

Report on the First-Phase Placement UN-Nippon Foundation of Japan Fellowship

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1. Introduction

This report concerns the process that I have been through during my first-phase placement as one of the 2007-2008 UN-Nippon fellows. This covers not only the placement itself but also the process before and after the placement. This encompasses the time frame from when I heard the information about the fellowship at the first time until the end of my first-phase placement. This report also provides some suggestions for the improvement of the fellowship in the future and concluding remarks.

2. Knowing the Fellowship

It was in June 2006 when a high-ranked officer of Indonesian National Agency for Surveys and Mapping (Bakosurtanal) inform me about the fellowship. Dr. Sobar Sutisna, who is the Head of Centre for Boundary Mapping of Bakosurtanal was in New York, the US at that time when he found out that there was a Technical Cooperation Trust Fund between United Nations and The Nippon Foundation of Japan. The program, according to his short message to me, offered an opportunity to people from developing countries to enhance their knowledge in ocean affairs and law of the sea through research and internship.

The short information was however insufficient for me but was really attractive. Therefore I started to find out myself what the program was all about. Using internet search engine I finally managed to find the website of the fellowship program. As I have a strong interest in the field of ocean affairs and law of the sea, particularly maritime boundary delimitation, I instantly was interested to apply.

The website covers essential information regarding the fellowship reasonably well. Therefore, only from the website I could understand what the program is about and what the requirements are. However the way the information is organized in the website could have been improved by sidebar menu, for instance. It seems to me that the website is constructed by plain html, which is good and light to an extent, but with a less-informative menu structure. Apart from the possible room from improvement, the website has covered essential things a candidate would require for application.

3. The Application

As far as I am concerned, the fellowship website provides all forms required for application. It also informs clearly all supporting documents

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candidates should submit for their application. The fact that it provides candidates with editable application forms is a good idea making the candidates able to fill the form neatly by typing. In addition, the pre-structured proposal form is also an advantage as candidates are helped to formulate their proposal better. It will be different if each candidate is free to build their own-style proposal. This, I suppose, is also to ease the selection team in making final decision.

One concern was regarding the medical requirement. It is to me rather burdening when candidates were asked to provide full health examination records for the application. It is not only that it is unusual for a scholarship/fellowship, this requirement also costs much. Only to send the X-ray film costs me around 50% of my monthly salary as a lecturer in an Indonesian University. It is not because of the weight but due to its 'odd size' the document needed to be treated specially in delivery. This consequently caused expensive charge for posting. In addition, the medical form, to the majority of medical doctors in Indonesia, is not that familiar. It took me a while to explain what the doctor should do for the examination.

Another good thing about the website is that it lists all current and former fellows. This helped me much in securing assistance from existing fellows regarding application. It was Hendra Siry (2006-07) from Indonesia who kindly gave his hand to me when completing my application. I found his name on the website and then made very good contact until today. Other candidates should also be able to take the same advantages as I did.

Surprisingly this year, I am told that there is no application from Indonesia. There must be reasons for that. Hendra and I have tried our best to circulate information about this fellowship and we are ready to assist whoever (especially from Indonesia) with regard to application. Unfortunately no one applies. In my personal opinion, there are two main reasons for this: lack of advertisement of the program and the complicated procedure of application, especially regarding the medical requirements. However, I believe that things are different in different countries. Something that we consider as difficulty might not be seen as obstacle by candidates from different countries.

In term of advertisement, an announcement of the fellowship can be put in national newspapers in Indonesia, for instance. Otherwise, a formal letter can be sent to relevant institutions in Indonesia such as universities, Department of Foreign Affairs, Department of Marine Affairs and Fisheries, Bakosurtanal, etc. I believe this will work better in Indonesia. I am personally available to be the ambassador of the fellowship for Indonesia in the future. With the UN support and permission, I can officially circulate the information to relevant parties in Indonesia. We only need to arrange how things should work.

Concerning the complicated process of application, a pre-registration process might be applied for the Indonesian case. This is a stage where candidates are only assessed based on their academic and professional performance. In this stage, they are not required to submit all the medical

requirements. Only short-listed candidate are invited to submit this ‘final’ requirement. However this is my subjective opinion based on the situation in Indonesia. Different situation should be faced in different countries. I understand that this will bring difficulties to the selection team. No matter what, more applications from around the globe are needed for a better and fairer competition.

