



FIJI NATIONAL UNIVERSITY

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Mohammed Taslim (4th from right) with the IMO Secretary General and Representatives from member states at the IMO HQ – London.

Student life in Europe

by Mohammed Taslim

Whilst being employed by Fiji National University's (FNU), Fiji Maritime Academy (FMA), it has been quite an experience for me being a Masters student on a full fellowship award from the Australian Maritime Safety Authority (AMSA) to study at the World Maritime University in Malmo Sweden, specialising in Maritime Education and Training (Maritime Affairs).

I am grateful to be living and studying in Sweden amongst colleagues from about 100 different countries and be part of a learning experience where studies are electronically-based and consist of blended learning and e-exams.

The first four months of our Masters programme allows us to fully understand the International Maritime System, including Maritime Law and Policy, Maritime Economics and Governance, Management & Organisational Behavior, International Maritime Organization (IMO) Governance.

Later, our studies were directed towards our individual specialisation.

To adapt quickly, I have managed to absorb the Swedish and Arabic languages, which made my life even easier as the national language here is Swedish.

Earlier this month, we visited the International Maritime Organization (IMO) in London to attend the 6th session HTW 6/12 meeting by the sub-committee in Human Element, Training & Watch keeping.

Key elements were discussed and part of the meeting involved member states agreeing on the communication of information in accordance with the 1978 STCW Convention (International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Seafarers).

It was a very proud moment for me to be part of this international level meeting with representatives from the member states from all around the world. After the afternoon session of the discussions, I was allowed to meet the Secretary General of IMO, Kitack Lim, and whilst introducing myself to the SG, I heard someone said "Bula Taslim" from behind.

I was amazed to meet another Fijian friend, Litiana, who is the only Fijian working at IMO in the Secretary General's Office.

Imagine my happiness having a talanoa (chat) with a Fijian after being away from Fiji for 14 months now.

Since Fiji was a colony of the United Kingdom, it was not difficult to adapt to London during my visit. I found that there were many similarities.

There were many similarities between Fiji and London in the building designs, vehicles and communication, which is English.

This is a difference in Sweden, where language is a barrier, vehicles are left-hand drive and the population of Malmo City, where I stay, is almost the same as Fiji's population.

Being a football fan, I had the lifetime opportunity of visiting Arsenal, Chelsea and Manchester Football clubs and stadiums.

While in UK, I also visited the Fleetwood Nautical Institute, Liverpool. They offer Navigation, Marine Engineering and related Seafarer training similar to what we offer at our Fiji Maritime Academy (FMA).

We spent 2 nights at the Fleetwood Nautical Institute and then flew back to Malmo through Manchester. As part of our field studies, I also visited places

such as Norway, Horton, Oslo, Denmark, Stockholm, Barcelona and Italy. This was to understand how the Maritime Industry is progressing.

As you know, 90 percent of world trade is through maritime transportation.

Later this week (May 25), we will be travelling to Manila, Philippines to study their Maritime education and training system, as Philippines is one of the major seafarer supplying country in the world.

Considering the Shipping Industry 4.0, I'm doing my thesis on the impact analysis of introducing eLearning to our Fijian Seafarers. This is in line with the rapid change in technology and to ensure that us Fijians are not left behind when it comes to modern teaching methods.

At this point, I am thankful to the current Government of Fiji for its effort in making the world recognise the potential Fijians have and the impact Fiji is making towards issues such as ocean governance and climate change.

I was honored and appreciated when the President of World Maritime University, Cleopatra Doumbia-Henry mentioned the leadership of Prime Minister of Fiji Frank Bainimarama at COP23.

Being the only Fijian present at the conference, I was impressed that she would even mention Fiji.

Finally, I would like to say a big vinaka vakalevu (thank you) to the FNU Vice Chancellor Professor Nigel Healey, Registrar Sarita Devi, FMA Chief Executive Officer Mahesa Abeynayake, Acting Dean CEST Salaboagi Mavoa and my wife Misbah Takenat Tasneem.

I am looking forward to my graduation in November 2019 and should return to Fiji after the ceremony.

I want to encourage more Fijians to their further studies and contribute towards our nation and make Fiji proud.

Vinaka!

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He is currently a final year Masters scholarship student at the World Maritime University in Malmo, Sweden, specialising in Maritime Education & Training (Maritime Affairs).

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