

**DAY OF THE SEAFARER EVENT**

**JUNE 25 2016, MANILA**

**GERARDO BORROMEO,**

**VICE CHAIRMAN, INTERNATIONAL CHAMBER OF SHIPPING**

Excellency Secretary-General Lim, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I very pleased to make some brief remarks on this IMO Day of the Seafarer, in my capacity as a Vice-Chairman of the International Chamber of Shipping.

For those of you unfamiliar with ICS, we are the principal global trade association for shipowners, with a membership made up of 37 national shipowners' associations – including the Filipino Shipowners' Association – collectively representing over 80% of the world merchant fleet.

It goes without saying that the success of the global shipping industry, and its facilitation of world trade and sustainable development, is very much dependent on the seafarers we employ, about 1.7 million of whom are currently working in international trades. To coin a phrase, seafarers 'move the world', and in doing so they also make tremendous sacrifices, staying away from home and family for extended periods of time.

I think seafarers can be very proud that they are at the centre of a global industry that is a driver of green growth, at the same time accepting ever greater awareness of their environmental responsibilities, something which has directly contributed to the industry's impressive environmental performance.

Shipping, by far, is the most carbon efficient form of commercial transport, at least 30 times more efficient than air cargo and 5 times more than trucks. Shipping reduced its total CO<sub>2</sub> by over 10% between 2007 and 2012, despite an increase in maritime trade. And in response to the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, the International Chamber of Shipping has already proposed that IMO Member States should develop what we have described as an 'Intended IMO Determined Contribution', to help further reduce CO<sub>2</sub> on behalf of the international shipping sector.

It also goes without saying that being a seafarer is a special profession, although sadly, outside the Philippines at least, this is something that may not always be fully appreciated by the wider society which shipping exists to serve. Collectively, we must do even more to promote public understanding of the vital role of seafaring and shipping in keeping the global economy moving.

But I want to use this opportunity to make three quick remarks, directly relevant to the employment of seafarers.

First, ICS is pleased to continue to work closely, with our social partner – the ITF, and its seafarer union affiliates in the Philippines – in order to ensure the worldwide implementation of the ILO Maritime Labour Convention.

The ILO MLC is something about which we are all rightly proud, and it is truly unique to the shipping industry, demonstrating our commitment to the ILO concept of Decent Work, and the maintenance of a level playing field for employment standards, regardless of the seafarer's country of residence.

We are very pleased that the MLC has been now been ratified by 75 nations and now covers over 90% of the world merchant fleet. The ILO MLC is truly now the

forth pillar of global maritime regulation, alongside the SOLAS, MARPOL and STCW Conventions adopted by the IMO.

With respect to IMO, the immediate challenge this year is to ensure that the industry and governments are ready for the end of the transitional regime for the 'Manila' amendments to the IMO STCW Convention, governing seafarers' training standards.

It is important that seafarers will have completed any required updating training, and that administrations are ready to issue large numbers of required certificates and flag state endorsements, to the extent that this has not been done already.

According to the latest global maritime manpower update, published a month ago by ICS and BIMCO, the Philippines is still one of the largest seafarer supply countries and is the largest source of ratings, including the new STCW grade of Able Seafarer, who must now have their training documented in an approved training record book.

In the Philippines, we are doing all we can to ensure there will not be any teething problems in 2017. But we are hopeful that the industry, and also governments worldwide, will indeed be ready.

Finally, in addition to reiterating that seafarers keep the world moving, and are at the forefront of the industry's efforts to play its part in tackling climate change, they can also be called upon to take on other extraordinary tasks, beyond the call of normal duty.

In particular, I would like to highlight the bravery and courage that is currently being displayed by so many seafarers, of all nationalities, with respect to the rescue at sea crisis that is now taking place in Europe and in the Mediterranean.

The shipping industry fully accepts its humanitarian responsibility to come to the assistance of anyone in distress at sea. But one aspect of this terrible situation, which is often overlooked, is the effect that this is having on merchant seafarers.

Many seafarers have been involved in large-scale rescue operations, saving the lives of thousands of people (but many of whom have suffered immensely).

It has to be remembered that seafarers are civilians, they are not professional rescue personnel.

While the politics surrounding the migrant crisis are hugely complex, ICS will continue to argue that governments need to do even more.

Merchant ships, and the seafarers that serve on them, should not be expected to be routinely involved in such dangerous large scale rescue operations that are really the proper responsibility of governments.

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But the Day of the Seafarer is a day of celebration. On behalf of ICS, and in co-operation with our colleagues from the seafarers' unions, we remain committed to promoting recognition of the extraordinary role of merchant seafarers and the important and vital work that they do for the global community.

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