NEWSLETTER
Friends of WMU JAPAN
One World, One Family
92
September 2025

From Dreams to Reality: My First First-Time in Japan

Charotte Wara
Alumni Assistant, WMU

From 10 May to 18 May 2025, together with Professor Francis Neat, Nippon Foundation Professor of Sustainable Fisheries and Ocean Biodiversity at the World Maritime University (WMU), we had the privilege of accompanying the Sasakawa Fellows sponsored by The Nippon Foundation on a truly memorable field trip to Japan, the home and headquarters of The Nippon Foundation. When I first heard the news that I'd be traveling to Japan this year with the Sasakawa fellows, I was over the moon! Visiting Japan had always been a dream of mine, and from the moment it became real, I started counting down the days as early as January 1st, 2025. I simply couldn't wait!

10 May 2025- Departure. Filled with excitement and anticipation, I joined the Sasakawa Fellows at 06:30 am and we boarded the train to Copenhagen Airport, ready to begin our unforgettable journey to Japan. We first flew to Munich, then continued our journey to Kansai International Airport, Japan, arriving in the early hours of 11 May.

11 May 2025- Arrival. After clearing passport control and customs, we were warmly welcomed by Ms. Emi Shimada from OPRI and our wonderful tour guide, Ms. Miyo Wada. Together, they led us to the bus that took us to our hotel in Kobe, where we would be staying for the first three nights. At the hotel, we were graciously welcomed by Mr. Eisuke Kudo, Senior Advisor, and Ms. Reiko Naito, Mr. Takeshi Ikuta from OPRI. Since we arrived before check-in time, we securely stored our luggage and set off for the orientation and a rundown of the entire week. After the orientation session, we enjoyed a delicious buffet-style lunch at the hotel, offering a delightful taste of Japanese hospitality. We then set out for sightseeing at the iconic Kobe Port. Although the long journey had left us tired, the thrill of finally being in Japan gave us a second wind. Energized by excitement, we boarded a train to Kobe Port where we started our unforgettable adventure! After our visit to Kobe Port, we returned to the hotel, where we were all grateful for the chance to unwind, take a refreshing shower, unpack, and recharge—ready to embrace the exciting schedule that awaited us in the days ahead.

12 May 2025 – Marine Technical College and Furuno Electric. The day started at the Marine Technical College (MTC), where we received a warm welcome from Rector Dr. Ayumi Ishikura and JMETS staff. The visit included informative presentations about Japan's maritime education system. Later, we visited Furuno

Electric's MEGURI2040 Shore-Based Support Center*, where the fellows learned about Japan's advancements in autonomous shipping technologies. The day concluded with a welcome reception at Shin-Kobe where Professor Neat delivered a speech, expressing gratitude to the Sasakawa Peace Foundation (SPF), The Nippon Foundation, and MLIT for their generous support and warm hospitality. The evening was festive, highlighted by the WMU song performed by students and alumni. The reception was a lively and memorable evening, as we had the opportunity to connect with distinguished guests from Japan and around the world. The delicious Japanese buffet added a special touch to the night.

13 May 2025 – Daihatsu Infinearth Plant and Himeji Castle. We visited the Daihatsu Infinearth Himeji Plant, where we were hosted by President Mr. Hama and his team. After a company presentation, students toured the factory in two groups and engaged in a vibrant Q&A session. Mr. Kudo thanked the hosts on behalf of the Fellows.

In the afternoon, we visited Himeji Castle, Japan's most well-preserved castle. Its history, architecture, and panoramic views left everyone in awe. We explored the castle's interior rooms and historical artifacts, while also respecting Japan's cultural traditions, such as removing our shoes. It was truly a fantastic experience, stepping back in time while taking in breathtaking views from the top.

14 May 2025 – Expo 2025 and Osaka Aquarium. We explored the Blue Ocean Dome and the United Nations Pavilion at Expo 2025 in Osaka. We engaged with advanced technologies addressing marine pollution and global sustainability initiatives, including immersive VR experiences related to the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Afterwards, a delightful buffet lunch set the tone for a visit to the famed Osaka Aquarium, a mesmerizing place located near Osaka Bay. After the aquarium visit, we travelled by train to Tokyo, enjoying traditional Bento boxes for dinner en route. The colourful presentation and variety of flavours made the meal a memorable part of the journey.

