



COMITÉ MARITIME INTERNATIONAL

PRESIDENT

9 April 2020

MLA Presidents
Titulary Members
Consultative Members

Re: *Postponement of 2020 Tokyo Conference*

Dear Presidents, Titulary Members and Consultative Members,

I hope this letter finds you, your families and colleagues in good health and spirits, coping reasonably well under the circumstances with the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, and getting used to the new normal of Government-imposed lockdowns, social distancing and working remotely.

As advised in my correspondence of 18 March 2020, the Japanese Maritime Law Association, Tokyo Conference Organizing Committee and Executive Council have been monitoring closely the COVID-19 pandemic and its potential impact on the 2020 Tokyo Conference.

The International Olympic Committee recently announced its decision to postpone the Tokyo Summer Olympics by one year. While there are encouraging signs the COVID-19 pandemic is being successfully contained in a number of countries (with welcome news of lockdowns being gradually lifted), other countries may have to maintain lockdowns and social distancing in place for some time before they see a reduction in COVID-19 cases. Additionally, some medical experts are predicting subsequent waves of COVID-19 infections later this year in countries where the virus was initially successfully contained.

Accordingly, it is with considerable regret that the Japanese Maritime Law Association, Tokyo Conference Organizing Committee and Executive Council have decided to postpone the 2020 Tokyo Conference until we have more clarity on how long it will take to contain the COVID-19 pandemic.

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We are currently exploring various options which may allow us to postpone the Tokyo Conference by up to one year (as the Japanese Government has done with the Tokyo Summer Olympics), and are in discussions with the President and Board of Directors of the Canadian Maritime Law Association on what impact (if any) such a postponement might have on the June 2021 CMI event planned for Montreal. We will keep you closely advised of developments in this regard.

At this juncture, it appears unlikely we will be able to conduct an Assembly in 2020 unless the Belgian Government issues a decree or law waiving the requirement of an annual in-person meeting for Belgian legal entities such as the CMI, and allowing for an electronic or virtual annual meeting. Our thanks and appreciation to Jean-Francois Peters, the Chair of the Constitution Committee, who is looking into this matter and remains optimistic the Belgian Government will pass such a decree or law shortly (as was recently done by the German Government), which may enable us to hold an electronic or virtual Assembly later in the year. In the interim, we are also grateful to Giorgio Berlingieri for providing valuable information from the archives detailing how the CMI has dealt with past crises, including confirmation the CMI's work was suspended for 8 and 10 years, respectively, during World War I and World War II. Fortunately, our ability to communicate electronically and work remotely should ensure the work of the CMI continues during these difficult and trying times.

On behalf of the Executive Council, thank you for your continued participation in the work of the CMI, and we very much look forward to seeing you in Tokyo, hopefully in 2021!

Faithfully yours,



Christopher O. Davis