CONFERENCE REPORT
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1. INTRODUCTION
“Developing International Law in Challenging Times.” To approach this topic, the International Law Association (ILA) convened its 78th Biennial Conference from 19-24 August 2018. A group of highly distinguished scholars and practitioners in the field of international law gathered at the beautiful Intercontinental Hotel in Sydney, New South Wales, Australia. As an ILA scholarship holder, I had the honour to attend to this event. I summarize my experience in this regard in this report.

2. CONFERENCE PROGRAM
SUNDAY - WELCOME RECEPTION
During this evening reception, I had the opportunity to get acquaintance with among others two recipients of the ILA scholarship - Mr. Bichet Nicoletti and Mr. Osiecki, Ms. Juliet Fussell - member of the organization committee of the ILA Scholarship Fund, Ms. Natalie Klein - member of the organization committee of the Conference, and some members of the German Branch of the ILA that I am planning to join. These new contacts were established after the welcome speech of Dr. Christopher Ward SC, Lord Mance, Gitanjali Bajaj on behalf of the conference sponsor DLA Piper, and Hon. Mr. Coleman MP. This last speaker grasped the relationship between Australia and International Law by referring to the cases of Phillip Morris and East Timor. It was very enlightening for me to understand the role that international law has played in Australia.

MONDAY
The opening ceremony took place at the New South Wales Parliament House that was located close to the Intercontinental Hotel. During this ceremony, it was particularly interesting to experience the election of Dr. Christopher Ward as the new president of the ILA. In addition, especially due to my interest on indigenous issues, I was fascinated to watch the performance of different types of Australian aboriginal dances on the stage. Australian aboriginal peoples explained the meaning of these dances for their communities and the role of aboriginal peoples in Australian history. This helped me to understand Australian cultural and historical specificities.

Following an invitation by Mr. Dieter Fleck - rapporteur of the ILA committee on nuclear weapons, I participated in this panel as speaker and presented my research on the Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in Latin America and the Caribbean. I researched on this topic for the sake of developing this presentation to the ILA Conference. The audience received this presentation very well. In addition, I could establish an academic cooperation with members of the ILA committee on nuclear weapons, non-proliferation and contemporary international law.
In the afternoon, I went to the open session of the ILA committee on feminism and international law. During this session, the members of this committee discussed their draft report in a very pleasant atmosphere. The topic of this report focused on the economic empowerment of women. For the sake of the development of my own work, I paid particular attention to the explanation by Professor Christina Binder on the case law of the Inter-American Human Rights System and the analysis concerning best practices in Brazil for the empowerment of women.

In the evening reception at the Federal Court of Australia, the Chief of Justice gave us the welcome speech. The building of the Federal Court offered a magnificent view of the city. Here I was able to start a networking with Korean and Chinese scholars.

TUESDAY

The day started with a business breakfast with Dr. Sarah Nouwen, Mr. Damian Sturzake and Professor Catherine Kessedjian. Following their invitation, the ILA scholarship holders gathered together with them at the Intercontinental Hotel. We had the opportunity to present ourselves, our work, and hear about theirs. Importantly, our hosts gave us space to ask questions about the organization and the work of the ILA branches and committees. Since this ILA conference was the first one for some of us, this opportunity was very meaningful for our integration with the ILA. I would recommend to institutionalize this type of practice (business breakfast with ILA scholarship holders) for the future editions of the ILA conference.

In the morning, I attended the panel on teaching and education in international law and the ILA committee open working session on international protection of consumers. I found the topic of the panel on teaching and education in international law innovative compared to the topics of other international conferences to which I have previously attended. At this panel, I heard discussions about experimental teaching in international law. This was very inspiring for me. After the coffee break, I went to the working session on the international protection of consumers and participated in the debate about the draft report of this committee by the rapporteur Professor Dan Wei. It was great to hear first-hand insights by the professor on this topic that was brand-new to me.

During lunchtime, I had the wonderful opportunity to attend to the keynote speech of the Hon. Michael Kirby AC CMG on his work related to his function as chairperson of the UN commission of inquiry on North Korea. It was so great to hear about the challenges involved in writing a report about the situation of human rights in a closed society such as North Korea. This type of information is not available in written materials or accessible to the public. This is the reason why I believe it was a unique and extremely enriching speech.

In the afternoon, I went to the panel on the concept of imminence in international law and presented my poster through an oral communication. At the panel, I heard the talk by Professor Kälin on the issue of interim measures of protection in international human rights adjudication. With respect
to this presentation, I particularly enjoyed his explanation on the case law of the human rights committee. Then, I presented my poster on indigenous peoples and self-determination in international law. It was an amazing experience for me to present it at the premier’s room of the Intercontinental Hotel and to be chaired by Dr. Keith Suter.