15 May 2025 – Kashima Coastal Industrial Zone, Port of Kashima, the Fisheries Engineering Kamisu Branch and the historic Inubosaki Lighthouse. We were again warmly welcomed by these institutions. After company presentations, students had the opportunity to tour the factory. We enjoyed our time on the bus, which was a wonderful opportunity to admire the beautiful landscapes and scenic countryside surrounding Tokyo.

One of the most memorable moments for me was visiting the Inubosaki Lighthouse. While the spiral staircase was quite a challenge to climb, I gave it my all and made it to the top, but "she laughs" looking down those stairs from the top? No, that was the real thrill Heights still make me a little nervous. This was an unforgettable experience, and one of the many highlights from my time in Japan.

16 May 2025 – Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism (MLIT) and The Nippon Foundation Headquarters. This was the most significant day of the trip. We visited the Maritime Bureau at MLIT where Professor Neat expressed sincere thanks to Director General Yoshifumi Miyatake and his team, and acknowledged the valuable academic contributions of WMU alumni like Mr. Takanori Uzumaki, who now represents Japan at the IMO. After a thought provoking and educative presentation from MLIT,

we then proceeded to The Nippon Foundation headquarters, where we were honored with the personal audience of Dr. Yohei Sasakawa, Chairman of The Nippon Foundation. I was equally honoured to serve as Master of Ceremony, introducing the fellows to Dr. Sasakawa, who attentively listened to the students on how their WMU education would benefit their countries. Dr. Sasakawa warmly responded by encouraging the students to stay connected through the Friends of WMU Alumni Network, reinforcing the importance of lifelong collaboration. Professor Neat delivered a heartfelt address highlighting the life-changing impact of the Sasakawa Fellowship Program. He also applauded The Nippon Foundation's commitment to gender equality, with the upcoming 2025 cohort achieving a 50:50 gender balance for the first time. The meeting concluded with group

and individual photos with Dr. Sasakawa. What a memorable and fantastic day it was! The day ended with a farewell reception featuring dignitaries from government, private sectors, and international embassies. The buffet dinner and performance of the WMU Song created a joyful, heartfelt close to the formal events of the week. It slowly began to sink in that our time in Japan was coming to an end.

17 May 2025 – Cultural Exploration and Sanja Festival. Despite the heavy rain, spirits remained high on this final day in Japan. We visited Meiji Jingu Shrine, and the Hamarikyu Onshi Garden. Later, we experienced the lively Sanja Matsuri Festival in Asakusa, where we enjoyed local street food, shopped for souvenirs, and immersed ourselves in Tokyo's festive atmosphere. What a day it was, a perfect blend of culture, tradition, and celebration to end an unforgettable journey in Japan.

18 May 2025 – Departure from Japan. As we departed, gratitude filled everyone's hearts. The hospitality from the Sasakawa Peace Foundation and all hosts was unparalleled. The trip, meticulously planned and full of enriching experiences, had created lasting memories. The bonds formed, knowledge gained, and the warmth received from everyone will be cherished forever. To the SPF team, our sincerest thanks for all the thoughtful detail and arrangement. You've given us a gift we'll treasure for a lifetime. Goodbyes are always the saddest, but this is not a goodbye; I can't wait to be back. Arigato gozaimasu!

