

ASERI MASTER'S COURSES – a.y. 2006/07
GRADUATION DAY CEREMONY – STUDENTS' SPEECHES

Milan, December 12th 2007

Ms. Gintare Stanisauskaite, Master in International Relations Management

Dear colleagues, or better to say dear friends, dear professors, administrators, guests I wish to say good afternoon and thank for bestowing this honor upon to me as a speaker and representation of my class. I am honored today to stand here in front of all of you and to congratulate all students, including myself, for being able to finish this master and to receive the degree. As a person I am happy about it, as a student I am proud of it. And I have to say I believe we did the best we could. That is why I am lucky to be a part of our achievement we made as graduates of the class of 2007.

Let me to quote one thought: “you have to leave the city of your comfort and go into the wildness of intuition. You will not get there by bus, only by hard work and risk, and by not quite knowing where it will bring you, but what you will discover on your way will be yourself.” I truly believe that we did exactly the same. Some of us left our countries, families, other changed the profiles and paths they were following for the last years in order to take a new opportunity, which also was a challenge. It let us to discover new things, to grow, to understand better our s, to strengthen our weaknesses, to develop our skills and capacities. During this not easy and very intensive year we grew as persons and more over as professionals.

I do believe that all of us have great dreams to succeed and goals to reach. Furthermore, I am also sure that all of dreams can come true if we only have courage to pursue them. That’s exactly what we did a year ago entering this university. We opened new doors that were closed to us before, we gained new opportunities. That is why I would like to believe that today we stand much more near our dreams as a year before.

I know, many of us, including myself, today are nostalgic and filled with excitement and uncertainty at what the future holds. It is perfectly normal to feel so, because today we are closing one chapter of our lives and entering into the real world. The world which is not surrounded by professors we can learn from. This world is filled with doubts, high competitions, and risks. It is a world where “yes” can mean “no”. It can be tuff to be a part of it. It can be scary, but at the same time it is so exciting. At the end of the day there is not core curriculum of the life and everything what is matter is not what we

complete, but what we experience. At this point, I hope that all will agree that in ASERI we had an unforgettable experience which opened new doors for us and our future careers.

Now let me to give you my example of experience I gained in ASERI. Before deciding to come here I asked myself why I need it? I already have been busy with other studies and already had good opportunities for the further career in the institutions I liked to work. To be honest I have not found the answer to my question till now. Everything I understood was that I just wanted to catch new opportunities and to gain more international experience. I felt a hunger for more knowledge, I seek to create new vision of my life and to find the path I would like to follow in the coming years, I wanted to discover new skills of myself. That is why I thought, and today I see that I was right, that ASERI was a place to be. I found here even more than I was expected. I found here a very international atmosphere where under one roof professors and students for all over the world met to teach and to learn. A place where people represented so many different countries and cultures and that was a great value and a beauty of the studies. We had an opportunity to understand better our complex world by learning from well know professors, economists, politicians. Nevertheless, we also learnt form ourselves. We gather the priceless experience of being so different together all year long. I am happy that I challenged myself even if I also experienced stressful and hard moments and not always was sure that I be able to do the things in the way I would like to. At the end of the day I always keep in mind that: "what do not destroy us, make us become stronger." And that is exactly how we should feel today: stronger, smarter, and more self-confident. Nevertheless, during our year in ASERI we had an opportunity not only to get theoretical knowledge, but also to try ourselves and our skills in national or international work environment. That was another huge value of the studies and now I am taking it with me as I am closing the doors of ASERI. During these few months of our internships we had a chance not only to convert our knowledge in the practical situations, but also to be part of the real world we are going to be since now. Perhaps some of us understood that work experience they had was exactly what they would like to do in the coming years, or perhaps they understood that this is not their way to follow. In one or another hand we all had an experience which, I hope, gave as a chance to create our visions we would like to follow and helped to answer the questions that bowered as a year ago.

Of course, to be honest till the end, not all the days were as bright and full of excitement as today. We also had hard moments, we were tired, stressed. However, I think that today these not so positive moments are just a small part of our past and we all can agree that ASERI was a place worth to be in and the experience we gain during this year will help us to become in the future the captains of business and industries or to have great careers in various work areas.

Before wishing all the best for all and each of you I would like to remind you that even if we are closing the door of this university we still staying in the University of Life where we continue to study and live. Just in university of life nobody will write marks for us, we do it by ourselves, and there we have to be students and professors at the same time. So now let me wish for all of you to love the things you going to do in the University of Life. Do the things with passion, learn the things you really would like to know. In this way even the possible failures perhaps we need to face in our future career will not destroy us, but lead to better improvement, success and battles we are going to win. Never give up, have great dreams and make them become reality!

