

2025 Award Ceremony



The Award Ceremony for the WMU Sasakawa Fellows, Class of 2025, was held on the evening of October 31 in Malmö.

Although heavy rain on the previous day had raised concerns about the weather, the day of the ceremony was cloudy but calm. The air was chilly, as is typical for Malmö at this time of year, yet the conditions posed no obstacle to the smooth and dignified conduct of the event.

The Sasakawa Auditorium was filled with a celebratory atmosphere and welcomed many distinguished guests, including Ms. Louise Proctor, Deputy Director of the Subdivision for Planning and Programming, Technical Cooperation and Implementation Division of the International Maritime Organization (IMO), along with other prominent guests from the global maritime and ocean communities.

The ceremony opened with remarks by Dr. Mitsutaku Makino, President of the Ocean Policy Research Institute (OPRI), Sasakawa Peace Foundation, who was visiting WMU for the first time since assuming the presidency. His presence underscored the close institutional ties between WMU and organizations engaged in ocean policy and research.

In his opening remarks, Dr. Mitsutaku Makino encouraged the Fellows to actively engage with the global Sasakawa Fellows network, noting that hundreds of Fellows are already making significant contributions to the maritime and ocean sectors around the world. He emphasized that the future achievements of the graduates themselves will serve as the strongest testament to the lasting value of the Fellowship and called on them to play a leading role in sustaining and strengthening this community in the years ahead.

WMU President Max Mejia then addressed the graduates. He expressed his sincere appreciation for The Nippon Foundation's long-standing support of the University and reflected on the values fostered through the Sasakawa Fellowship. President Mejia emphasized generosity, service, and the importance of contributing one's time and talents for the benefit of others, highlighting the responsibility carried by the Fellows as members of a global professional community.

Mr. Mitsuyuki Unno, Executive Director of The Nippon Foundation, delivered the central address of the evening. Extending his congratulations to the graduates, Mr. Unno offered a thought-provoking speech focusing on seabed resources. He noted that such resources, located on and beneath the ocean floor, are increasingly viewed as potential assets for future development, leading many stakeholders to consider them primarily in economic terms.

At the same time, Mr. Unno suggested that seabed resources should also be understood as a gateway to deeper scientific knowledge of the oceans and the

Earth system. He posed a fundamental question to the audience: how can we assume that these resources exist solely for the benefit of our current generation and civilization, when the mechanisms of the oceans remain only partially understood? Acknowledging that there are no simple or immediate answers, he encouraged the students to continue thinking critically and responsibly as they return to their home countries and professional fields.

Mr. Unno further expressed his hope that the graduates would actively utilize not only the Sasakawa Fellows' network, but also the broader The NF Fellows' network, as tools to address complex and interconnected ocean-related challenges.

Following his address, Mr. Unno presented each graduate with a Sasakawa Fellow Certificate, offering congratulations in their native languages, a gesture that reflected both the international character of the Fellowship and the personal commitment behind its support.

A reception was subsequently held at World Bistro, attended by WMU faculty, staff, students, and guests. Mustapha Ceesay (Gambia, 2026) served as Master of Ceremonies, guiding the program with warmth and sincerity as he sent off his graduating colleagues and reinforced the sense of continuity between the Class of 2025 and the Class of 2026.

As the evening progressed, Natalia Suárez Triviño (Colombia, 2026), representing the incoming class, delivered the "Words from the Students" address. This was followed by a Vote of Thanks from Rene Merino (El Salvador, 2026) on behalf of the graduating Class of 2025.

The celebration concluded with the Class of 2025 performing the WMU Song under the direction of Sourabh Yadav (India, 2025). Having sung the song together on many occasions throughout their studies, the final performance served as a symbolic closing to the fourteen months they had shared as a cohort, bringing the evening to a warm and memorable conclusion.





Mr. Mitsuyuki Unno's Speech at the 2025 Award Ceremony

Dear Fellows,

It gives me great pleasure to stand here today to congratulate the new Sasakawa Fellows on their graduation.

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to President Max Mejia and the entire WMU faculty for their excellent education. Let me also take this opportunity to express my appreciation to Dr Ronan Long, Director of the WMU-Sasakawa Global Ocean Institute, for his continuous efforts in promoting ocean governance and interdisciplinary collaboration.

In addition, I extend my gratitude to the residence supervisor for overseeing the fellows as they lived together under the same roof, and to the home nations and organizations for sending the fellows to WMU. And above all, I would like to thank and congratulate the families for their continued support and encouragement of our fellows.

