



The 183rd International Senior Seminar
“Management of Correctional Institutions in the 21st Century
– with a focus on the Nelson Mandela Rules”

1. Duration and Participants

- From 11 January to 6 February 2023
- 14 overseas participants from 13 countries
- 3 participants from Japan

2. Seminar Overview

In order to create a safer and more just society, correctional institutions have two main responsibilities: to protect society from crime and reduce reoffending. To fulfil these responsibilities, criminal justice authorities are obliged to take necessary measures to ensure that prisoners are safely held in custody, ensure that each offender’s human rights are respected, and support their reintegration into society as law-abiding citizens. In this regard, these underpinning principles have been recognized in the international community through international standards and norms, represented by the Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners (Nelson Mandela Rules), adopted by the United Nations General Assembly, which proclaim those principles and embody them in a set of guidelines. The Nelson Mandela Rules call for respectful and fair treatment of inmates, promoting humane conditions of confinement. All these are indispensable preconditions for a rehabilitative environment in prison.

The purpose of the Seminar was to consider the management of correctional institutions in the 21st century based on the International Standards and Norms, including the Nelson Mandela Rules mentioned above. The seminar participants first presented the current state of correctional institutions in their own countries and shared the challenges they faced respectively. The participants learned about measures to tackle overcrowding and achieve a rehabilitative environment through lectures, and further discussed these issues in group workshops. Finally, based on the knowledge and in-depth understanding gained through the Seminar as a whole, they delivered Individual Presentations to present possible solutions to tackle the challenges in each country.

UNAFEI’s Training Courses and Seminars are designed to build a professional network that will enable the sharing of information on each country’s efforts. The seminar participants stayed at the UNAFEI dormitory for four weeks, nurturing friendship through day-to-day exchanges and building a network for life-long international cooperation.

3. Contents of the Seminar

(1) Country Reports

All participants delivered presentations on the systems, practices, statistics and challenges related to correctional institutions in their respective countries. After everyone’s presentations were completed, the Programming Officer summarized the presentations and held a general discussion. The participants diligently made comments and asked questions about challenges such as overcrowding and corruption in correctional institutions, which revealed their strong interest in the main theme of the Seminar.

(2) Lectures

Lectures were given by UNAFEI faculty members, experts from overseas (Visiting

Experts) and Japanese lecturers as listed below. After each lecture, a Q&A session was held. A broad range of questions was asked by the seminar participants to each of the lecturers, which provided a lively exchange of opinions.

i) UNAFEI Faculty Members

- Professor MIYAGAWA Tsubura
Lecture Title: Imprisonment around the World
Lecture Title: International Standards and Norms
- Professor AKASHI Fumiko
Lecture Title: United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for Non-custodial Measures (The Tokyo Rules)
- Mr. Thomas L. Schmid, Linguistic Adviser
Lecture Title: Connecting Correctional Theory with Sustainable Development: An Historical Perspective on the United Nations Crime Congress

ii) Visiting Experts

- Mr. Robert Hollander
Prison System Advisor, International Committee of the Red Cross
Lecture Title: Improvement of Quality of Life and Protection of Human Rights in Correctional Institutions
- Mr. Charlie Taylor
His Majesty's Chief Inspector of Prisons
Lecture Title: The Importance of Independent Inspection in England and Wales (Online)

iii) Japanese Experts

- Mr. SHINIKETANI Ryō, Director of Inspection Office, General Affairs Division, Corrections Bureau of the Ministry of Justice
Lecture Title: Complaints and Inspection System in Penal Institutions in Japan
- Mr. ONO Hiroshi
Manager of General Affairs Section, Training Institute for Correctional Personnel
Lecture Title: Introduction of Training Institute for Correctional Personnel
- Ms. HANDO Mayumi
Research Officer, Centre for Evidence-Based Research
Lecture Title: Introduction of Centre for Evidence-Based Research

(3) Panel Discussion

The following three panellists made presentations on three topics, followed by Q&A and discussion by seminar participants and guests. Active discussions were held on a wide range of topics, including the prison inspection system and the enhancement of staff awareness of human rights.

i) Panellists

Mr. Robert Hollander

Mr. Charlie Taylor

Dr. SHINKAI Hiroyuki, Professor, Faculty of Law, Kanagawa University

ii) Discussion Topic

- Measures to ensure the effectiveness of International Standards and Norms
- Methods for Effective Capacity-Building
- Promoting human rights protection and quality of life in correctional institutions

(4) Group workshops

Seminar participants were divided into three groups to discuss the issues assigned to each group. In the discussions, the participants shared the systems and practices of their respective countries, identified challenges facing the promotion of legal aid based on the knowledge gained through the country report presentations and lectures, and discussed specific solutions to resolve those challenges. Each participant was very enthusiastic and engaged in active discussions. Each group made presentations on the results of the discussion. In response to each presentation, participants in other groups asked insightful questions which contributed to lively presentations.

