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## 2022 United Nations Ocean Conference

### Interactive Dialogue 1: Addressing marine pollution

Monday 3:00-6:00 pm, 27 June 2022

Altice Arena, Tejo Hall, Lisbon, Portugal

### **DRAFT REMARKS by Mr. Kitack Lim, Secretary-General, International Maritime Organization (IMO)**

*Background for drafting: The Interactive Dialogue is one of the main events of the Conference. The session will be opened with short remarks by the two co-chairs and the moderator, followed by the four panellists. The panellists' remarks are intended to be action oriented and forward looking, in the context of the theme of the Conference "Scaling up ocean action based on science and innovation for the implementation of Goal 14: stocktaking, partnerships and solutions". This will be followed by the Lead Discussants, then remarks from the floor by delegations (see separate note).*

**Current length of remarks approx. 10 minutes**

## Introduction

Excellencies,  
Distinguished fellow panellists,  
Delegates, ladies and gentlemen,

Allow me first of all to thank the hosts, the Governments of Portugal and Kenya, for the tremendous efforts in

organizing this second UN Ocean Conference. It is urgently needed and the tremendous interest in the Conference is a clear indication of the oceans' vital importance to all of us.

## **Where we are – the context**

Addressing marine pollution is at the heart of the work of the International Maritime Organization (IMO), a specialized agency of the United Nations which is the global standard setting body for international shipping as well as for the prevention of pollution from dumping of wastes at sea.

Shipping and maritime activities are prime users of the oceans. Shipping is invaluable to global trade and economic growth, as made abundantly clear during the pandemic. Shipping carries over 80 per cent of world trade, providing the most economic and environmentally sustainable way of transporting cargo.

IMO has adopted more than 50 conventions to make shipping safer and to protect the marine environment, with more than half of those treaties directly related to environmental issues.

The maritime sector - like the rest of the world - is voyaging through substantial changes. We, at IMO, work tirelessly to ensure that the regulatory framework is constantly enhanced and strengthened to meet new demands and challenges. Shipping is truly international, connecting and affecting all of us, so the regulatory framework must be fair, and must ensure no one is left behind as the industry moves towards even greener operations.

Marine pollution is a transboundary problem. The threats from certain types of pollution, such as marine plastic pollution, are seen at global scales and the impacts from this pollution, coupled with climate change, create an increasing threat for marine biodiversity, ecosystem functioning, and consequently human wellbeing. These impacts can disproportionately affect developing

countries, in particular Small Island Developing States and Least Developed Countries.

It is the duty of IMO and all its Member States to ensure that its policies and measures do not deepen the existing divide between developed and developing countries.

### **The work of IMO – some landmark achievements**

Over the decades, IMO measures have been enhanced, contributing to the continuous and further greening of the shipping industry. Many of IMO's regulatory advances have paved the way for, and by necessity catalyzed, technological developments and innovation.

An excellent example is IMO's work to address the global threat of invasive aquatic species and their impact on ecology, economies and human health. The recognition of shipping's role in the transfer of invasive aquatic species led to the adoption of the 2004 Ballast Water Management Convention. It set standards that stimulated R&D and technological developments that have

minimized the risk of transfer of harmful invasive species via ballast water.

Scaling up efforts such as those is crucial to a global industry such as shipping. There will be champions leading the way, but to truly green a sector, everyone needs to be able to move forward together.

This makes capacity building, technical cooperation and partnerships absolutely key to transfer knowledge to all parts of the world. It is vital that the regulations that Member States agree on at IMO are implemented and complied with globally because policy and regulatory developments, technological developments and sustainable development are fundamentally interconnected.

In recent years, much of IMO's work has focused on ensuring the maritime sector plays its part in meeting global ambitions and goals on tackling climate change. But we have not lost sight of the many other issues that are 'on our environmental radar', such as marine plastic

litter from ships, that will require technological developments as well as a global response throughout the industry. Reducing underwater noise and managing biofouling on ships, alongside a precautionary approach to ocean interventions for climate change mitigation, come to mind.

[IMO also works closely with the UN family in providing emergency responses to situations then these arise. I take this opportunity to reiterate IMO's contribution to international efforts aimed at preventing and preparing for a possible oil spill from the deteriorating FSO SAFER, which is moored off the coast of Yemen. The United Nations has produced a viable plan to address the threat and I urge delegations to contribute to these pledging efforts, launched on 11 May,]

### **Looking forward and stepping up efforts - Greening the sector**

Ladies and gentlemen,

A greener, resilient maritime sector is not only an opportunity for a sector that binds us all together – it is a necessity for sustainable development and to ensure all of us meet our global ambitions and goals to secure the needs of future generations.

As we scale up our efforts, R&D collaboration, information sharing, and capacity-building will be key to ensure no one is left behind in the push for the greening of the shipping sector.

It is therefore no coincidence that this year's World Maritime theme is '*New technologies for greener shipping*' reflecting the need to support an inclusive and 'just' green transition of the maritime sector into a sustainable future,

IMO's extensive technical cooperation and capacity-building work focuses on assisting developing countries and their maritime administrations to implement global regulations and standards already in force - and to prepare for those that are yet to come into force. This has

successfully been done through our multi-partner, multi-tier major projects, which we will explain further in our side-event that is being held tomorrow.

Greening the maritime sector is both a logical and continuous development. It has been underway for many decades - but it needs to speed up and scale up even further. This transition may be seen as a challenge - but it is an opportunity as much as a necessity. I truly believe that it can serve to enable the sector to reconnect with young generations in all regions of the world, many of whose future careers will feature greener, more sustainable and energy-efficient technologies, be it seafarers, port workers or others across the shipping industry - not least in developed countries.

### **Closing words – calling for more action**

Ladies and gentlemen,

The ocean truly sustains us all, and the maritime sector connects us all. A greener, resilient maritime sector is



essential for the needs of future generations – the maritime sector underpins all sustainable development.

In addressing marine pollution, working towards the UN's Sustainable Development Goals and realizing this greener future, IMO works closely with Member States, industry and other partners, and with the other parts of the UN family, to break the silos and build bridges with other sectors and stakeholders, on all the issues I have mentioned today and many more.

Cooperation mechanisms and open dialogue are key. IMO is proud to be the secretariat for the Joint Group of Experts on the Scientific Aspects of Marine Environmental Protection (GESAMP) as well as an active partner in UN-Oceans, the Global Partnership on Marine Litter (GPML) and the UN Environment Management Group, to name just a few.

These mechanisms as well as dialogues, such as the ones we are having this week, are essential for us to move further, and faster.

Shipping must continue to navigate its path towards a greener future with heightened ambitions, to ensure that we safeguard our ocean for generations to come.

Thank you.

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