Everyone gathered here in this auditorium looks very confident as proud WMU graduates and Sasakawa Fellows. Now, we look forward to seeing you represent your home countries and be recognized on the global stage.

Of course, we will be happy to help you continue to take on challenges after graduation. Today, our network includes over 1,800 Fellows from more

than 150 countries. However, we do not measure success by size.

Graduation is just a milestone. The knowledge and experience gained at WMU serves as the foundation for each of you to represent your home countries and take an active role in the international community. The success of human capacity development depends on how you apply this foundation.

And you already have the tools for success. The Nippon Foundation's Alumni Network, to which you will now belong.

There is a limit to what can be solved by the efforts of one country, one institution and one individual. In order to pass the oceans on to future generations, we need to work across disciplines, professions, and borders.

As you embark on your next challenges, we encourage you to make full use of these resources. This includes pursuing further research and collaborating not only with Sasakawa Fellows but also with our alumni from different programs. In the future, regardless of the path you choose, we will continue to support you through the Nippon Foundation Alumni Network.

Congratulations once again, and welcome to the Friends of WMU.



WMU Graduation Ceremony 2025

The WMU Graduation Ceremony for the Class of 2025 was held on 1 November, celebrating the successful completion of studies by the next generation of maritime and ocean leaders, including 30 Sasakawa Fellows.

The day was marked by clear and sunny weather, a rare gift for Malmö at this time of year, as if to celebrate the graduates' departure.

The ceremony opened with a dignified musical performance by the Royal Fire Brigade Band, whose stately sound set a festive and ceremonial tone for the occasion.

The graduation ceremony was conducted in the presence of many distinguished dignitaries, including Ms. Carina Nilsson, Mayor of Malmö and Chairperson of the Malmö City Council.



The ceremony was presided over by WMU President Professor Maximo Q. Mejia, Jr., together with Mr. Arsenio Dominguez, Secretary-General of the International Maritime Organization (IMO) and Chancellor of WMU.

Prior to the conferral of degrees, outstanding contributions to the maritime and ocean community were formally recognized. The Doctor of Science, honoris causa was conferred upon two individuals.

Mr. Mitsuyuki Unno, Executive Director of The Nippon Foundation and a member of WMU's Executive Board from 2016 to 2024, was honored for his long-standing support for WMU. Guided by a strong belief in human capacity development and innovation, his commitment has contributed significantly to the University's growth, including the establishment of the WMU-Sasakawa Global Ocean Institute and the development of the new WMU building and auditorium. The same degree was also awarded to Her Excellency Ambassador Marie Jacobsson in recognition of her distinguished career in international law. A former Principal Legal Adviser on International Law and Ambassador at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Sweden, H.E. Amb. Jacobsson has played a leading role in advancing international peace and security, with expertise in the law of the sea, polar law, and international environmental law.

Professor Takeshi Nakazawa was appointed Professor Emeritus in recognition of his long and distinguished service to the University. Professor

Nakazawa first joined WMU in 1997 and later returned as a full professor and Head of the MET Specialization, making significant contributions to teaching, academic leadership, and student supervision over many years. His dedication has left a lasting impact on the University and generations of WMU graduates.

Following the awards, each graduate received their diploma from Mr. Arsenio Dominguez. Academic excellence was also recognized during the ceremony.

Two students achieved identical top grades in the MSc in Maritime Affairs and were awarded the Chancellor's Medal: Mr. Lucas Fernando Vaquero Roviriego (Sasakawa Fellow from Brazil) and Mr. Zhang Yang (China). The C P Srivastava Award for International Fellowship was also presented to the Sasakawa Fellow Mr. Bismark Acheampong (Ghana).

Several Sasakawa Fellows were also recognized through the Specialization Prizes and the Kalmar Prizes. Among them were Mr. John Peter Kabonge (Uganda), Mr. Ridho Budiman (Indonesia), and Mr. Lucas Fernando Vaquero Roviriego (Brazil) for excellence in their respective specializations, as well as Ms. Lydia Salla Kadir (Nigeria), Ms. Idil Mohamed (Somalia), Mr. Damian Tiscornia (Argentina), and Mr. Bismark Acheampong (Ghana) for their leadership among peers. Taken together, these recognitions reflected the academic excellence, professional competence, and leadership demonstrated by the Sasakawa Fellowship students through their dedication and hard work during their studies.

After the ceremony, a reception was held, bringing together graduates, faculty members, and family and friends who had traveled from the students' home countries to share in the occasion. The venue was filled with celebration and joy as graduates marked this milestone together with those who had supported them throughout their journey.