* For more information, please visit The Nippon Foundation's official website: https://en.nippon-foundation.or.jp/what/projects/ocean/meguri2040

Discussions on In-Water Cleaning (IWC) Guidance and Future Biofouling Actions within the IMO Framework

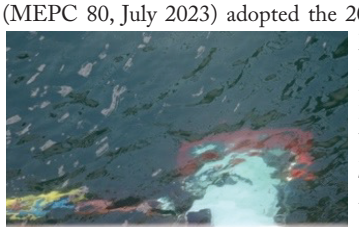
Dr. Ryuji Kojima
Principal researcher,
Offshore Advanced Technology Department
National Maritime Research Institute (NMRI)

1. Introduction

The transfer of invasive aquatic species via ships' biofouling poses a significant impact on the marine environment. As the ships' biofouling increases the drag resistance of ships' hull, fuel consumption increases to give the exhaustion of greenhouse gases (GHGs) from ships. They were formally brought to the attention of the International Maritime Organization (IMO) in 2006, highlighting the need for international measures to address this significant pathway for marine bio-invasions.

2. The discussions matter regarding the in-water cleaning (IWC) guidance

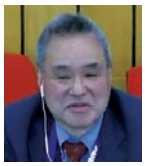
In response, the IMO started to discuss global measures for biofouling control through the development of technical guidelines and frameworks. The 80th session of the Marine Environment Protection Committee (MEPC 80, July 2023) adopted the 2023 Guidelines for the Control and Management of Ships' Biofouling to Minimize the Transfer of Invasive Aquatic Species (resolution MEPC.378(80))—hereinafter referred to as the 2023 Guidelines. The 2023 Guidelines were developed based on the outcome conducted by the 10th session of the Sub-Committee on Pollution Prevention and Response (PPR 10, April 2023). Since procedures for IWC of chapter 9 (Cleaning and Maintenance) in the 2023 Guidelines should be discussed as a separate guidance, the MEPC 80 approved to develop them as a guidance on IWC and extend the target completion year of the guidance to 2025. This action was intended to support the technical guidance for the approval of IWC systems and/or equipment, with particular attention to the capture efficiency of debris, including biofouling organisms, during the cleaning process. This aligns with the objective of minimizing the environmental risks associated with IWC operations. Following the finalization of the guidance at the PPR 12 (January 2025), the MEPC 83 (April 2025) adopted the Guidance on IWC of Ships' Biofouling, as set out in the annex (MEPC.1/Circ.918). The guidance aims to facilitate the global implementation of safe and environmentally sound IWC practices and to promote consistent application of the 2023 Guidelines across all regions.



3. Future action against the biofouling of ships in the IMO

Looking ahead to the future, the PPR Sub-Committee has been tasked to develop a legally binding international framework for the management of ships' biofouling. This framework will address inspection, certification, documentation, and enforcement mechanisms, while also addressing broader environmental concerns such as microplastic release, hazardous substances, air emissions, and underwater noise. An assessment and recommendations on the structure of the framework are expected to be provided by MEPC 86 (2027), with a finalized draft legal framework and recommendations to be provided by MEPC 89 (2029) for further consideration. This initiative represents a significant step forward in global efforts to protect the marine environment through comprehensive control and management of biofouling.

VHF Data Exchange System (VDES) for Digitalization of Maritime Radiocommunication



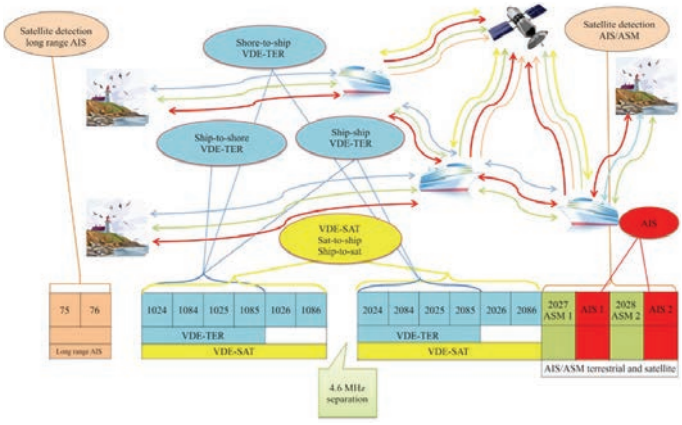
Mr. Hideki Noguchi
Chair, WG2, IMO NCSR Sub-Committee
Chair, IALA DTEC Committee
Technical Advisor, Japan Ship Technology Research Association (JSTRA)

1. Introduction

At 110th session, the Maritime Safety Committee approved the draft amendments to SOLAS and other associated documents for the introduction of VHF data exchange system (VDES) in the IMO regulatory framework. This article introduces outlines of VDES and its position in the IMO regulatory framework.

