARATHNE-RUPASINHA**

**IPBA SCHOLAR REPORT ON THE PARTICIPATION AT THE INTER-PACIFIC BAR ASSOCIATION 25<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL MEETING AND CONFERENCE- HONG KONG 2015**

The 25<sup>th</sup> IPBA Annual Meeting and Conference was an event which sought to achieve multifarious objectives including the enhancement of knowledge of the delegates and affording an opportunity to them network with lawyers from all over the world. I was privileged to have been selected as a scholar to attend the Conference and I wish to extend my heartfelt thanks and gratitude to the scholarship committee headed by Mr. Amit Acco for the opportunity provided.

I must also thank Ms. Rhonda Lundin, Ms. Yukiko Okazaki for the tremendous job done in addressing all the logistical matters and I must specially thank Mr. Huen Wong - Chair, IPBA Hong Kong 2015 Host Committee for personally attending to the visa issues I had.

Commenting generally on the Conference, it was very well planned and balanced in terms of sessions and social events.

As a scholar, my first day of the Conference started with a tour to the High Court of Hong Kong. It was certainly an enlightening experience to observe the court proceedings in a different jurisdiction. The questions which came to my mind having observed the court proceedings were immediately answered by the comprehensive overview of the legal system of Hong Kong provided to us during the visit to the offices of M/s Deacons.

Regarding the sessions, it must be mentioned that the topics for the sessions had been carefully chosen and one could only imagine the amount of work that must have been required to conduct such successful sessions. The speakers were well prepared for the sessions and were also able to deftly answer the questions raised by the participating delegates. I was particularly enthralled by the sessions of the tax committee including the session on “Commissionaire arrangements and Permanent Establishment risks”. The issues discussed at the tax sessions were extremely relevant to me as a lawyer representing a developing country. Generally, the sessions that I attended provided me insights into different aspects of law and it was undoubtedly an illuminating experience. I hope that the presentations made at the sessions will be made available online soon.

Whilst it was quite daunting to act as a panelist in the scholars’ session on “Bar Programmes' and Law Firms' Contribution & Commitment to Young Lawyers' Careers”, the assistance given by my scholar panelists as well as Mr. Acco and Mr. Tatsu Nakayama were very helpful in handling the session well. The session provided me the chance to discuss about the legal system of Sri Lanka and a variety of other legal issues relating to Sri Lanka.

The social events were very well thought out and coordinated and organized in a manner providing excellent opportunities to network and socialize. I got the noticed how all delegates took an extra effort to make us scholars feel welcome and I had very lively discussions with a number of delegates on the legal systems in different parts of the world, legal developments and current legal issues. It must be mentioned that it was an honour to meet Mr. Kunio Hamada, the founding President of the IPBA and to engage in discussions with him.

I wish to thank my fellow scholars and delegates who made my stay in Hong Kong an unforgettable one. I hope that the friendships made at the conference will be lasting ones in addition to being mutually beneficial in our professional careers.

Last but not least, I wish to state that I am willing to assist the IPBA, IPBA Scholarship Committee and the Alumni in every way that I can in the future and that I will spread the word

about the benefits of becoming a member of the IPBA and of attending the conferences to all my colleagues in Sri Lanka.

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