With the graduation of the Class of 2025, the total number of WMU graduates reached 6,632, representing 171 countries and territories around the world. The Friends of WMU, Japan extends its sincere congratulations to the graduating Sasakawa Fellows and wishes them continued success in their future endeavors, together with good health and well-being for them and their families.





Chancellor's Medals in the MSc in Maritime Affairs

The Specialization Prize for PM



Lucas Fernando Vaquero Roviriego (Brazil, 2025)

My first thoughts after graduating from WMU were: every sacrifice - mine and my family's - was worth it. When I first arrived at the Hendrik Smith Residence, the question I kept hearing, and asking myself, was: What are you doing here? Now, after completing this journey, I can finally answer it. I was there to make friends.

My experience at the World Maritime University has been one of the most meaningful chapters of my life. Studying alongside colleagues from across the globe, bringing unique cultures, experiences, and visions for the future, was a privilege that changed me deeply. The friendships and professional networks I built will continue to shape my worldview for many years to come.

The academic rigor, combined with the warm environment and camaraderie created by WMU's faculty and staff, pushed me to grow and embrace new ways of thinking. Reaching the milestone of graduation - and unexpectedly receiving the Chancellor's Medal and Specialization Prize for Port Management - filled me with immense gratitude, pride, and a renewed sense of responsibility.

This achievement would not have been possible without the generous support of the Sasakawa Peace Foundation and the vision of Dr. Yohei Sasakawa, whose commitment to education and maritime development makes opportunities like this possible. I am honored to be a Sasakawa Fellow and proud to join the global WMU alumni family.

The C P Srivastava Award for International Fellowship



Bismark Owoahene Acheampong (Ghana, 2025)

Unexpected and humbling are the words I will use to describe what happened on November 1, 2025, at Malmö live. My WMU journey was a conflicting one. Being an African boy staying in the cold Scandinavia, a non-lawyer leading Maritime Law and Policy specialization of 30 students from 20 countries, and a member of the Student Council, I must say was challenging. But I feel fulfilled today and profoundly honoured to be the recipient of the prestigious Sir CP Srivastava Award for International Fellowship and a co-recipient of the 2025 Kalmar Prize. This is a collective win for my country Ghana, my organization, the Ghana Maritime Authority, my brilliant classmates and the entire WMU faculty.

This milestone provides significant momentum as I forge ahead on my maritime journey with renewed hope and confidence. As our ocean continues to suffer from the impact of climate change caused by human activities, loss of biodiversity and pollution, technical expertise in Maritime Law and Policy is indispensable. For this reason, I am determined more than ever to use skills acquired and the tools WMU gave me to make a difference starting from Ghana, throughout Africa and the World. This achievement would not have been possible without the generous support of The Nippon Foundation, my sweet mother, siblings and loved ones and for this reason I say thank you.

The journey continues

The Specialization Prizes



John Peter Kabonge (Uganda, 2025)

Specialization Prize for MEM

I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude for the scholarship opportunity provided by the Sasakawa Peace Foundation (SPF). This experience broadened my knowledge and understanding of the maritime field. My journey at the World Maritime University (WMU) was truly enlightening, and filled with learning and growth in many dimensions of life.

The knowledge from the professors at WMU encompassed a wide range of professions, representing the complete nature of the maritime industry. Additionally, interactions and engagement with my peers exposed me to the various regional and global perspectives on the maritime industry, helping me to establish a valuable global network of professionals.

Through focus and dedication, I successfully completed the WMU MSc. Maritime Affairs programme, and I was honoured to receive the award for the best student in the Maritime Energy Management (MEM) specialisation. I dedicate this award to my family, the SPF and my fellow S25 MEM students with whom I worked and shared knowledge. Graduating as the best student brought great honour to my country, Uganda, and my family. As I return to my country, I hope to contribute to the development of Uganda's transport sector and to promote effective leadership within my community.



Ridho Budiman (Indonesia, 2025)

Specialization Prize for MSEA

My journey at the World Maritime University has been one of the most transformative chapters of my professional and personal life. Returning to Indonesia after graduation, I carry not only a degree but a renewed commitment to strengthening our maritime sector. Being awarded the specialization prize for Maritime Safety & Environmental Administration (MSEA) is an honour that reflects the support, guidance, and encouragement I received from the WMU community, especially my professors, colleagues, and the Sasakawa Peace Foundation (SPF) team. The diverse and global learning environment at WMU, which the friendships with fellow students from around the world, broadened my perspective on the challenges and opportunities facing the maritime domain. Through rigorous academic work, collaborative projects, and field studies, I gained a deeper understanding of how safety, resilience, and sustainability shape the future of maritime governance.