2. VDES

VDES is a radiocommunication system that is developed based on AIS. Therefore, it is sometimes called "next generation AIS" or "AIS 2". VDES has 4 radiocommunication components AIS, Application Specific Message (ASM), VHF Data Exchange terrestrial (VDE-TER) and VHF Data Exchange satellite (VDE-SAT).



VDES can exchange digital data between ship and ship, ship and shore, and ship and satellite with 32 times higher rate (307.2 kbps) than AIS (9.6kbps). Since VDES has satellite component, its range is also broader than AIS.

AIS was originally developed for improving situational awareness, i.e. safety of navigation but because of its digital data capacity, the usage of AIS is now broadened from safety of navigation to management of fleet, efficiency of logistics and maritime security. As same as AIS, VDES is expected to be used for many purposes.

IMO mentioned VDES as one of enabler for e-navigation in its e-navigation strategy implementation plan (MSC.1/Circ.1595). The International Organization for Marine Aids to Navigation (IALA) has also published VDES overview (Guideline G1117) and other numerous guidelines and recommendations regarding VDES.

3. Future challenge

The messages and data structures of AIS are all defined by ITU with Recommendation ITU-R M.1371 series but VDES does not have such mechanism. VDES itself is only exchanged digital data therefore how to use such data is depend on applications installed in the associated equipment connected to VDES such as ECDIS, onboard computer. Key challenge for the success of VDES is how to share such applications worldwide.

Another challenge is competition with new emerging satellite communication service such as Starlink. Although VDES has higher data rate than AIS, new satellite communication service provides broadband digital service. While these satellite communication services are for public service, VDES is dedicated for maritime communication service. It is important to decide the role of VDES in future digital maritime communication.

There are many VDES studies, trials and testbeds conducted in the world and it is expected to solve these challenges soon. VDES will open another maritime digital world.

Matarbari Deep Sea Port of Bangladesh

Rajib Chowdhury
(Bangladesh, 2016)

1. Background: The Matarbari Deep Seaport Project is significant infrastructural development project in Bangladesh designated to influence at establishing the country's first deep-sea port in the Matarbari area of Moheskhali Upazilla, Cox's Bazar, along the Bay of Bengal, Bangladesh. Initially the project was intended to build a 1,200 MW coal-fired power plant development by the Coal Power Generation Company Bangladesh Limited (CPGCBL). A 14.3 km-long, 250 meter long and 18.5 meter deep channel was constructed to facilitate the import of coal for the power plant.

2. Objectives: Matarbari Deep Seaport aims

a) To enhance maritime capacity of Bangladesh
b) Reduction of dependency on transshipment hub
c) To contribute to the economic growth of the country
d) Regional Connectivity with South-East Asia

3. Project Development: The project concept has been adopted from Japanese Ports & it will be the first deep sea port and fourth sea ports of Bangladesh. At first phase, one 300 meter long multipurpose terminal and one 460 meter long container terminals will be constructed by 2026. The navigation channel will be 350 meters length with a maximum permissible draft of 16 meters. Vessels with the capacity of 8000 TEUs containers will be able to take berth. Japan International Cooperation Agency won the contract for the consultancy services of Matarbari Port development project in September, 2020.

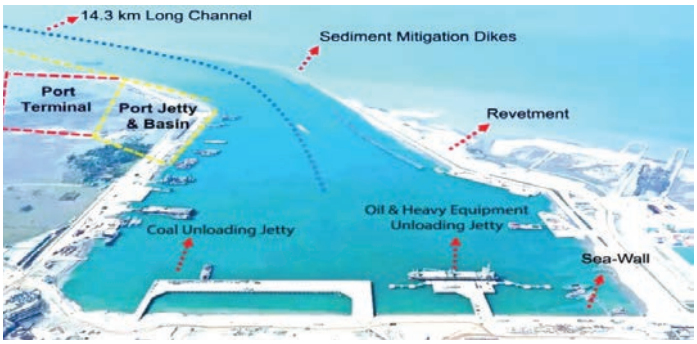


Figure 1 Matarbari Port Area

A joint venture of Penta-Ocean Construction Co., Ltd. and TOA Corporation has recently been awarded a construction contract from the Chittagong Port Authority of Bangladesh for the "Matarbari Port Development Project Phase-1 Package 1: Procurement of Civil Works for Port Construction". The contract amount is approximately JPY 73.4 billion, and the construction period is 42 months.