I just would like to add that it was a great pleasure to be here, to know all of you, to learn and to experience everything we experienced. I would like to thank for all my class mates and all professors and to wish all the best for ASERI and for ourselves. We worked hard all year long in order to get the master degree and I hope that since now this degree, which we will get in few minutes, star to work for us. So now... Let's celebrate! Because it is really what we deserved!

Ms. Giovanna Abate, Master in Economics, Institutions and Public Policies

Ladies and Gentlemen good afternoon,

I'm very glad to be here today having the opportunity to tell you something about my splendid experience in attending the Master's in Economics, Institutions and Public Policies. This Master's is a very special one as it has been set up by two major Universities: the University of Lugano - USI - and the Postgraduate School of Economics and International Relations - ASERI - of the Catholic University of the Sacred Heart of Milan.

First of all, I'm telling you the reason why I chose this Master's: I wanted to deepen my knowledge in economics but, in doing so, also to explore other academic fields such as law and political sciences and to analyze their ties and connections. The Master's program perfectly matched my requirements giving also the possibility to experience two different University models: the Swiss one and the Italian one. No need to say that both academic staffs were extremely qualified and helpful, always answering the students' requests and clarifying their doubts.

The classes of the first semester took place at USI. There I found a modern campus, offering every service a student might desire, among which a five-floor IT laboratory open 24-hours a day, studying rooms and a furnished library. We moved to

Milan in March, at ASERI. Even if the location was smaller and quieter than USI, the Faculty were prepared to face an international environment, and able to provide students with the knowledge and understanding of the most pressing issues in our global scenario. All courses were aimed to stimulate fruitful discussions, using a multidisciplinary approach and always allowing the students to freely express their opinions.

Another important aspect is the capacity to effectively enter the working environment, as the Master's expected the students to carry out a three-month internship. I had the chance to find it at ALTIS, the Postgraduate School of Business and Society of the Catholic University. During that time I had the precious opportunity to explore an absolutely interesting topic: Corporate Social Responsibility. I had a very positive working experience and this led me to continue my collaboration. As the matter of facts, I'm still working with ALTIS even if I gained my Master's degree on November, finishing my internship period.

This experience gave me the unique opportunity to test myself in a very challenging way. A

deep engagement and determination were required. Nevertheless, the efforts were widely rewarded. Not only did I brilliantly learn new subjects, but I could be in touch with different cultures, experiences and points of view represented by people coming from all around the world which enriched me more than I expected. The friendships born during this Master's year have become solid and important points of reference in my life.

For all these reasons I would like to thank all the people who made this extremely useful experience possible: all the professors - both from USI and ASERI - who taught us such interesting and innovative subjects; Professor Parsi and Professor Cencini, our Master's Directors; Mrs. Angeleri, always so kind and patient with our pressing requests, and all my classmates with whom I had such a funny and pleasant time.

Finally, a special thank to all the people from ALTIS, especially Professor Molteni, Mr. Pedrini and Miss Ferri who trusted in me extending my job collaboration.

Thank you!

Mr. Isaac Corrado, Master in International Cooperation and Development

Dear Professors,
Colleagues,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I thank you for giving me the opportunity of speaking on behalf of the students, who attended to the first edition of ASERI's master in International Cooperation and Development. It is a big honour for me to tell my experience and share with all the participants the feelings, the thoughts and the special moments that characterized the last eleven months of my life and that, probably, were common to my classmates.

One year ago, when I decided to apply for this course, I was searching for an educational path that would allow me, not only to achieve a skills enrichment, but also the concrete opportunity to compare my cultural and labour background with those that others, coming from different contexts and having other lifestyles or job experiences, would offer. In concrete, I was feeling that my personality was incomplete and that the last 17 years, that I lived in Italy, offered me a one-way perspective of life and of the problems that human beings have to cope with. Therefore, I was seeking the opportunity to achieve a broad personal enrichment, that would allow me to complete my education as an adult person.

Eleven months have elapsed and I'm glad to discover that I have changed, that I grew and that this could happen, because I had the chance to meet persons, who worked in an international context and who, besides transferring to the students indispensable technical notions, achieved the difficult result of transmitting also a practical and personal view of the labour context, where my colleagues and I would like to build and conduct a satisfying career.