4. The Granting Decision

On 1 November 2006, I was informed that my application was successful. I am granted the prestigious UN-Nippon Fellowship to conduct a nine-month research and training funded by the Nippon Foundation of Japan and administered by the United Nations. This is to me a remarkable achievement.

5. Placement Process

In my application I listed three different institutions where I wanted the research to be conducted. The Australian National Centre for Ocean Resources and Security (ANCORS) of Wollongong University is my first preference. The Department of Environmental, Earth and Ocean Sciences (EEOS), University of Massachusetts Boston (U.S.A.) and Indonesian Centre for Law of the Sea (Indonesia) were my second and third option, respectively.

For the reason that I did not really understand, the placement process took a long time to be accomplished. It must be difficult for program advisor to decide who to go where as several things need to be considered. As far as I know, more than one fellow applying for the same institution, for instance, was one of the sources of difficulties. Notwithstanding the reasons, the delay in making the decision to an extent caused problem to me. While my institution had no problem in giving me permission for this fellowship program, it still needed precise information concerning the time as soon as possible as my inexistence in the institution would consequently affect several things. As a lecturer, I needed to make a good plan and collaboration with lecturers who would substitute me for lectures. In addition, for my case as a government employee, no passport application can be made until there is definite state destination for the travel. Similarly, visa application could not be lodged before the decision is made. In the future, the UN should be able to make final decision faster. In that case, the fellows will be very much helped in dealing with their existing duty and institution.

In February 2007, the decision was finally made and informed to me. ANCORS, my first preference was finally agreed to be my first-phase host for a six-month academic research. I was personally satisfied with the decision as I have had good contact with people from ANCORS. Dr. Clive Schofield, my assigned supervisor, was also the supervisor when I did master degree in the University of New South Wales (UNSW). Therefore, I hope I would not face difficulties in supervisor-student relationship.

6. Traveling Administration

Three things were to take care of: visa application, flight ticket purchase, and first month allowance, which is 'Max Trv Rate'. For the visa, I needed to apply for two different visas: Australia and the US. I was lucky as I have been to Australia before so at least I know how to apply for a visa to the country. Everything was available online at the website of Australian Visa Application Centre (AVAC). Similarly, everything was available to me for the US visa application in its website.

For any question regarding the visa, email communication was sufficient. I found difficulties in deciding what type of visa I should apply for Australia and I finally found out through the embassy via email that I needed to apply a short visit visa class 419 for fellowship. Meanwhile, for the US I applied for a business visa. The application for the Australian visa was made in person while for the US was online. It was not yet possible for the Australian visa to be applied online, unlike the US visa.

It was quite surprising that I could get the US visa in only one hour at the day of interview, while it took me more than a week for the Australian one. One of the reasons for the delay was that I needed to seek clearance from the Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID) as I am an alumnus of the program. As required by the AusAID, my visa application to Australia has to be approved by AusAID, whenever I want to travel after my AusAID scholarship program. This means that the embassy would not issue the visa until a clearance was made by the AusAID. After a while, AusAID issued its permission and the Australian visa was granted for me. It was on the 21 February 2007 when the American Visa was granted and only on 2 March 2006 the Australian visa was obtained.

The next step was to obtain the ticket from UNDP in Jakarta, Indonesia. I am told by the UN that a letter has been sent to Jakarta about this and I would be contacted soon. I did wait for a few days but no one contacted me from UNDP until I decided to contact office in Jakarta. I obtained the detail of the office from the letter sent to UNDP by UNDESA, which was copied to me. I thought I did the right thing by contacting the office as it seemed to me that the process of my ticket booking had not yet started until I called. However, the people from UNDP were really helpful. They took care of me and made a very good follow up after my call. It was then confirmed that my ticket was ready for departure on 22 March 2007 from Denpasar to Sydney.

The last thing regarding traveling preparation was the first month allowance (Ma Trv Rate). I was required to establish a USD bank account as the money would be transferred in USD, not in IDR. I was lucky to have a very good relationship with Bank Mandiri, one of the Indonesia's state-owned banks. The process of establishing a USD bank account took me less than an hour. The day after that, the sum of USD 4,253 was transferred to my new account. I was then ready to start the journey.

I departed from Bali on 22 March 2007 (Ngurah Rai International Airport) and arrived in Sydney on the next day.