Standing alongside the IMO Secretary-General and the WMU President at the graduation ceremony was a humbling moment that symbolized both achievement and responsibility. As I continue my career, I hope to translate the knowledge and values gained at WMU into meaningful contributions for Indonesia and the global maritime community.

Share the pain, share the hope, share the future.

Thank you, Dr. Yohei Sasakawa!

Kalmar Prizes

Lydia Salla Kadiri (Nigeria, 2025)

Lucas Fernando Vaquero Roviriego (Brazil, 2025)

Idil Mohamed (Somalia, 2025)

Mario Damian Tiscornia (Argentina, 2025)

Bismark Owoahene Acheampong (Ghana, 2025)

PROJECT TANGAROA

POTENTIALLY POLLUTING WRECKS

A Global Framework for the Near- and Long-Term Assessment, Intervention and Sharing of Data for Potentially Polluting Wrecks

For further information on Project Tangaroa and the upcoming workshops, and to register your interest in participating, please contact us at:

secretary@potentiallypollutingwrecks.co.uk



Dr. Akifumi Iwabuchi

Tokyo University of Marine Science and Technology

For centuries, ships have sunk to the bottom of the sea. While wooden vessels posed limited long-term environmental risks, the situation changed dramatically in the 20th century. Steel ships carrying heavy fuel oil, munitions, and hazardous cargo now lie deteriorating on the seabed, creating what is known as the threat of Potentially Polluting Wrecks (PPW). Unlike wooden wrecks that gradually decomposed, steel-hulled vessels corrode over time, increasing the risk of structural collapse and the sudden release of oil and toxic substances into surrounding waters.

In recent years, attention has increasingly focused on WWII shipwrecks. After nearly 100 years underwater, many of these vessels are rapidly deteriorating. Hazardous leakage, particularly of heavy fuel oil, is causing growing environmental damage in various parts of the world. In the South Pacific, such leaks have severely affected coral reefs and coastal ecosystems and have directly impacted communities that rely on inshore fishing and tourism for their livelihoods. For small island developing states and remote coastal regions, even a single spill can result in long-term economic hardship and food insecurity. The issue of PPW is therefore not only an environmental concern but also a pressing socio-economic and humanitarian challenge.

Despite the scale of the problem, international coordination on PPW management has so far remained limited. Many wrecks are located in complex legal and political contexts, including former battle zones and areas beyond national jurisdiction. Moreover, questions of ownership, liability, underwater cultural heritage, and environmental protection often overlap. Addressing PPW risks requires a comprehensive and cooperative framework that brings together scientific expertise, legal instruments, technological capacity, and local stakeholder engagement.

Project Tangaroa was launched to respond to this urgent challenge. The initiative brings together Lloyd's Register Foundation, IUCN, and



ICOMOS-ICUCH, alongside partners such as UNESCO, Waves Group (UK), Ocean Foundation (US), and Major Projects Foundation (Australia). By combining expertise in marine science, conservation, heritage management, and policy development, the project aims to build a coordinated global response to the PPW threat.

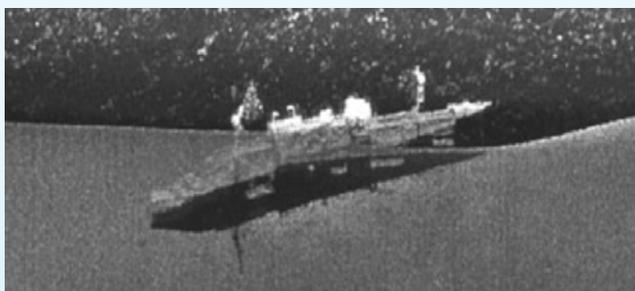
Preparatory meetings were held in London (March 2024), Helsinki (September 2024), and Malta (March 2025). The process culminated in the publication of the Malta Manifesto during the 3rd UN Ocean Conference in Nice in June 2025. The Manifesto sets out a comprehensive action framework. It calls for:

- Raising awareness and strengthening advocacy on PPW
- Developing international standards and protocols through the IMO
- Creating guidelines and practical toolkits in cooperation with UNESCO and UNEP
- Aligning efforts with SDG 14 to prevent and significantly reduce marine pollution

In addition, the initiative emphasizes the importance of establishing sustainable funding mechanisms to support long-term operations and to safeguard vulnerable coastal communities. Technological solutions, including oil removal techniques and improved monitoring systems, must be expanded and assessed for scalability in diverse marine environments. Improved access to archival, historical, and technical data will also support evidence-based risk assessment and management strategies.

