

(As delivered)

**National Technical University of Athens
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Ladies and gentlemen, good morning,

Let me begin by thanking the organizers for the opportunity to speak to you today and congratulate them, in particular your chairman, Prof. Psaraftis, for the initiative to convene this symposium. It is a pleasure for me to be here and I am looking forward to sharing some thoughts with such a distinguished and diverse audience.

With ship owners operators, managers, academics and students, policy makers and, doubtless, many other disciplines among your number, I am grateful for the challenge; for while, on a day-to-day basis, the work we do at IMO, as the global regulator of the international shipping industry, may be concerned primarily with deep and sometimes arcane detail, it is equally important that we keep sight of the larger picture. Rather like a navigator in a busy fairway, we need one eye on the radar, plotting close quarter situations, and the other scanning the horizon to ensure we are still heading in the right direction. So I thank you for the welcome opportunity to lift my head from the detail and take a wider view.

For the purposes of our practical working arrangements within IMO, we tend to treat maritime safety and security, and the protection of the environment, as separate themes within our overall mandate. The Member States form separate committees to deal with these topics and the IMO Secretariat is structured to reflect that arrangement. In reality, of course, these concepts are completely interrelated. For every time a ship is involved in an accident, whether it be a grounding, a collision, a fire or anything else, there is the potential for pollution. And you only have to imagine the prospect of, say, a laden oil tanker in the hands of untrained hijackers to realize, instantly, that any threat to maritime security also endangers life and ships at sea and, therefore, has the potential to place the environment in jeopardy.

So how do we tackle such massive and multi-dimensional issues? I think the first observation to make is that no-one, or no one organization, can do this alone. There are many stakeholders and each and every one must take some responsibility and must approach their own activities with the proper frame of mind, if progress is to be made. At IMO, we are responsible for developing and maintaining the international rules that govern the safety, security and efficiency of ships, as well as marine environmental protection. As a result of our work, there is now a comprehensive set of standards surrounding just about every aspect of ship design, construction, manning, equipment and operation, all aiming to achieve those very goals. But our work is of little value if a whole chain of other entities and individuals do not also play their part.

It begins with Governments. Through IMO, it is the Governments of the world that develop, refine and adopt standards for international shipping. But then they have to implement and enforce those standards rigorously and uniformly to ensure that they produce the desired results. A responsible national shipping administration must do everything in its power to ensure that the

ships flying its flag over their transoms are genuinely up to the standards that international legislation, and public expectation, requires of them.

Then, the maritime industries themselves all have to make their own contribution. Ships need to be designed and built to the appropriate standards and classification societies need to perform their task of verification and certification with appropriate diligence. In shipping companies, the management and technical departments all need to pay proper attention to the upkeep and maintenance of the vessels in their care. There are other links in the chain, too. Charterers, for example, need to make the right decisions about the quality of the tonnage they fix. Financiers and insurers need to be wary that they lend their support only to high-quality operators. And, finally, it comes down to **individual people**. It does not matter whether you are a welder in a shipyard, a stevedore operating a dockside crane, an engine-room rating or a ship's master; if you do not perform your task properly, the end result can be disaster.

At IMO, we very consciously work on two broad fronts simultaneously, to address the issues bound up in the theme of this symposium. On the one hand, we are constantly **reviewing, revising, updating and developing the technical standards** that apply to ships and their operation, among other reasons to keep up with technological developments. And on the other hand, we address the human element, both in its own right and as a component of the overall technical infrastructure. There would, after all, be no value in developing technical performance standards for a new type of ships' equipment, without also paying attention to the ergonomic aspects.

The **framework of standards** developed by IMO is comprehensive and far-reaching. As a set of measures designed to ensure, first and foremost, the safety of life at sea; to prevent accidents occurring; and to mitigate the negative effects of any that do occur, it has been, and continues to be, extremely effective. I see those goals as IMO's principal objectives and consider the regulatory framework developed by the Organization for that purpose as the protective shell for international shipping. It may occasionally need strengthening in certain places and adapting in others but, if you stay within it, you have every chance of enjoying safe and trouble-free operations.

To illustrate how comprehensive is IMO's regulatory framework and why it merits a great deal of care and attention, when, at the beginning of next month, the Maritime Safety Committee meets in Copenhagen, it will address an agenda containing topics as wide-ranging as the oversight of the provision of mobile satellite communication services in the Global Maritime Distress and Safety System and the implementation of the Long-Range Identification and Tracking (LRIT) of ships system, and amendments to the International Code for the Safe Carriage of Packaged Irradiated Nuclear Fuel, Plutonium and High-Level Radioactive Wastes on board Ships.

On a more conceptual level, the Maritime Safety Committee will continue its work on what is a fundamental change in the basic philosophy that underpins the **standard-setting process**, from a prescriptive approach to a "**goal-based**" one. The essential difference is that, whereas prescriptive regulations specify exactly what must be done to achieve compliance, goal-based standards, as the name suggests, define the objective to be achieved but not the means of doing so. The goal-based philosophy should, the supporters of its concept suggest, make the incorporation of practical advances and new technology into the legislative framework much easier than before.