7. The First Placement

As required by the program, a fellow should spend his/her first six month conducting academic research in a specified institution. In my case, I am assigned at ANCORS, University of Wollongong, in NSW, Australia. Here are several points concerning the first placement.

a. Settling Down

Wollongong to me is not a new place. When pursuing my master degree in the University of New South Wales in Sydney (2004-2006) I visited the place several times. Further more, I had a chance to collaborate with ANCORS as part-time lecturer in 2005. This, consequently, made my early days in Wollongong as a UN-Nippon Fellow easy. I managed to secure a place to stay a month before my arrival due to a help of a friend of mine who is a graduate of the University of Wollongong. Simply speaking, I did not find difficulties in settling down in my new place.

b. Research Topic

The very first thing to do during the first days of my first-phase posting was determining research topic. The grand topic had been previously determined but it needed to be detailed more specifically. My research in ANCORS concerned **The Submission of Indonesia's Extended Continental Shelf** with particular assertion to its current status and problem. The topic was considered as a relevant topic as Indonesia, was currently preparing its submission. By conducting research in such topic I expected to be able to get exposed to the process Indonesia was running. Furthermore, the research would be seen as a recent important issue for Indonesia.

The first month of my placement was used to detail the thesis that I would write during the rest of the six month of my activity in ANCORS. Dr. Francois Bailet and Mr. Luigi Santosuosso of DOALOS provided their kind assistance in formulating my thesis. Their good response to my questions concerning the thesis outline enabled me to enhance the structure of my thesis. With good collaboration with people from DOALOS and my supervisor I finally managed to finalize the thesis outline, based on which my thesis would be built.

c. Research Environment

ANCORS, which was previously known as the Centre for Maritime Policy (CMP) is a well-established centre in the field of ocean affairs and law of the sea. It is one of the 30 reputable participating centers/institutions for the UN-Nippon Fellowship Program. Being attached with the University of Wollongong, the centre is granted with full access to all research facilities, especially massive collection of library. I found that the collections were sufficiently adequate to support my research.

In addition, the center has several staffs and students working in the big area of ocean affairs and law of the sea. This provided me with good

academic environment so that we could exchange ideas and information. The center also has a well-organized seminar program where everybody can be updated with new development in relevant areas.

Being the only surveyor, by profession, in the center, I found the chance to contribute technical aspects of law of the sea to the dynamics of research and studies in the center. I had a chance to collaborate with lawyers and other social scientists where I can contribute my technical expertise in the field of law of the sea. For instance, I drew several maps for PhD students and staffs in the center for their thesis and publications. In some occasion I also had chance to help them understand technical aspects of law of the sea through informal discussion. I created several animations to visualize the law of the sea so that people could understand it easier. An animation related to my research was the one concerning the delimitation of continental shelf beyond 200 nautical miles (extended continental shelf). It helped my fellow lawyers understand how extended continental shelf should be delimited by coastal states.

d. Supervision

Dr. Clive Schofield was my academic supervisor during my first-phase placement. He was also co-supervisor for my thesis when I did my master in UNSW, Sydney in 2004-2006. We developed a very good relationship during my master study and established a very good arrangement to work together. We even kept writing some publications when I was in Indonesia. This, in fact, was an advantage for me when I was conducting the fellowship. I did not find much difficulty in building good relationship with my supervisor so then we could focus on the research project.

Communication between Clive and I was really good and we used the internet to exchange ideas and do consultation effectively. The fact that Clive is a busy person made direct communication was not that easy to do. Clive spent a lot of his time out of the center for lectures and presentations so I needed to work independently with minimum supervision. However, I am satisfied with the way we handle the research and we still had enough time for face to face discussion. The only thing is that he is currently busy with many things so that it took him a while to read my draft and give comments. By the time of this report writing, I am still waiting for his response to my draft.

e. Thesis Writing

I started to write the thesis in the second month of my placement. By the time, I have had established the structure of my thesis after consultation with my supervisor and people from DOALOS. The thesis has four chapters: Introduction; Continental Shelf and the Work of the CLCS; The Indonesian Case; and Concluding Remarks. Each chapter is broken down into several topics with smaller scopes.

With regard to thesis format, a template was provided by Hendra Siry, one of the 2006-2007 fellows, which is really useful for all new fellows. The template helps me organizing the thesis more effectively. As I previously mentioned, the thesis writing is an independent activity with minimum supervision. I was given freedom to read and search myself. I also managed to maintain communication with key persons from relevant institutions in Indonesia for latest update and development. However, not all information I obtained were open for public due to the issue of confidentiality. Therefore, I had to carefully select information to be revealed in my thesis.