I participated in the evening in the reception sponsored by Marque Lawyers at the Intercontinental hotel. This event had as guest speaker Ms. Melissa Conley-Tyler. During the reception, I had a conversation with one of the rapporteurs of the ILA committee on procedure of international courts and tribunals. This conversation was a good opportunity to comprehend the work of the ILA rapporteurs and to grasp the best way to engage in the ILA.

WEDNESDAY

In the morning, I divided myself between multiple panels. On the first half of the morning, I went to the panels on general principles of law in a rules-based order and engaging with non-state actors in international law. After hearing the talk by Professor Brad Roth, I moved to another room for the panel on non-state actors. There I had the pleasure of hearing the presentation by Dr. Nicolette Butler. Besides that, I had the opportunity to hear and meet Dr. Oluwatobiloba Moody of the CIGI Canada. Dr. Moody grasped the evolving regime-complex for traditional knowledge of indigenous peoples as developed by the World Intellectual Property Organization. Such elucidation helped me to increase my interest and knowledge on the ongoing challenges surrounding the indigenous peoples’ international movement. On the second half of the morning, I attended the panels on the development of international law in the area of business and human rights, and private international law challenges in China.

After lunch, I participated in the working sessions of two different ILA committees: Islamic law and international law and participation in global cultural heritage governance. I am not very familiar with those topics and this is why I chose to go to these committees, to expand my horizons on international law. These topics represent new regimes for me - far away from my academic routine. Striking for me was the contrast regarding the work progress of these committees. While the committee on Islamic law was discussing its last report, the committee on cultural heritage was debating on the nature of its mandate.

In the evening, I went to the special dinner event at the Luna Park. It was a lovely evening with extraordinary food in which I had the chance to seat close to the representatives of the Chilean Branch of the ILA. Additionally, the keynote speech by Professor Mary Ellen O’Connell was marvelous. Her analysis on the relationship between naturalism, international law, and the use of force in a technological future was cutting-edge.
THRUSDAY

The last day of conference was very productive and fast. I had a coffee with a former chair of the ILA Committee on the rights of indigenous peoples. Since this topic was much related to my doctoral research, it was wonderful for me to have this conversation. I learned a lot from the rapporteur’s expertise on this field. Moreover, I went to an informal discussion with the ILA scholarship holders about our current research endeavors. Ms. Meyer, Mr. Osiecki, Mr. Kouna, and Mr. Bichet Nicoletti presented their projects whereas Mr. Bhatt and I mostly asked questions to them. It was great to get to know even better the other ILA scholarship holders. Finally, during the closing ceremony, it was very interesting to watch the issuance of the new ILA resolutions. In addition, following Dr. Nouwen’s invitation, as an ILA scholarship holder, I had the opportunity to address shortly the participants of the closing ceremony. This opportunity was not only important for expressing my gratitude to the ILA, but also it was very effective for broadening my contact network. I believe it would be extremely important to institutionalize this tradition to the benefit of future ILA scholarship holders.

3. CONCLUSION

The ILA Conference 2018 will remain as a landmark in my career as young international legal scholar. It was undoubtedly an outstanding event compared to others conferences on international law. The success of this event drew upon the high level of the participants, the welcoming atmosphere, and the impeccable organization. I would like to express my most sincere thanks to all the persons who collaborated with this event.

For my academic life, it was meaningful to achieve all the goals that I set prior to my participation in the conference. First, I presented my poster on self-determination and indigenous peoples. By doing so, I received constructive feedback on this topic by brilliant scholars. Besides that, I held an additional presentation on nuclear law that evoked an invitation for publication. Second, I could expand my contact networking that now includes scholars from all over the world. Prior to the conference, my networking was more European related because I have been conducting research in Germany for the past few years. By being an ILA scholarship holder, the experience of contact networking was enhanced. Scholars came to congratulate me for obtaining the scholarship and asked about my research. Third, I could attend to a myriad of events during the conference. This was essential to expand my horizons on international law, i.a. by hearing advanced analysis on topics, which are not very much disseminated in European legal scholarship.

This fantastic experience made me want to engage substantially with the work of the ILA. Currently, I am planning to join an ILA branch and committee. In addition, I am willing to attend ILA regional meetings in the following years. The obtention of the ILA scholarship was crucial for me. As a young scholar, I would not have had the financial means to participate in the 2018 ILA
Conference without the ILA support. I am deeply grateful for that. The 2018 ILA Conference was a first step of a long-term relationship. I hope to see you again 2020 in Kyoto!

ILA Scholarship Holders 2018