4. Key Prospects for Maritime Trade in Bangladesh

1) Enhanced Capacity & Efficiency:

a. Larger vessel berthing: At present in Chittagong Port a vessel with a maximum 10 meter draft, 190 meter carrying maximum 3000 TEUs containers length can take berth. It has also channel limitation as Chittagong port is basically a tidal port. Vessels cannot come to the port at any given time. It has to depend on tide. Matarbari will overcome such limitations as it will allow larger vessels such as Panamax & Capesize ships, carrying up to 8000 TEUs with 16 meter draft. As Matarbari port will have breakwater system, so vessels can call port at any time.

b. Reduction of transit time: The Port is expected reduce delays in export times significantly. As an instance using matarbari port an export consignment will need 23 days instead of 45 days to the US and 16-17 days instead of 42 days to Europe.

c. Cost Savings: According to JICA's study, the Matarbari terminal will save $131 per 20-foot container and about $200 per 40-foot container.

Figure 2 Matarbari Deep Sea Port Construction Phase I

2) Increased Trade Volume:

a. Matarbari port is forecasted to handle approximately 1.1 million TEUs containers by 2026 & 1.4-1.42 million TEUs by 2041. This will certainly ease off pressure on Chittagong Port and Port congestion will reduce.

b. At present more than 95% maritime trade happens through Chittagong ports particularly for RMG sector. Matarbari port will strengthen RMG sector and other alternative export oriented sectors to grow as a business cluster.

3) Economic Growth:

a. Matarbari deep sea port development will have a significant impact on the country's trade connectivity and economic growth. An internal study by JICA forecasted that Matarbari port construction will enhance country's GDP by 2-3% & it will create numerous job opportunities.

b. Matarbari Port will attract numerous projects including free trade zones and special economic zones, a coal fired power plant, LNG terminals and motorways terminal estimated to be over $25 billion in investment ($15 billion public, $10 billion private), particularly from Japan, augmenting industrial sectors like shipbuilding and resource exploration.

Figure 3 Matarbari Port Beacon of Hope

4) Strategic and Geopolitical Significance:

a. Because of its geographical location in proximity to Bay of Bengal, it became a vital maritime node in regional shipping.

b. It can also support land lock countries like Bhutan, Nepal and parts of India (Seven sisters).

c. Matarbari port developed with Japanese assistance (JICA) under the Bay of Bengal Industrial Growth Belt (BIG-B) initiative. This project aligns with the Japan's Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP) strategy to ensure secure sea lanes and regional connectivity.

5. Conclusion: Matarbari Port is not just an infrastructural development; it's a beacon of hope and a geostrategic asset for Bangladesh and its regional counter partners. Likewise Japanese port with it deep-sea capabilities and strategic backers, it will enhance national security, stimulates economic growth & boosts Bangladesh's influence in the Indo-Pacific corridor.

Strengthening Supply Chains and Maritime Operations in Timor-Leste

Julio Santos (Timor-Leste, 2022)

Since gaining independence in 2002, Timor-Leste has relied on strong logistics and maritime operations to support its nation-building, economic growth, and integration into the global economy. CEVA Air & Ocean Timor has been at the heart of this progress, delivering a wide range of services that connect the country to regional and international markets. Through freight forwarding, customs brokerage, oil and gas logistics, maritime services, and advanced transport management systems, the company's activities reflect not only commercial success but also a commitment to strengthening Timor-Leste's connectivity and future development.