The main topics and contents of the group presentations are as follows.

- Group 1: “Measures to Ensure the Effectiveness of International Standards and Norms”
 - Ensuring accountability and transparency for management of correctional institutions
 - Establishing an independent oversight body to prevent torture and ill-treatment
 - Implementing institution visits by external agencies
 - Establishing the procedures of filing complaints by inmates
 - Establishing appropriate procedures and guidelines
- Group 2: “Methods for Effective Capacity-Building”
 - Implementing appropriate training and capacity-building programmes for staff
 - Preparation of training curriculum based on International Standards and Norms
 - Collaboration with universities and educational institutions
 - Evaluation of staff who contributed to the introduction of International Standards and Norms
 - Collaboration with private organizations and volunteers
- Group 3: Promoting human rights protection and quality of life in correctional institutions
 - Introduction of alternative punishment and diversion as measures against overcrowding
 - Building the new correctional institutions and renovating deteriorated institutions
 - Ensuring adequate salaries for correctional staff
 - Prevention of corruption through raising the awareness of correctional staff etc.
 - Visits by judges and prosecutors to correctional institutions

(5) Individual Presentations

In the final stage of the seminar, each participant delivered an individual presentation addressing issues in the participant's own country based on the knowledge and in-depth understanding gained through the seminar. Some of the presentations introduced efforts in criminal justice in Japan or compared Japan's system with that of the presenter's country. It was clear that the participants were keen to apply what they had learned at the seminar and the knowledge they had gained at the places they had visited to their future practice.

(6) Self-learning Session

In order to efficiently implement the programme, a self-learning session for about one hour was set up every day. One of the self-learning programmes was e-learning materials on the Nelson Mandela Rules provided by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC). All participants successfully passed the final online examination, and they were issued a certificate. On-demand video materials jointly produced by UNAFEI and the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) were also provided to the participants to learn about the criminal justice system in Japan. When all participants finished watching the videos, UNAFEI Professors conducted a feedback session to deepen their understanding.

4. Feedback from Participants

Many positive opinions were received from the participants on the well-prepared curriculum and the comprehensive content. They commented that they learned much from the programme. Through lectures and visits, the management of correctional institutions and the treatment of offenders in Japan attracted the participants' interest. They were especially surprised by the fact that Japan has managed facilities on an appropriate scale after the period of overcrowding, and that corruption has not spread to correctional officers. Opportunities to interact with Japanese volunteer probation officers greatly impacted the participants, acknowledging the significant contribution of Japanese citizens to the treatment of offenders and prevention of reoffending.

Based on experiences inside and outside the Seminar, including going out to various places on weekends, many participants mentioned that cities in Japan were safe and clean, and that they were impressed by the Japanese people's punctuality and disciplined behaviour.

5. Comments from the Programming Officer

The principles of the International Standards and Norms concerning the management of correctional institutions and the treatment of offenders are very important and essential. Nevertheless, in many countries around the world, overcrowding of correctional institutions is an urgent issue, making it extremely difficult to put these principles into practice. With regard to those circumstances, the main theme of the seminar was highly challenging.

Despite the difficulties, the participants earnestly engaged in the programme to deepen their understanding of the significance of the main theme and to learn from lectures and presentations. They had a high level of insight to objectively analyse the current situation and issues in their own countries. They were also willing to further improve practices in accordance with the principles of the International Standards and Norms. In order to tackle various issues related to the management of correctional institutions, cooperation among relevant organizations with various expertise is indispensable. Therefore, I believe that it is meaningful that the International Senior Seminars invite high-level policy makers and practitioners from various fields of criminal justice. The participants spent four weeks together, sharing experiences and discussing important issues, which contributed to the formation of professional networks and personal friendships.

I was impressed by the sincere attitude and enthusiasm of the participants, and learned much about practices in the participants' countries. I hope that the knowledge gained from the programme will serve as the basis for the development of practice and contribute to the management of correctional institutions and the rehabilitation of offenders in each country.