As I mentioned earlier, when looking at the wider horizon, beyond the detail of the measures themselves, what comes into sharp focus is the crucial importance of **implementation** and

enforcement. The prime responsibility for this rests with Governments, and it is sometimes a source of frustration and concern that there continue to be gaps between expectation and performance in this regard.

For example, the interval between the **development and adoption of measures** and their eventual **entry into force** is often unacceptably long. IMO conventions invariably contain strict entry-into-force criteria, typically consisting of formal ratification by a certain number of countries which, together, account for a certain percentage of the world's shipping fleet. It is not unusual for several years to elapse before these criteria are met. The frustration is borne out of the fact that, in some cases, the very countries that promoted, developed and adopted a new treaty sometimes fail to take the next step to ratify it; while the concern comes from the knowledge that the anticipated progress towards the goal of improved safety, security, environmental protection, or whatever a particular measure was designed to achieve, is being delayed. Moreover, such delays only serve to increase the pressure on those countries that are ready to implement new and higher standards to impose unilateral or regional regulations to reflect those standards – which would have massive practical downsides for shipping.

Aware of the need to help Member States improve their record on implementation, IMO has developed a **voluntary Audit Scheme** which is intended to provide an audited Member State with a comprehensive and objective assessment of how effectively it administers and implements the mandatory IMO instruments covered by the related audit standard, which is the **Code for the implementation of mandatory IMO instruments**.

The Scheme is now underway and, to date, more than 30 Member States have volunteered for audit and around 100 individuals have been nominated by Governments to act as independent auditors. It is, therefore, already on a very firm footing and both the Organization and I, personally, are strongly committed to it.

While I would be happy to see what is currently a voluntary scheme become **mandatory**, that decision, of course, rests with the IMO Members themselves. I believe that a mandatory scheme would be extremely effective, given that it is expected to bring about many benefits, such as identifying where capacity-building activities (for example, the provision of technical assistance by IMO to Member States) would have the greatest effect. The ability to target appropriate action to improve performance would also be greatly enhanced. For their part, audited States would receive valuable feedback, intended to assist them in improving their own capacity to put the applicable instruments into practice, while the generic lessons learnt from audits would be available to all States so that the benefits could be widely shared and systematically fed back into the regulatory process at IMO. And knowledge of areas that may need improving, and of the effectiveness of corrective action taken, would be significant new elements for all Governments and users of shipping services to consider when determining quality.

It is, of course, impossible to generalize about why countries find it difficult to ratify and implement measures that have already been adopted. Some simply lack the will; some find it impossible to schedule the time within their own, national legislative procedure; some lack the necessary skills in drafting maritime law; while others lack the technical resources and practical expertise needed to implement the measures, even though they agree with them in principle.

That is why, in addition to the Member State Audit Scheme, IMO also has a **comprehensive programme of technical co-operation** designed to assist Governments, which lack the knowledge and resources needed to comply with international rules and standards. Through activities, such as workshops, training courses and seminars, and the provision of expert advice, the programme focuses on human resource development and institutional capacity-building so

that countries are in a position to ratify, implement and enforce, effectively and uniformly throughout the world, the measures they adopt at IMO. The Organization's technical assistance programme is supplemented by the contribution our high-level training institutions (the World Maritime University in Malmö, Sweden; the International Maritime Law Institute in Malta; and the International Maritime Academy in Trieste, Italy) make to the efforts of our Members to raise their standards and thus enhance their maritime credentials.

This enabling work is a vital part of our mission, particularly when IMO is seen in its broader context. As a specialized agency of the United Nations, IMO is part of a family made up of numerous other organizations, programmes, funds and other bodies. To know that we are part of such a broad-based network, designed to achieve so many worthy objectives relating to peace and security, human development or the sustainability of planet Earth, is a source of permanent strength and encouragement to us, and we try to keep these wider aims constantly in the back of our minds throughout all our endeavours.

And never is it more prominent in our thoughts than when we are dealing with the **human element in shipping**. Over the last 30 to 40 years, the centre of gravity in shipping, as in so many industries, has moved away from the traditional maritime countries. Today, there is a new hierarchy in shipping and many of the countries that dominate it are still in the early stages of their development. For many, the various sectors of the maritime sector have become important sources of employment and income.

But this trend has also highlighted some of the challenges that have long surrounded the human element in shipping: training and certification, diminishing crew sizes, language problems, pressure to work longer hours, fatigue and so on, all need to be addressed. The **International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Seafarers** is currently undergoing a major review at IMO but, again, if we look beyond the detail, it is important to stress that the key objective must be to create an ethos within shipping in which safety, security and environmental protection are second nature. The STCW Convention, along with a number of other measures, such as the International Safety Management Code, for example, are all designed to create just such a culture.