Company Overview

CEVA Air & Ocean Timor, widely recognized as CEVA LOGISTICS, has been a cornerstone of the logistics industry in Timor-Leste since its establishment in November 1999, in Timor-Leste. One of the companies that has contributed to nation-building alongside Timor-Leste since its independence in 2002. Initially operating under the name SDV Logistics and the company became Bolloré Logistics Timor. Bollore' Logistics was acquired by CMA-CGM a leading worldwide shipping group based in Marseille-France to merge with CEVA Logistics in the beginning of 2024 with the aim to offer end-to-end logistics solutions to each customer. Currently CEVA Air & Ocean Timor functioning under the management of CEVA Indonesia. CEVA Air & Ocean Timor has expanded into a robust organization with 70+ employees, offering an extensive range of services with unparalleled quality in Timor-Leste. It remains the sole logistics support company in Timor-Leste with its own global network of offices.

Activities and Leadership

I joined the company in November 2022 and have since taken on various roles across different departments. Throughout my journey, I have navigated diverse challenges, each serving as an opportunity for growth and learning. My focus has always been on overcoming obstacles while continuously developing my skills and advancing my professional career. Since October 2024, I have led CEVA Air & Ocean Timor as Coordinator, a Member of the Board of Directors, and the Legal Representative, overseeing all operational and commercial activities. My role has been instrumental in enhancing operational efficiency, ensuring seamless coordination, and driving strategic decision-making to secure commercial success. Our operations span multiple fields, including Freight Forwarding (Sea & Air), Customs Brokerage, Transportation & Logistics Support, Stevedoring, Shipping Agency, Aircraft Ground Handling, Supply Base Management, Supply Vessel Operation, Project Cargo & Chartering, Oil & Gas Logistics, Supply Manpower, Meet & Greet Services, and Crew Changes.

Industry Engagement and Expertise

A key focus of my leadership has been the implementation of advanced logistics technologies, particularly the Transport Management System and the Shipping Line Management System. These innovations have significantly streamlined operations, improved supply chain visibility, and reinforced CEVA Air & Ocean Timor's position at the forefront of logistics in the country and the region. What drives me most in my role is the opportunity to engage with people from diverse backgrounds across the globe. Building strong relationships with customers, understanding their unique needs, and providing tailored logistics solutions are at the heart of my professional mission. I am dedicated to ensuring that CEVA Air & Ocean Timor not only meets but exceeds customer expectations, fostering trust and long-term partnerships.

Beyond logistics operations, my expertise extends into key maritime disciplines, including Maritime Analytics and Business, Maritime Marketing and Logistics, Maritime Investment and Finance, Shipping Management and Policy, and Port Development and Operations. My academic foundation in these areas was established through my MSc in Maritime Affairs, specializing in Shipping Management & Logistics, from WMU-Malmö. Additionally, I stay informed about industry trends through reputable sources such as Clarksons Research, Lloyd's List, UNCTAD, WTO, and the World Bank.

Future Vision

I began my career in the government sector before transitioning to the private sector, where I now actively contribute to nation-building. At CEVA Air & Ocean Timor, I leverage private-sector expertise and resources to drive development across various sectors, promoting economic growth, innovation, and sustainability. Committed to collaboration and progress, my mission is to establish CEVA as a key player in Timor-Leste and the regional logistics industry. By embracing technological advancements, strengthening strategic partnerships, and fostering adaptability, I aim to build a forward-thinking logistics network that enhances economic growth and strengthens connectivity within the country and across the globe.

Strengthening Global Maritime Education: 20 Years of the WMU–SMU ITL Programme

Hongron Yu
(China, 2007)

2025 marks a remarkable milestone: 20 years of the joint Master Programme in International Transport and Logistics, collaborated between WMU and SMU.

Although It's Malmo, Sweden that we Sasakawa fellows joined the prestigious master's programs of World Maritime University, there is another opportunity to receive WMU's first-class education in a city other than Malmo. It's a joint MSc Programme collaborated between WMU and Shanghai Maritime University (SMU), China.