Importantly, Project Tangaroa highlights the central role of local communities. Their knowledge, participation, and empowerment are essential for effective and equitable solutions. At the same time, unauthorized salvage activities and the accelerating impacts of climate change—such as stronger storms and changing ocean conditions—pose additional risks to aging wrecks and demand coordinated international responses.

Ultimately, Project Tangaroa addresses not only the legacy of past maritime conflicts and accidents but also the future relationship between humanity and the ocean. The widespread distribution of potentially polluting wrecks reminds us that marine environmental protection requires sustained global cooperation, scientific rigor, and shared responsibility to safeguard both people and the planet.



Towards Ocean Equity: Highlights from the Ocean Nexus Symposium



Dr. Cinda Scott
Co-Director of The Nippon Foundation
Ocean Nexus Program
Adjunct Professor in the Department of Marine
Affairs at the University of Rhode Island.



On December 11, 2025, the Nippon Foundation Ocean Nexus program held a symposium to share and highlight the work and research of Ocean Nexus. Ocean Nexus invited fellows from institutions around the world including Australia, Canada, China, Denmark, Japan, Martinique, Mexico, Northern Mariana Islands, Norway, Palestine, Panama, South Africa, South Korea, Taiwan, United Kingdom and United States to participate in the symposium. These international scholars and researchers spent several days in Tokyo participating in a conference led by Ocean Nexus Director Dr. Yoshitaka Ota, Co-Director Dr. Cinda Scott and Deputy Director Dr. Grant Blume, to strengthen ocean equity principles in their research and to establish and develop a society for ocean equity.

In the world of ocean policy and governance, protecting the environment first, then considering human beings is the dominant mode of thought for policy prioritization. However, Ocean Nexus believes in placing the highest priority on supporting people who are suffering the most from the impacts of environmental change. Therefore, Ocean Nexus places a focus on advancing laws, policies, education and science that center those who bear the greatest burdens. In this way, by centering people first, rather than the environment, Ocean Nexus focuses its research and efforts on ocean equity.

It is important to note that ocean equity is distinct from equality. As Harvard Professor Martha Minow has explained through the words of a civil rights activist: “Equality is giving everyone the same thing; equity is giving people what they need.” Ocean equity therefore involves ensuring appropriate support and rights for people who have been marginalized by factors such as race, gender, class, or geography, and addressing the structural inequalities that shape their lives. Importantly it also requires a redistribution of power thus equity is not about treating everyone the same—it is about prioritizing those who have been placed at a disadvantage.

The most essential knowledge lies in the lived experiences of people on the frontlines—those who have been responding to environmental changes directly for generations. Unfortunately, the voices of those who have been historically marginalized have been overshadowed in struggles over power, resources, and decision-making, yet these communities who have long cared for the ocean are expected to endure disasters, resource depletion, and pollution impacts on their own.

To highlight this inequity, participants of the symposium heard from a series of speakers on a variety of topics. Dr. Amelia Moore spoke on

“Social Impact of Changes in the Marine Environment”, Dr. Andres M. Cisneros-Montemayor shared his research on “Future Predictions for the Blue Economy”, and Dr. Randall Abate discussed, “A Legal Approach Rooted in Social Justice at Sea”. The symposium provided a wonderful venue for Ocean Nexus to reaffirm its values of ocean equity. We were honored to hear remarks from Nippon Foundation Honorary Chairman, Yohei Sasakawa and Chairman, Takehisa Ogata. Additionally, University of Rhode Island President, Dr. Marc B. Parlange shared his thoughts about the importance of Ocean Nexus and ocean equity around the world and in Rhode Island (the Ocean State). Ocean Nexus Director Dr. Yoshitaka Ota shared remarks on social justice in the ocean.

Ocean equity seeks a fundamentally different future with the goal of ensuring that all people can benefit from the ocean by building the knowledge, governance systems, and institutions needed to make this possible. It envisions the ocean as:

- a place where people live and thrive,
- a place where culture and identity grow,
- and a place whose benefits are shared by all.

Developing the intellectual and institutional foundations that allow us to restore the ocean as a space of life, culture, and collective wellbeing—that is the essence of Ocean Equity and how Ocean Nexus and its fellows and researchers envision the future of our oceans.

Please follow Ocean Nexus on Instagram, LinkedIn and Substack and visit our website www.oceannexus.org for more information.

