

**SLS Advanced Degree (LLM, JSM and JSD) Class Remarks, June 2013 by Olivia Jackson**

[As prepared for delivery]

Graduating class of 2013, faculty and staff, family and friends. Good morning.

From Brazil to Belgium, Iceland to India and China to Canada, the international class of 2013 is one of the largest in Stanford Law School's history. This is the first year that Stanford Law School has had a separate advanced degree class speaker and we thank Dean Magill for this opportunity. The 65 advanced degree students graduating today hail from 29 countries. It is an honor to represent them and speak to you all. Frankly, I suspect that my classmates only chose me because of my accent. One of my American friends told me I could stand up and recite the alphabet backwards and everyone would still love it. I've decided instead to take the more traditional route of sharing with you a little about our differences on arriving at SLS as international students, and about the similarities and connections we now have as we graduate.

Many of you have come to know the advanced students over our time here. For those who are not as familiar with us, I'd like to take a moment to explain our backgrounds. Most of us have concentrated almost exclusively on law before coming to SLS, gaining law degrees from our home jurisdictions and working for a number of years in legal practice. Our ranks include former law clerks from the Mexican Supreme Court, the Israeli Supreme Court and international tribunals, as well as former employees at the European Union and the United Nations, together with a number of students who have worked in-house or in private practice across the globe. We are diverse not only in our backgrounds but also our motivations for coming to study here. Some of us want to stay and practice law for a while in the United States. Others want to take all we have learned here and share it at home. Some of us have explored many different subjects in law and other disciplines, while the JSD and JSM students in particular have devoted hours to legal scholarship. Some students came with their families. We take the opportunity now to thank those families, as well as all of our families and friends, for their unfailing support, whether they are watching this later online or have crossed oceans to celebrate with us today.

So as I've explained, we're all very different. But now, along with the rest of the Class of 2013, we all have Stanford Law School in common. During our time here, we have seized academic opportunities, formed deep and lasting friendships and, quite literally, given the Californian backdrop, expanded our horizons.

I'm going to talk about the friendships we have forged first. It is fair to say we have had some American adventures together, from trying our hands at beach volleyball, to embarking on possibly ill-advised road trips to Vegas, to trips to Lake Tahoe where experienced skiers taught beginners from hotter climates how to fall over gracefully. We have thrown ourselves into Stanford life too, forming rock bands, challenging both JDs and Berkeley to soccer matches, and in the case of one Chinese student, even joining the Stanford marching band. Amidst all this, a Korean lawyer dazzled us all by sitting for, and passing, the California Bar in February. Throughout all of these enriching experiences, we

have made lifelong cross-cultural friendships. As just one example, Lily, the six-month old daughter of a Swedish LLM, will now return home with a Brazilian lawyer as a godfather.

In academic terms, we knew we were coming for a first-class education, to learn from amazing faculty and staff whom we thank for making us so welcome—in particular, we thank our teaching fellows and the program assistants this year.

I've been told that it is a joke amongst the JD students that the international students start every contribution to class with the words “in my country...” Honestly, I confess there was probably some truth in that, at least in the first few weeks, but we hope there has also been great value in having that comparative view of law in the classroom. One of the problems of legal practice, especially in the early years, is that it is all too easy to focus on the four corners of the office, or the document in front of us, and forget to look up. But we have learned already in our own practices the importance of lawyers looking up, looking across borders and learning from each other. Stanford reinforces the importance of this comparative outlook for us: from conferences on online dispute resolution and cybersecurity to classes on financial regulation or International IP, our education here has been a reminder that so many legal issues are interconnected and of how much we can gain, when seeking solutions, from looking up and around us.

And so to the future. We have all served as ambassadors here for our own countries. We leave now as ambassadors for Stanford Law School. Ambassadors don't just provide insights into local cultures and the detail of otherwise incomprehensible local law; they also make you feel at home. As we look forward, each of us happily commits to continue to cherish and nurture the connections we have formed here. You have welcomed us into this community and as part of the Stanford Law School family. So we invite you now to allow us to reciprocate: know that you can call on friends and colleagues scattered across the world. We are thrilled to be part of this graduating class and now to be joining the wider Stanford alumni community. To my classmates: I am so proud to be graduating with you and of your amazing accomplishments here. To everyone else, I return to a theme: “in my country” we say congratulations, and thank you so much for having us.