By the end of first-phase placement, the majority of the thesis draft has been completed. My supervisor is currently reading the draft and will subsequently give comments for corrections.

f. Presentation

As the requirement of this fellowship in ANCORS, a fellow should deliver a presentation concerning his/her research. I was scheduled for a presentation on 19 September 2007 at 10 am. Being a tradition in the centre, everybody in attended the presentation and showed their enthusiasm.

8. Publications

One of the most important parts of conducting research is the chance to publish result of works. During the six-month research in Wollongong I managed to publish some works including papers, newspaper articles, magazine articles, and books. Here is the list of my publications:

- Arsana, I M. A. (2007), Islands, Maritime Jurisdiction and Sovereignty (in Bahasa Indonesia), Suara Pembaruan, 4 September 2007, Jakarta, Indonesia
- Arsana, I M. A. (2007), Extended Continental Shelf: Extending the Indonesia's Maritime Area (in Bahasa Indonesia), SIKLUS, Jurnal Kajian Hubungan Internasional, August 2007, Jakarta, Indonesia (paper accepted for publication)
- Arsana, I M. A. (2007), International Maritime Boundaries - A Technical and Legal Perspective (in Bahasa Indonesia), Gadjah Mada University Press, Yogyakarta, Indonesia
- Arsana, I M. A. (2007), Naming Indonesia's islands has implications for sovereignty, The Jakarta Post, 20 August 2007, Jakarta
- Arsana, I M. A. (2007) Settling Maritime Boundaries, Position Magazine August-Sept, NSW, Australia.
- Arsana, I M. A. (2007), Settling Maritime Boundaries, Asian Surveying & Mapping, 13 June 2007, NSW, Australia
- Arsana, I M. A. (2007), Timor Leste must settle maritime boundary, The Jakarta Post, 23 May 2007, Jakarta
- Arsana, I M. A. (2007), The Negotiation of Indonesia-Singapore Maritime Boundaries (in Bahasa Indonesia), Suara Pembaruan, 11 April 2007, Jakarta, Indonesia

- Arsana, I M. A. (2007), Indonesia-Singapore talks on maritime borders making progress, The Jakarta Post, 5 April 2007, Jakarta

9. The End and Acknowledgment

The presentation I made on 19 September marked the end of my first-phase placement in Wollongong. It was the time for farewell and preparing for the second-phase placement in DOALOS, New York, United States. It was a great time for me to be in the center for the last six month. I had very good relationship as well as learned much from everybody in the center concerning ocean affairs and law of the sea.

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to Dr. Clive Schofield for his guidance and a good supervision. I also thank Prof. Martin Tsamenyi, the director of ANCORS for providing such a great environment for my research. My acknowledgment goes also to Myree Mitchell, for all administrative assistance during my research. Chris Rachman and Lee Cordner AM are also good colleagues to whom I should express my sincere gratitude. To all my friends in the center, Kresno Buntoro, Jane Mbeno, Georgia, Daisuke, Dorina, Michael Garcia, Lowell Bautista, and Amy Emran, I thank them for their support and good friendship. With all of those good colleagues I made my six-month stay in Wollongong a wonderful and fruitful moment.

10. Suggestions

In general I should say that the fellowship, including its advertisement, application, placement process and research is well organized. However, it does not mean that there is no space for improvement. I have mentioned some suggestions that can be considered so the fellowship in general can be improved. The suggestions are relevant to the advertisement, the application, the placement process and research. Some other suggestions are:

- The application procedure can be enhanced by online application system which will be an advantage also in term of data management as also raised by Dr. Bailet, the program adviser.
- Regular communication should be made after the decision of the granting has been made until the placement is decided.
- The fellowship can have a journal publication with ISSN where fellows can publish their work, including final result of their research.
- A regular forum can be established for a medium where former and current fellows can exchange ideas.
- The fellowship can establish other grant scheme to support former fellows conducting projects in their own countries such as research, training, book writing etc. This will also enhance the popularity of the fellowship.

11. Concluding Remarks

UN-Nippon Foundation Fellowship program is a good program through which people from developing countries can enhance their knowledge and understanding concerning ocean affairs and law of the sea. I have been through these last six important months of my research career and am benefited from the program. Not only can I conduct research in a highly reputable research center, this program also provides me with opportunity to network with important people/parties in this area.

Apart from few improvements that can be made to the program in the future, I recommend this program to be sustained for the benefit of mankind in managing our Planet Water: The Earth. However, this is to me not the end of the story as I have another three-month to accomplish. The report concerning my three-month internship in DOALOS will be submitted at the end of the internship, which will be on 23 December 2007.