

## **Aleka's Welcome**

It is a great pleasure to see you all here, in person. We have not had a good party for 4 years! So thank you for coming to celebrate the milestone achievements of our young maritime professionals.

When we started the YMP in 2011, I was not certain whether they would persevere for 12 years. Not only have they persevered but have excelled beyond expectations.

During those years, the first wave of the YMP are now in their 40s. They have moved up and forwards in their careers with confidence and skills.

It has been amazing how quickly the YMP are progressing. They have staged fantastic events in both content and performance.

Thanks are due to our corporate members who host them and open their venues to friends and competitors. Of course, the ethos of the LSLC is neutrality, and we have encouraged a spirit of co-operation and friendship.

The branches of the YMP have reached Singapore, Italy, and Geneva.

Undoubtedly, both the YMP and LSLC activities have a positive impact on your firms and chambers.

And thanks to our hybrid events, many, from other countries, are now watching us!

Apart from this commercial effect of these events, in the broader scheme of things, they do exert influence upon the advancement of the law, as well as the promotion of London as the Centre of dispute resolution.

I am personally very proud of the YMP's achievements. It has been like watching a plant grow, and blossom, when it is properly looked after.

So I thank our corporate members, and all of you here, for supporting them. With togetherness, we achieve!

Let me now leave this message to our young professionals:

Do please maintain the ethos of the LSLC.

But do not get shut in the ivory tower of the law; sniff out for ideas and things you can do, to contribute to the industry, and broadly to the community. Expand your tentacles even outside the law.

Let's face it, there are only a few lawyers who have immersed themselves in the law and have had an impact upon its development.

Some of them are in this room as special guests. The best of London, who are role models for you.

I would like now to congratulate the three Chairpersons of the YMP since 2011: Menelaus Kouzoupis, Ian Woods, Francesca Cappa, /and the YMP committee, for their drive, dedication, and excellent work of leadership.

It is due to the energy and determination of Francesca and the YMP committee that we are here today – they raised the funds from our generous sponsors, so they deserve acknowledgment.

But Francesca, in particular, has been impressive for her multitasking, even with a baby in her arms, and her persuasive skills.

Being Italian, she knows that picking up the telephone, to speak to people, produces faster results. But being a lawyer, she does not omit to record the agreement!

I am personally grateful to our sponsors, but I now invite Francesca to thank them and say a few words –

Then Lord Thomas, the President of the LSLC, would like, on your behalf, to express our admiration of the YMP's achievements in the last 12 years.

Thank you.