IPF BOARD MEMBER PIET STEEL HONOURED WITH JAPAN'S ORDER OF THE RISING SUN



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The conferment ceremony took place at the Residence of the Ambassador of Japan to the Kingdom of Belgium, H.E. Mr. Masahiro Mikami in Brussels. The event was attended by Mr. and Mrs Steel, their two daughters and sons-in-law and many close friends such as Salvatore Adamo and acquaintances. Also in attendance representing the Belgian Royal Family was Mr Vincent Houssiau, Chief of Staff to His Majesty King Philip.

"I am deeply honoured to have received the Order of the Rising Sun, Gold Rays with Neck Ribbon, bestowed by the Government of Japan," commented Mr. Steel. "This award acknowledges my longstanding efforts to promote exchange and strengthen the bonds of friendship between Japan and Belgium—a mission that has enriched my life with unforgettable experiences and encounters with remarkable people."

The Order of the Rising Sun, established in 1875 by Emperor Meiji, is Japan's first national decoration and is awarded to individuals, both Japanese and foreign, who have made distinguished contributions to the advancement of Japan in various fields, including international relations and the promotion of Japanese culture.

Piet Steel brings a wealth of diplomatic experience to his role, having served the Belgian Foreign Service from 1975 to 1997 with key postings in London, Geneva, Hanoi, and Hong Kong, including as Ambassador of Belgium to Vietnam. Following his retirement from the Belgian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, he transitioned to the corporate world, holding positions such as Director of Public Affairs for Solvay Group and Vice-President of External Affairs for Toyota Motor Europe.

In 2010, the Government of Japan appointed him as the Honorary Consul General for the Flanders region, a testament to his recognized contributions to Japan-Belgium relations. Beyond his professional endeavors, Mr. Steel is actively involved in numerous social and societal organizations, holding leadership roles in entities such as the Chinese Palace and the Silk Road Countries, the Belgium Hong Kong Society, and the Belgium Vietnam Alliance. He also serves on the boards of Special Olympics, Inc. (US), the International Polar Foundation, and is Vice-President of the Belgian Polar Secretariat, which manages the Princess Elisabeth Antarctica station.

Mr. Steel's dedication to humanitarian causes was also recognized with the Melvin Jones Fellow Award of the Lions International. He has previously received the Friendship Medal from the Government of Vietnam.

Born in 1950, Piet Steel holds a Law Degree from Ghent University.