IG: @oceannexus, LinkedIn: @oceannexus, Substack: @theconfluencenews

-Editorial Note-

The Nippon Foundation Ocean Nexus Program, launched in 2019, builds decades of the Foundation’s commitment to protecting the ocean and follows the earlier Nereus Program (2011–2019), which focused on forecasting the ocean’s future. Recognizing a growing crisis in ocean equity and the breakdown of equitable access to marine resources, Ocean Nexus was established to advance “ocean social justice.” Today, it connects more than 300 researchers worldwide to promote equitable ocean governance through collaborative, interdisciplinary research and global partnerships.



Depth Through Dialogue: Italy and Philippines Forge a High-Impact Partnership in the Submerged Frontier



Rommel Agsaullo Supangan
(Philippines, 2008)

The Stratbase ADR Institute, in partnership with the Italian Embassy in the Philippines and Fincantieri, hosted the landmark forum entitled “The Underwater Dimension as a New Frontier of Security and Cooperation: Common Challenges and Regional Specificities in the Dialogue between Italy and the Indo-Pacific” last November 12, 2025 at the Makati Diamond Residences, Makati City.

In his Opening Remarks, the Italian Ambassador, H.E. Davide Giglio spotlighted one of the world’s most consequential yet least understood arenas: the underwater domain. He could not more emphasize that the world’s next great strategic frontier lies not in the skies or on the seas, but beneath them.

Stratbase Institute President Prof. Dindo Manhit explained why the Philippines is at the heart of this submerged reality. Across the Philippines’ east and west lie subsea cables that quietly make modern life possible, carrying local and international data, commerce, and connectivity. Any disruption, he warned, would hinder information flows and destabilize regional trade.

MGEN Nestor C Herico PN(M)(Ret) reinforced this urgency in his Keynote Speech, noting that underwater threats are no longer incidental but increasingly intentional. Premising that “data is the new oil,” he pointed that a single severed cable can constitute an act of warfare. Incidents in the Taiwan Strait, Baltic Sea, and Red Sea show that no region is insulated from this threat.

In the first panel, a key highlight came from CAPT Francesco Ruggiero of the Italian Navy General Staff, who presented Italy’s National Underwater Dimension Hub in La Spezia: an innovative, multi-agency ecosystem advancing situational awareness, unmanned underwater systems, and technological sovereignty. Their output-based approach, powered by public-private and military-academic collaboration, offers a compelling model for Philippine adaptation.

Rear Admiral (RADM) Roy Vincent Trinidad, Spokesperson for the West Philippine Sea and Inspector General, Philippine Navy, affirmed growing Philippine-Italy cooperation, from high-level defense talks to capability development and interest in manned and unmanned underwater systems. Industry insights from Engr. Aurora Buzzo, Area Manager Sales,



From left to right: Roben Navarro De Guzman (2009); Rommel Agsaullo Supangan (2008); Dr. Fabrizio Bozzato (SPF); and Christine Pauline Bergano Dicano (2015).

Fincantieri, further elaborated the alignment between conditions within Mediterranean Seas and the West Philippine Sea, from dense cable routes to hybrid risks, opening paths for industrial cooperation and aligned with the Philippines’ Self-Reliant Defense Posture (SRDP). Meanwhile, the second panel examined broader Indo-Pacific and European dynamics. Mr. Matteo Piasentini, Senior Lecturer, Department of Political Science, University of the Philippines - Diliman, outlined Italy’s position to diversify partnerships, which aligns with the Philippines’ Comprehensive Archipelagic Defense Concept (CADC) and its SRDP initiatives, creating a natural convergence as both nations explore the strategic niche of subsea security and resilience.

RADM Rommel Jude Ong (Ret), Non-Resident Fellow, Stratbase Institute, grounded his discussion in Philippine realities. He outlined a practical yet forward-looking framework for subsea cable protection. His vision included strategic deterrence, acoustic sensors, hardened cable landing stations, integrating cable protection into patrol missions, and deepened bilateral cooperation across the subsea technology spectrum.

Italian scholar, Prof. Fabrizio Bozzato, Senior Research Fellow, Sasakawa Peace Foundation, drew from Italy’s experience as the Mediterranean’s subsea crossroads, with Sicily at its center. His message was memorable and cautionary: societies must abandon the comfort of “out of sight, out of mind.” Nations must learn to keep their eyes, not just on the ocean, but under it.

After the last moderation, the dialogue closed with a striking consensus: the underwater domain is the new arena where technology, security, and sovereignty converge. Italy and the Philippines now stand poised to forge a cooperative and future-ready partnership, securing not only the depths below but the stability of the Indo-Pacific above.

