

Report of the 28th IPBA Annual Meeting and Conference Manila, 14-16 March 2018

To start with, I must tell prospect Scholars that the IPBA Annual Conference in Manila was beyond my expectations. An extraordinary experience indeed!

In this report, I will explain details of the conference such as the Committee Sessions, interesting side events that I attended and in general what you can expect from receiving the prestigious accolade of "IPBA Scholar".

When I first heard about the IPBA Conference I thought such events are dedicated to senior lawyers at partnership level, however the Conference in Manila proved me wrong. In fact, the Annual Conference is well attended by both senior and junior lawyers. The Association itself is very welcoming towards young generation; this is why the IPBA Scholarship Programme and the Next Generation Committee are in place.

The theme for this year's conference "Fostering Seamless Cooperation in ASEAN and Beyond" was perfectly established at the heart of committee sessions topics, opening ceremony and all other networking events such as Welcome Reception, Japan Night and of course Gala Dinner. One single aspect that makes the IPBA Annual Conference stand out is the diversity and the appropriate number of delegates; the conference size is right, not too big, not too small. Therefore, I and other Scholars had a great chance to greet and know most of the attendees from different jurisdictions and learn about the legal systems in their countries and areas of practice.

Our first day started with a warm welcome and an introduction by Scholarship Committee Chair, Mr. Jay LeMoine. Thereafter, we together with Ms. Sheryl Bartolome from Manila Host Committee visited the Regional Trial Court in Makati City where we had a unique opportunity to meet with the Executive Judge of the Regional Court who took time out of his busy schedule to discuss with us the legal system and trial proceedings in the Philippines. Then, we were brought to downtown Manila to visit the office of Romulo Mabanta Buenaventura Sayoc & De Los Angeles, one of the largest and most highly regarded law firms in the country. A partner of that firm, also an IPBA member, presented the firm's history and shared practical insights on building a successful law practice. One aspect of the office tour

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that grabbed every Scholar's attention was introducing the firm's first founders, some of whom had passed away, by showing a big painting depicting the founders' group portrait on the wall. It seemed to me a great sign of loyalty. Later in the evening at the IPBA Scholars' Reception, we had the honor to introduce ourselves before the delegates and receive a certificate of appreciation from the IPBA President. It truly was heartwarming to receive many warm congratulations from IPBA members later that night at the Welcome Reception Dinner.

This Conference allows you to tailor your own agenda by choosing sessions of your interest and expertise from a wide range of technical topics that the concurrent committees organise. Being an arbitration enthusiast, I attended the sessions of the Dispute Resolution and Arbitration Committee one of which was on the "The Hague Convention on Choice of Court Agreements". The panel speakers lively discussed whether the Convention is really considered a game changer. I also attended the Arbitration Committee Meeting on the last day in which the Chairs and Committee members brainstormed on next year's events and initiations. I particularly enjoyed the sessions on "Training Junior Lawyers", "Business and Human Rights Due Diligence" and "The Survey of the Rules on Cross Border Legal Practice". All the sessions were conducted in a novel, interactive manner and the speakers were prominent experts on the respective topics who could be easily approached.

As a highlight of the Conference, I was honored to attend a high-level meeting in which the respected IPBA leaders and the President of Iranian Central Bar Association met and discussed avenues for further cooperation. Last but not least, being a Scholar comes with a responsibility; I feel that it is my duty to act as an IPBA ambassador in my jurisdiction and spread the word on benefits of IPBA membership to my colleagues in Iran. Great steps have been taken in this regard, including a report on the IPBA Annual Conference and the meeting of the respected leaders of the two Associations which was recently published in the Iranian Central Bar Association website.

I hope I could provide next Scholars an overview of the fantastic experience I had in Manila. The conference was indeed a success and I highly recommend it. I would like to thank the generous support of the IPBA Scholarship Committee, the well-organised programme by Hosting Committee and IPBA secretariat, especially Ms. Rhonda Lundin for her great pre-conference coordination without whose efforts this would have not been possible.

I very much look forward to 29th IPBA Annual Meeting and Conference in Singapore 2019.