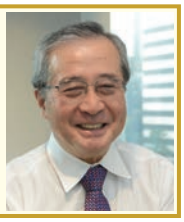
The program, with a specialization in International Transport and Logistics, is delivered in Shanghai by WMU in collaboration with SMU. It has been designed to extend WMU's professional education to a new and thriving clientele from the region and beyond, and to meet more of the maritime industry's demand for high-level specialized professionals. The programme is intensive and is taught over 14 months from May each year, and ending in July of the following year. The entry requirements, grading system and quality assurance processes are those in force at WMU. Successful graduates receive a WMU Master of Science in Maritime Affairs degree.

WMU and SMU have enjoyed a close cooperative relationship for decades. Since its inauguration in 2005, two universities have been committed to the high-qualified maritime education that meets the development trends of the international shipping industry. In the past 20 years, ITL has enrolled 20 intakes of students, and graduates are now playing influential roles in international maritime logistics business in China and around the world. A total of 613 young talents have graduated from ITL, from 17 countries, such as China, South Korea, Malaysia, India, Indonesia, Australia, Ghana, the Netherlands, Greece and Trinidad & Tobago.

Besides the expertise from both universities, the program also makes the best use of geographical advantages. As an international shipping center, Shanghai has a vibrant and diverse shipping - related business ecosystem, and its container throughput soared to 5150 million TEU annually in 2024, maintaining its top - ranking position globally for 15 consecutive years. As part of the programme, students will have chances to take part in a number of seminars and field study visits; destinations include Shanghai-based shipping, port and other maritime institutions. In addition, a four-week study trip to WMU Malmo campus is also organized.

Through 20 years of joint efforts, the ITL programme has won high reputation, thanks to WMU's world-class faculty, outstanding quality assurance, Shanghai's position as a global maritime centre and SMU's extensive industry network. Personally, I'm proud of being involved with this program for over 15 years from its very beginning until 2021, joining numerous bipartite discussions and coordinations, applying government approval for the running of the program, fulfilling accreditation and quality assurance related tasks, facilitating WMU professors and international students to teach and learn in China etc. Besides unforgettable learning and living experience in Malmo, working experience with this program has been my another life-long precious memory connected with WMU, our beloved home.

Notice of Chairman Succession at The Nippon Foundation



The Nippon Foundation underwent a change in its presidency effective June 20.

Mr. Takeju Ogata, who has served as President (Chief Executive Director), has assumed the role of Chairman, while Mr. Yohei Sasakawa has stepped down from the position of Chairman and has been appointed Honorary Chairman.

As Honorary Chairman, Mr. Sasakawa will continue to serve as the Chairman of The Friends of WMU, Japan. We therefore look forward to keeping you informed of his activities and engagements through this newsletter.

Dr. Sasakawa's Enduring Legacy: From Albania to the WMU Family.

Ermal Xhelilaj
(Albania, 2008)

Dr. Yohei Sasakawa, Chairman of The Nippon Foundation, visited Tirana, Albania 11-13 June 2025. During his kind and welcomed visit to my country, which was a beautiful surprise for me and Albania as well, Dr. Sasakawa met with the Prime Minister Edi Rama, President of Albania, Bajram Begaj, and other important government officials to discuss further cooperation between Albania and Japan by contributing to peace and stability in international community and strengthening the relationship between our two countries. Among all these important meetings with high governmental officials, I was very pleased and honored to receive an invitation from Dr. Sasakawa for a meeting in Tirana for having breakfast together on Friday, June 12th, at the Mak Albania Hotel. During the meeting, we discussed how much Albania has made progress towards maritime industry and ocean's affairs in general. Dr. Sasakawa discussed the importance of the cooperation of our two countries and expressed the need to further strengthen this collaboration with Albania not only as a coastal state with maritime industry but also a country with the strategic objective of becoming an EU member. Dr. Sasakawa was very kind in asking my professional enhancement and activity during the last years after my graduation from WMU as an Associate Professor of Maritime Law and Policy at the University of Vlora, policy-making in Albanian legislation and support towards maritime industry. Dr. Sasakawa stressed the significance of my dedication to developing expertise in the field of maritime affairs in Albania. As a former WMU student, a Sasakawa Fellow, and as an Albanian scholar I extended to Dr. Sasakawa my deepest gratitude for his immense contribution and dedication to global humanitarian cause of leprosy, human rights, as well as the strong support to ocean's affairs, maritime industry and professionals as well. I was surprised and impressed by his strong spirit mirrored also by his achievement by successfully climbing the Mt. Kilimanjaro at age 85, unfurling a banner reading "Don't Forget Leprosy." At the end of the meeting, it was with great pleasure to receive the Dr. Sasakawa's very valuable textbook "Making the Impossible Possible" and a set of books reflecting the ancient, beautiful and respected Japanese culture. Overall, the meeting with Dr. Sasakawa was one of the most beautiful and unforgettable moments of my life and good opportunity for strengthening the relationship between a great nation and respected country of Japan and Albania. Thank you Dr. Yohei Sasakawa.

