

CONFERENCE REPORT

As I prepare this conference report, I am reminded of the excitement that I felt upon being informed that I had been awarded the taxation section scholarship, followed by the anticipation of what lay ahead. I had heard a lot about the International Bar Association (“IBA”) Annual Conferences but was yet to experience one. It was only once that I was there did I realize the reality was beyond my imagination. Now when I have to pen down my experience at the IBA Annual Conference, 2009, organized in Madrid (Spain) (“Conference”), I am at a loss for words which would appropriately and sufficiently describe one of the best experiences that I have had in my professional life so far; nonetheless following is a summary of the event.

Opening Ceremony

I distinctly remember the overwhelming feeling as all the delegates attending the Conference collected for the opening ceremony at Palacio Municipal de Congresos (Campo de las Naciones). As I watched His Majesty, the King of Spain open the Conference, sitting along with about 5000 other lawyers, I felt as if I was part of something much bigger than I had imagined and for the first time, the enormity and diversity of the legal profession really sunk in. Thereafter everyone proceeded to the Palacio del Negralejo, where everything from the food and wine to the performers were Spanish style and everyone had a great time.

Getting Started

There was a buddy system followed at the Conference, wherein all scholars had buddies who would guide throughout the conference. In fact, a breakfast meeting was organized on the first day of the conference for all scholars to introduce them to their buddies. I think this was a great idea and my buddy Olga Boltenko was very helpful during the Conference.

Further, considering that the first experience in IBA Annual Conferences can be quite intimidating, the first session that I wanted to attend was the Young Lawyer’s introductory meeting organized by Young Lawyers’ Committee. I found the program extremely helpful in getting familiar with IBA and the Conference and I think, all of those who attended it, would agree that it was a great session.

Sessions

During the Conference, since my interest lies in tax and funds, I mostly attended the sessions organized by the Taxation Section, Taxes Committee and the Investment Funds Committee. The sessions were very interesting and detailed leading to healthy discussions between the audience and the speakers. I thought the comparative analysis, wherein the perspectives of

various jurisdictions were examined, was an interesting way of conducting the sessions. Moreover, I appreciate the opportunity to interact with the panelists during the breaks. Everyone seemed very enthusiastic and excited to be at the Conference and amity between the professionals was evident.

Taxation Section Dinner and other Social events

Sitting in the company of tax experts from across the world, I had an amazing time. Everyone was extremely sweet and upon the announcement of my winning the scholarship being made, many were kind enough to come up and congratulate. The dinner was genuinely an experience I would always remember.

Other than the taxation section dinner, I also attended social events organized by various law firms. From the Estadio Santiago Bernabéu to the museums in Madrid, the law firms were very creative in organizing these social events and they were a great opportunity to interact with other delegates.

Arrangements

I was extremely impressed with the way the Conference was organized. Days before the Conference started, the scholars were sent emails clearly explaining what had to be done in the following days. At the Conference, every one was extremely helpful and it was amazing to see the Conference with about 5000 lawyers roll so easily and smoothly into a definite success.

Conclusion

At the end, I would like to sincerely thank IBA for giving me this opportunity and considering my paper worthy of being selected for the scholarship. The level of exposure offered, in terms of *inter alia* interaction with legal experts from across the globe, the legal content, range of perspectives and diversity of culture, by the IBA is very high. To reiterate what I said in the beginning, the Conference makes you realize the enormity of the legal fraternity and opportunity. It was an experience I shall not forget.