Personally I remember that, while attending to the lessons, in several occasions I could imagine myself working and applying the skills I was thought and the feeling I felt was pleasant. It was confirming me that I chose and I was walking through the right path. This gave me an ulterior incentive to apply myself and study harder, in order to complete successfully the 6 months long lessons, that I admit were tough in several occasions.

This master gave me also the chance to meet and talk with colleagues, who revealed to be special and whom I thank, not only for sharing their experiences with me, but also for being and acting as good friends whenever I was in need of an advise or help, also when it was related to contexts different from the studies and the lessons we attended together. I admit I have been very lucky to walk through this educational path, side by side with them, and I'm very glad we arrived together to this graduation day, that awards us for all our efforts and the professors for their dedication and for believing in our capacities.

During the lessons, that for six months occupied me every day from Monday to Friday for several hours, I felt I was learning useful skills and I could read the same

consciousness in my classmates' eyes. Moreover, it was clear to me that professors and guests were doing their best to transmit their knowledge to me and all these elements made it easier for me to travel to ASERI's building, every day by train from Como, the city I live in and that is 30 km away from Milan. The usefulness of such days and the satisfaction I received induced me to study as soon as I got back home, though my body and especially my mind were tired by everyday's trips and classes. When I remember those days and I think of the special moments I experienced, I don't regret any of the choices I made eleven months ago.

I'm glad to say that ASERI's new master in International Cooperation and Development has been very useful to me, as the internship that I have recently completed can prove. From the 21st of June to the 21st of September of the current year, I had the chance to work at the Cooperation Office of the Italian Embassy in Maputo, the capital city of Mozambique. During those five months I was eager to demonstrate to myself, to the 20 colleagues, with whom I worked side by side for about 10 hours a day, and to all the other persons, with whom I had working relations, that I had received and practiced relevant tools during the previous 6 months long lessons. It was very important for me to demonstrate that I was finally able to work in the field of the International Cooperation for Development.

I received this chance and, from the first day of my stay in Mozambique, I was given the task of planning the micro-credit component of a project by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, that was entirely financed by the Italian Government. Once I completed such task, I was offered a job at the Embassy of Italy, that I was very happy to accept, and in January 2008 I will return to Mozambique, where I'll be working for other 6 months.

If this happened, is certainly because the skills I was taught by ASERI's professors and guests were relevant, but I also must thank my classmates who had the patience to listen to my questions, when I had doubts related to notions I've been imparted, and who were diligent in clarifying concepts that I did not understand entirely during the lessons.

In conclusion, I must thank all the professional and at the same time friendly context I found here in ASERI, made by persons who completed my scholastic but also personal education and who now allow me to start a working career, after an unforgettable and useful experience.

A particular "thank you" goes to Cristina, who was my and my classmates' tutor and, therefore, the recipient of every sort of request and demand but, even more important, of all the different humours expressed by the class during a year, characterized

by satisfactions but also by difficult moments that the students, the professors and the tutor had to cope with.

The first edition of ASERI's new master in International Cooperation and Development is concluded and this graduation day confirms that the experience has been positive because, starting from tomorrow, a group of 25 upgraded persons will begin their working careers, that hopefully will be satisfying for them and, moreover, useful for the persons they'll meet, colleagues as well as the beneficiaries of their activities.

This group of 25 persons, on behalf of which I'm speaking today, is glad to be considered responsible and conscious by ASERI's personnel, who gave it the chance to express its opinions and suggestions on the courses, the internships and in general the methodologies applied. While leaving this school, strengthened by the skills received during the past eleven months, each student leaves in change the wish that his suggestions will be applied, in order to make the future edition of the master an experience even greater for their successors.

Before I finish my speech, I would like to express a desire which is not only personal, but probably also common to all ASERI students', both those who attended to the MACIS courses and those who concluded the master in International Relations. During my stay in Mozambique, I experienced that I could count on the professors' advise if needed. In particular, I promptly received advise from Mrs. Giovanna Prennushi, who was my supervisor for the final project work I prepared and whom I thank for the time she spent helping me complete the dissertation. I appreciated very much that she was at my disposal, though she had much more important duties to comply with. Her dedication was excellent, as proven by the fact that she answered to my e-mails very early in the morning, or very late in the evening. My wish is that ex ASERI students have the chance to continue benefiting of such advise by their supervisors, or professors in general, in order to cope with the constraints that they may find during their first work experiences. Personally, I think I may need such advise starting from January 2008, when I'll move back to Mozambique and I'll have to comply with the interesting, but very difficult task of planning a network of microfinance services.

Thank you very much.