

## **IPBA Scholar Report on 28<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting and Conference**

I would like to extend my sincere thanks and gratefulness to the IPBA Scholarship Committee for providing me an opportunity to participate in its 28<sup>th</sup> IPBA Annual Meeting and Conference. Specifically, I would like to thank Ms. Rhonda Lundin, Ms. Yukiko Okazaki and Mr. Jay Lemoine for their support and assistance. The experience and knowledge that I gained from the Conference has been beneficial and inspirational to me both personally and professionally.

I reached Manila on the evening of March 13, 2018. I went straight to the hotel and rested so that I am well prepared for the three days Conference. On the first day of the Conference, I met six other IPBA scholars' from different countries. Early morning, Mr. Jay LeMoine, Ms. Christine Chen, and Mr. Picharn Sukparagansee from the IPBA Scholarship Committee gave us a warm welcome at F1 Hotel. Later, we went to visit a Regional Trial Court in Makati and met the Executive Judge of the Makati City Regional Trial Court, Hon. Elmo Alameda. He gave us a brief introduction to the judiciary system of Philippines, which was quite insightful. After that we went to visit Romulo Mabanta Buenaventura Sayoc & De Los Angeles, one of the leading corporate law firms in Philippines. This introduced me to the corporate structure of law firms in Philippines. I was impressed with the organization and structure of the law firm. Visiting this law firm made me wonder about how different is the corporate legal sector in my own country.

After that we went to Shangri-La at the Fort where the Conference was organized. We attended two plenary sessions which introduced us to the possibilities of doing business in Philippines and the business of corporate counsels. Later we attended a new Members/IPBA Scholars Reception. We, seven scholars, introduced ourselves, our background, and the areas in which we are working, to the IPBA members from different countries. We were also presented with a Certificate of Participation in the Scholarship Program. After our presentation, I introduced myself to lawyers practicing in many different jurisdictions. I felt very privileged to be able to exchange ideas with so many lawyers and expand my professional network. In the evening, we had a welcome reception with a theme "Kaon na Ta". Various performances were shown in the program which was very relaxing after a long hectic day. I enjoyed the reception tremendously.

The other two day of the Conference started with sessions. I attended a session titled “Training and Mentoring Junior Lawyers in Legal Profession” as it was a new topic for me. Coming from a country with very few established corporate law firms, this session helped me to understand the importance of training and mentoring for junior lawyers. I also participated in two sessions on data protection. Data protection and privacy law is a relatively new topic and I was able to understand how various jurisdictions treat this novel and sensitive issue.

I also attended a session on the effects of plain packaging requirement on tobacco products and such measures’ implications for intellectual property. As our law firm is involved in monitoring and updating our clients on tobacco regulations, this session was particularly useful for me. A session entitled “Is Artificial Intelligence (AI) going to replace us?” was a quite new topic for me. It provided an overview on Artificial Intelligence in today’s world, its common business and legal uses, its potential benefits and dangers.

On the last day of the program, I attended IPBA’s Annual General Meeting to understand the working system of IPBA. I was inspired by the working system of the IPBA committees and was pleased to learn that the membership of IPBA has been increasing since its inception. I communicated with lawyers from various jurisdictions during tea breaks, over lunch and gala dinner and at the Farewell party. I enjoyed Philippine food, music and dancing with the Philippine artists was quite fun. We also went to a Northern American night which was quite entertaining.

Overall, the program was very memorable. The IPBA provided me with a platform to connect with lawyers around the world and expand my knowledge and professional network. I am looking forward to participate in IPBA’s future Conferences.

**Usha Pandey**