Mission from Dar Es Salaam to Tokyo



Hassan Mrisho Kheri
(Tanzania, 2008)

Since January 2021 to date, I am working at the Prime Minister’s Office, Policy, Parliament Affairs & Coordination (PMO-PPC) as Maritime Coordinator. I coordinated the project of Tackling Illegal Maritime Activity in Tanzania, funded by the Government of Japan and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). Phase-one of the project, I managed to procure one patrol boat with 30 knots from Turkey and establish the “National framework coordination mechanism for tackling illegal maritime activities”. The second phase of the project involves the procurement of two 50-knot patrol boats from Yamaha Motor Company Ltd in Japan.

The Mission started in March 2025. The Tanzanian delegation carried out a due diligence assessment of Yamaha, focusing on its patrol and surveillance boat manufacturing capacity. The delegation visited Yamaha facilities to evaluate production capacity, quality control and manufacturing processes.

Yamaha has extensive experience in constructing high-speed security boats, with a proven record of supplying patrol vessels to law enforcement and security agencies across Asia, Africa, the Caribbean and island nations. This demonstrates Yamaha’s global capacity to meet demanding government security requirements.



The delegation from Tanzania at the Yamaha Motor Co. Ltd.

From 31 August to 6 September 2025, the Permanent Secretary of PMO-PPC led a delegation to Japan to inspect the construction of the two patrol boats at Yamaha. They visited the factory to observe fiberglass hull construction. Boat 1 was reported to be 100% complete and ready for sea trials. They also visited H.E. Baraka H. Luvanda, Ambassador of Tanzania to Japan, and Japan’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs to strengthen bilateral cooperation.

I was fortunate to meet Mr. Eisuke Kudo from the Sasakawa Peace Foundation during the visit. We talked about the achievements we have attained since graduating from WMU and how The Nippon Foundation continues to connect us professionally.

A Timeless Symbol of Challenge

~First-Ever WMU Class 2004 Reunion~



Naoki Saito
(Japan, 2004)

We graduated from WMU in 2004 - the year of the Athens Olympics. More than 20 years have passed since our graduation, and our first-ever reunion was held at WMU on 3 November, following the graduation ceremony 2025 on 1 November. We are deeply grateful to Dr. Aspasia Pastra who is Assistant Professor of WMU and also 2004 graduate for her dedication and efforts in making this gathering possible.

Nine alumni from the Class 2004 participated in the reunion. Among them were Sasakawa Fellows, Mr. Junzhong Bao (China, MET), Ms. Fumi Yakabe (Japan, MA) and Mr. Donny Michael (India, MA), who attended in person. Mr. Fernando Bustamante Igartua



(Mexico, PM) joined online from Panama. In addition, Mr. Mohab Mohamoud Abou-Elkawam (Egypt, MSEP), a graduate of the Class 2003, also attended in person.

The building where we studied has already been demolished and replaced with a new one, but it is still “our WMU,” unchanged in our hearts. When we were students in 2004, topics such as autonomous navigation, alternative fuels, environmental regulations, the SDGs, and cybersecurity did not yet exist in the maritime society. However, as these issues have now become critical challenges for achieving a sustainable maritime society, the fact that our classmates from the Class 2004 are taking on these challenges demonstrates that the knowledge we gained at WMU remains relevant across generations. At WMU, we learned the courage to face challenges.

We received a fragment of the old WMU building from President Maximo Q. Mejia, Jr. as a memento. Just as this fragment will never fade, I am confident that the friendship among us -the Class 2004 - will also remain unfading. And we will continue to take on the challenges facing the maritime society in the years ahead.

The long and Tough Journey to a Doctor of Philosophy

Yusuke Mori (Japan, 2014)

At 17:10 on 12 November, informing the end of the journey for the Doctor of Philosophy in Maritime Affairs, the sound of the bell echoed through the Sasakawa Auditorium at World Maritime University. This long and tough journey began in May 2021, when COVID-19's influence was still lingering. While serving as Deputy Executive Director of the International Association of Maritime Universities (IAMU), my PhD study was on a part-time, non-resident basis. After four years of study, with more than a thousand articles read, data collection from 48 interviews and 10 focus group discussions, another data collection from 25 experts, transcripts of verbal data, analysis, lectures, and the publication of research papers, the dissertation was submitted at the end of May 2025. The “Spikning” (in Sweden, nailing the dissertation) at WMU's library was held on 10 November, making the dissertation publicly available. The deliberation at Viva voce on 12 November was an enjoyable discussion with the opponent and the examination board members, lasting 4 hours. The day ends with a beautiful ringing of the bell at the Sasakawa auditorium, with a recommendation for the degree announced by the head of the examination board.