I very deliberately chose to couple the word “**security**” with “**safety**”, not simply because they are both among the topics addressed by this seminar, but also because, in both cases, a cultural shift will achieve more than any number of paper regulations.

Although IMO has long been involved in maritime security issues, it is fair to say that, at the turn of the Millennium, our work in this regard had not been at the very top of the Organization's agenda for some time. Our efforts to counter the insidious scourge of latter-day maritime piracy were, and continue to be, of great concern, but the protection of shipping from the threat of terrorism was not, at that time, a major issue. The tragic events of 11 September 2001, in the United States, changed all that.

“9/11” was the catalyst for the merchant shipping community to undertake a comprehensive and internationally-based review of the security measures that were in place to protect it. IMO, being the body created and sustained by Governments with the mandate to develop and maintain a global regulatory regime for international shipping, was the logical place for this to be carried out.

In December 2002, a Conference of Contracting Governments to the 1974 International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea – SOLAS – was held at IMO Headquarters. This historic meeting adopted a series of measures, which combined to transform the face of maritime security

and create the very first regime of globally recognized and approved security standards for shipping operations.

Among that conference's landmark decisions were to require, for the first time, that both ships and port facilities should appoint dedicated and properly trained **security officers** and have Government-approved **security plans** in place. It established a three-tier system for escalating security levels and required the ship and port facility security plans to set out in detail the measures that would be put in place for each of the three security levels. Later, IMO also revised the international treaties dealing with the **suppression of unlawful acts against the safety of navigation** and **offshore platforms**, in order, among other things, to create new offences and set out internationally agreed procedures for boarding vessels on the high-seas.

We must, of course, continue to address the security issue. It allows absolutely no room for complacency. Most recently, in this context, I have been authorized by the IMO Council to bring heightened concern over acts of piracy and armed robbery in the waters off Somalia anew to the attention of the **United Nations Security Council, through the UN Secretary General**. Innocent shipping and valuable humanitarian aid to millions of Somalis are being prevented from reaching their destination by these attacks, and the hope is that concerted action by naval forces operating in the area, in tandem with the Transitional Federal Government of Somalia, might help to alleviate the situation.

It is scant comfort to those involved but the position in Somalia does actually serve to highlight how crucial international shipping is to the circulation of vital goods and commodities around the world today. In this regard, we are all aware that more than 90 per cent of global trade is carried by sea and that maritime transport continues to grow in line with the increasing demands of world trade and the global economy. As you would expect, therefore, the **environmental credentials of international shipping** are coming increasingly under scrutiny. At IMO, we have made our "response to current environmental challenges" the theme for this year's World Maritime Day, which itself, will be the centrepiece of designed initiatives to highlight the problems surrounding shipping and the environment and, equally important, what we are doing to address them.

IMO's work in this area has covered **a remarkably broad canvas**. As well as the carriage of oil by sea, it has embraced the transport of hazardous and noxious substances; the discharge of sewage and dumping of garbage at sea; the use of harmful paints and coatings on ships' hulls; the carriage of microscopic aquatic life-forms around the world in ships' ballast water; the dismantling and disposal of ships once their economic lifetime has come to an end; and the removal of shipwrecks that pose a threat to safe navigation or to the environment or to both. Robust and effective measures have been developed to deal with all these and other possible threats that shipping might pose to the global environment.

But, perhaps, the most significant threat today concerns **atmospheric pollution**. And, once again, although the shipping industry is only a small contributor to the total volume of atmospheric emissions – compared to road vehicles, aviation and public utilities, such as power stations – IMO continues to work towards further reducing emissions from ship exhausts. And while no mandatory instrument has yet been adopted by IMO to cover the emission of greenhouse gases from ships, there is an Assembly resolution setting out our current policy on the subject and an IMO study has identified areas in which there is considerable potential for the reduction of carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions from ships, through improvements in ship design and engine performance, fuel choices and other measures. To that end, in October 2006, IMO adopted a work plan and timetable on the further work needed to achieve the limitation or reduction of CO₂ emissions from international shipping; while in July of this year, IMO's Marine Environment

Protection Committee agreed to my proposal for a holistic scientific review of the various options currently before the Organization, so that decisions on how best to prevent and minimize shipping's contribution to atmospheric pollution can be taken in the light of the full facts.

And so to conclude: I must admit that, when I first saw the theme that had been chosen for this symposium – maritime safety, security and environmental protection – my initial reaction was that the main difficulty in drafting my speech to you would be not what to say, but what to leave out, for the issues chosen form the very core of our mission in IMO. I hope I have been able to give you an insight into some of the particular challenges we are currently addressing and how the various processes are taking shape. I hope, too, that I have left out enough so that the speakers who follow can fill in the gaps and, of course, add their own perspective.

It remains only for me to wish you every success in what, I am sure, is going to prove a most thought-provoking and stimulating event.

Thank you.
