

## REPORT ON 28<sup>th</sup> IPBA ANNUAL MEETING AND CONFERENCE, MANILA

BY

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It was a dream come true when I was offered the scholarship to attend the 28<sup>th</sup> IPBA Annual Meeting and Conference in Manila, Philippines especially after not being selected the previous year.

Upon my arrival at Philippines on March 13<sup>th</sup>, 2018, I was warmly welcomed by members of the IPBA host committee and was escorted to the F1 Hotel where the scholars were housed. Being an early bird to the conference, which was to start on March 14<sup>th</sup>, 2018, I had the good fortune to have an extended interactive session with various fellow IPBA members. Mr. Barunesh Chandra, a senior from my firm, introduced me to Mr. Tatsu Nakayama, a popular and known face amongst the IPBA fraternity. Mr. Nakayama was quick to enter into the shoes of a mentor and throughout the conference provided me anecdotes of his experiences with IPBA.

The IPBA scholars were to assemble prior to the opening ceremony of the conference, for a tour to the regional trial court in the Makati City and visit a law firm. Despite, the regional court not functioning that day, Justice Elmo. M. Almeda and Justice Moreno, very accommodatingly spared time to meet the IPBA scholars and explained to us the functioning of the courts at Philippines. Following the visit to the trial court, we visited a prestigious law firm in Philippines, Romulo Mabanta Buenaventura Sayoc & De Los Angeles. This being my first visit to a foreign law firm, I was thrilled to learn about their work culture. The tour to Makati city was concluded with Ms. Sheryl G. Bartolome hosting the scholars and the tour members of the IPBA Scholarship Committee for lunch.

Soon the scholars were taken to the Shangri La Fort, the venue of the IPBA Annual Meeting and Conference. It was upon arrival at the Shangri La Fort, that I truly fathomed what the IPBA actually was. With the attendance of hundreds of lawyers and delegates from approximately 65 different jurisdictions around the world, I was proud to be a part of the IPBA fraternity. The opening ceremony was one exciting ball of pomp and fanfare, performances by the local performing groups, different buffet points serving different kinds of food and thereafter attended the 2 plenary sessions on the theme “Philippines is open for Business” and “The Business of Corporate Counsels”.

After the grand opening ceremony, Women’s reception was organized by the Women’s Business Lawyers Committee, the theme of which was ‘Beyond the Runway- Revisiting the Indigenous Woman and Culture’ wherein we met Ms. Lenora Luisa Cabili, the founder of the label ‘Filip + Inna’. She shared her struggles, very interesting experiences and her stories related to her colleagues who are a group of indigenous ladies from the remote villages of

Philippines. Later, the IPBA Scholars were facilitated. This led to the most nail biting moment of mine, since the time had come for the IPBA scholars to introduce and address the fellow IPBA members. As a young lawyer, I walked up to the podium to address a robust strength of lawyers. To my surprise, the audience was very appreciative of my speech and I become a popular face amongst the myriad of lawyers.

First day of the conference ended with the welcome reception ‘Kaon na Ta!’, which means ‘let’s eat’ and is term used in Philippines to greet friends and guests during celebrations. Though the day had come to an official end, my speech earned me invites to attend the Japanese and Latin American Night, where I got an informal platform to interact with my fellow IPBA members.

Though the Plenary session had started on the first day itself, the committee sessions commenced on March 15<sup>th</sup>, 2018 and continued till March 16<sup>th</sup>, 2018. Due to paucity of time, multiple committee session were simultaneously conducted. Over the span of these two days, I attended the following sessions.

- ‘Training and Mentoring Junior Lawyers in Legal Profession’, which was conducted by the Legal Development and Training Committee and moderated by Mr. James Jung. The session revolved around the importance of imparting ethical training, soft skills training and providing international insight to young lawyers. The session also witnessed discussions about the need for business effective training and effective quality control in the legal fraternity.
- ‘IPBA Competition Roundtable, 2018’, which was conducted by the Competition Law Committee and moderated by Ms. Janet Hui and Mr. Anand Raj. The session witnessed enthralling discussions on multiple antitrust issues, merger control filing, conduct issues and latest developments in various jurisdictions.
- ‘Data Privacy on Social Networks in Multiple Jurisdictions’, which was conducted by the Ad Hoc Next Generation Committee and moderated by Mr. Ngosong Fonkem (USA). Pivotal issues pertaining to right to privacy was discussed along with the legal liabilities that users and operators of social network face and the stance of the judiciary to such issues.
- ‘Institutional Innovations-Pushing the Envelope or Churning the Pot?’, which was conducted by the Dispute Resolution & Arbitration Committee and moderated by Mr. Hiroyuki Tezuka and Mr. Stevem Lim. With my principal area of practice revolving around arbitration and alternate dispute resolution, I was enthused to attend this session. Interesting presentations and discussions were held on changes in the institutional rules of arbitrations and procedures for expediting the arbitration mechanism, early dismissal and emergency arbitrator in order to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of arbitrations.

- ‘Is Artificial Intelligence (AI) Going to Replace Us’, which was conducted by the Employment & Immigration Committee and Technology, Media & Telecommunications Committee and moderated by Mr. Barunesh Chandra. The session was conducted on the evolution, potential benefits and dangers relating to artificial intelligence were discussed with specific emphasis of its impact on the legal profession.
- ‘Silent Struggles of Single Parents-the Roles of Law, Employers & Societies in supporting them to succeed in their Public and Private Lives’ which was conducted by the Women Business Lawyers Committee and moderated by Ms. Olivia Kung. It merits a special mention about Olivia, who was candid and vocal about sharing her personal struggles as a single parent.
- ‘Technology and International Arbitration, AI for IA?’, which was conducted by the Dispute Resolution & Arbitration Committee and moderated by Ms. Sae Youn Kim and Mr. Lars Markert. The panelists in the session discussed about the impact of technology on the legal profession and the problems that can arise during the use of artificial intelligence in international dispute resolution.

The experience of attending the committee sessions for the two days was an opportunity of a lifetime. The committee sessions instilled in me a more holistic perspective at approaching various legal issues, the benefits of which I hope to reap in the coming times.

Finally, the IPBA Annual Meeting and Conference was convened wherein all the delegates were present. The conference was concluded with the Farewell Night, which was inspired by the 60’s and 70’s rock and roll.

With the increase in cross border commerce and my personal interest to build a career in international commercial dispute resolution, the IPBA Annual General Conference and Meeting provided an unparalleled platform to interact with foreign lawyers and learn about the prevalent scenarios in various jurisdiction. It was amazing to witness how close knit and forthcoming the members of the IPBA members were to assist the other fellow members. I am thankful to IPBA for having provided me such a opportunity, which indeed has been a milestone in my career, and hope to continue efforts on my part to promote IPBA.

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