Your Immediate Response Is Needed: Printed Newsletter Distribution Ending Soon!

In light of ongoing changes in global postal services and our commitment to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), **we are shifting to primarily digital distribution** of our newsletters.

If you wish to continue receiving a printed version by postal service, **it is essential that you notify us as soon as possible.** Without your confirmation, we will not be able to include you in future postal mailings. **Please don't delay—email us now at wmujapan@spf.or.jp or use the QR code printed below.**

Important Timeline:

We will continue announcing this message only until the **September 2025 issue**. Printed newsletters will be **discontinued starting December 2025**, and **no printed copies will be sent after that date** unless we hear from you.

Your response will help us determine the number of printed copies needed during this final phase.

We sincerely appreciate your cooperation and understanding during this important transition.

Editor's note

I am deeply honoured to be able to say farewell to all the Sasakawa Fellows I have known and worked with since 1993. Of the 821 Sasakawa Fellowship-holders who enrolled between 1988 and 2024, I have had the privilege of knowing 786 of you.

During my time at the University, it has evolved and changed almost beyond recognition. When I arrived in Malmö in April 1993, the MSc programme was completely different and the PhD programme did not exist. The two programmes have been modernised, in content (obviously!) but also in structure, to match pan-European structures. Swedish accreditation has benefitted all of you who graduated in 2022 onwards, and WMU has now spent a decade in a bespoke home in the centre of Malmö. I have celebrated WMU's 10th, 20th, 30th and 40th birthdays, and I hope to see many of you again when the University celebrates its half-century in 2033.

Two things have remained unchanged since the University opened its doors for the first time on 4 July 1983. The first is the WMU spirit. The University is remarkable for its supportive, collegial and collaborative student and staff bodies. The often-used phrase, "The WMU Family" is not just empty words – it is a very real and unique way of living and working.

The second quality is the outstanding and continuing support from generous donors – chief among which is The Nippon Foundation/Sasakawa Peace Foundation. Our donors are the third membership group in our family. It is never a matter of simply donating funds; it is a matter of direct personal care and involvement with the students and the staff. From the marvellous annual field study visit to Japan, to the concern shown about any problems faced by their students, the staff of the Sasakawa Peace Foundation exemplify perfect family members.

But now it is time for me to move on – from 1 January 2026, I will be a free agent, able to decide how I spend every day. I am delighted that I will be succeeded as University Registrar by my beloved colleague, Pete Marriott, who has been at WMU since 2014. I hope that he beats my longevity record!

To all the Sasakawa Fellows, I wish happiness and success. One certain thing is that you all will continue to have a significant impact on the world's maritime and oceans affairs. Travel well, my friends!

Susan Jackson
(WMU Registrar)

Supported by THE NIPPON FOUNDATION

This newsletter is published under a grant from The Nippon Foundation
to promote communication among the Sasakawa Fellows of WMU (World Maritime University) and edited by the Sasakawa Peace Foundation in cooperation with Dr. Koji Murai Ms. Yasko Suzuki, Mr. Takuya Adachi, Mr. Eisuke Kudo and Ms. Sue Jackson.

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