Patience, dedication, effort, fortitude, anxiety, motivation, and courage—It is hard to find the appropriate words to describe the journey to the PhD. But it was really hard, challenging, a long journey, ultimately filled with joy.



During research data collection, many of the WMU Sasakawa fellows helped me establish the network and even served as interviewees. My special thanks go to my best friend, Dr. Aleik Nurwahyudy (Indonesia, 2014), who supported my research trip to Indonesia and continued to challenge me during my study.

I also appreciate all the fellows for your encouragement and support.

PhD dissertation, “Improving onboard training for deck cadets: An analysis through the lens of learning theories,” is available at the link below:

https://commons.wmu.se/phd_dissertations/43/



Dr. Yohei Sasakawa Meets WMU Sri Lanka Fellows in Colombo



Yapa Rajapriya Serasinghe
(Sri Lanka, 2017)

Dr. Yohei Sasakawa, Honorary Chairman of The Nippon Foundation and a globally respected philanthropist, visited Sri Lanka and met with the Sri Lanka Sasakawa Fellows of the World Maritime University (WMU) at the Cinnamon Grand Hotel, Colombo, on November 7, 2025.

During the meeting, Dr. Sasakawa shared his vision for the future of the global maritime sector and outlined The Nippon Foundation's continued commitment to advancing maritime education, safety, and sustainable ocean governance. He also emphasized the importance of humanitarian values and collaborative efforts in addressing challenges faced by maritime communities both in Sri Lanka and around the world.

The Sri Lanka WMU Sasakawa Fellows expressed their deep appreciation for Dr. Sasakawa's enduring support for maritime professionals and his remarkable contribution to humanity through his leadership and philanthropy. As a gesture of gratitude and respect, the Fellows presented a token of appreciation to Dr. Sasakawa to commemorate his visit and the memorable interaction.



Dr. Sasakawa's visit reaffirmed the strong relationship between The Nippon Foundation, the World Maritime University, and Sri Lanka's maritime community. His continued engagement is expected to inspire future collaboration and strengthen the role of Sri Lankan maritime professionals in contributing to global maritime development.

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Formal Adoption of the Charter of Friends of WMU, Japan



Following our recent communication to members regarding the Charter of Friends of WMU, Japan, we are pleased to announce its formal adoption.

The Charter was shared with all members for review in order to promote transparency and to confirm a common understanding of the Association's purpose, structure, and operational arrangements. We sincerely appreciate the comments received from members during the review period. As of the designated deadline, comments from one-third or more of the authorized members were not received. Accordingly, in line with the stated adoption procedure, the Charter has now been formally adopted.

As previously communicated, the Charter reflects the Association's long-standing practices and does not introduce any changes to members' rights, obligations, or day-to-day involvement.

The content of the charter will be posted in the next issue.

We sincerely thank all members for their continued support and cooperation, and we look forward to further strengthening our network within the global maritime and ocean community.

Editor's Note

I'm honoured to introduce myself as the new editor of this newsletter, taking over after Ms. Sue Jackson. I would like to begin by expressing my deep gratitude to Ms. Jackson, the other editors and the Sasakawa Peace Foundation for their dedication, creativity, and the strong foundation they've laid for this community.

A bit about me: as some of you may remember from an earlier newsletter, I joined WMU in February 2024 as the new Assistant University Registrar (Student Services). I was born and raised in Malmö but spent most of my professional life abroad. I'm happy to have returned home while still keeping an international

perspective to my work. Knowing how it feels to be new (and sometimes a bit lost!) in a foreign country helps me better understand and support our students on their journey while at WMU.

I've always believed that great stories connect us, inspire us, and spark meaningful conversations. My goal as editor is to help the Friends of WMU newsletter continue to share updates, insights, and ideas that matter to our readers.

Thank you for giving me this opportunity, I look forward to the work we'll do together!



Madeleine Lerup

Assistant University Registrar,
Student Services,
World Maritime University
Editor, Friends of WMU Japan
Newsletter



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Friends of WMU, Japan Secretariat, The Sasakawa Peace Foundation
The Sasakawa Peace Foundation Bldg., 1-15-16 Toranomon, Minato-ku, Tokyo 105-8524 Japan
Tel: +81-(0)3-5157-5210 Fax: +81-(0)3-5157-5230 URL: <http://www.spf.org/en/>

