Day of the Seafarer 2015
Message from Mr Ban Ki-moon
United Nations Secretary-General

Since the dawn of history mankind has gone to sea, and today seafaring remains one of the world’s most important professions. About 1.5 million seafarers provide the labour force that literally keeps the global economy moving – and we all benefit from that, whether rich or poor, north or south.

But as the global population grows, so does the demand for shipping; and there are fears that, in the future, there may be a shortage of seafarers. This is a concern not just for shipping, but for all of us who rely on seafarers.

On June 25 each year, we celebrate the international Day of the Seafarer. A campaign, driven by the International Maritime Organization, uses the day to draw attention to the profession and the benefits seafarers bring to mankind. This year the focus is on energising and inspiring a new generation of younger people to take up seafaring as a career.

Seafaring can provide young generations with unique opportunities. Not only can they secure decent work and earn a good living to provide for their families, they can also gain access to a world of life-enriching travel and experiences that
very few can dream of. Imagine sailing the world’s oceans, seeing the northern lights, experiencing arctic snow or a tropical storm for the first time – and meeting people from all over the world while doing so.

Then, when his or her sea-going days are over, the seafarer can draw on skills and technical expertise acquired in running today’s modern, high-tech vessels that make them very well qualified for a rewarding future in many shore-based industries.

Seafaring is a particularly attractive option for people in developing countries. But young people need to be engaged and enthused if they are to see and understand these opportunities. And this is what the 2015 Day of the Seafarer campaign aims to do.

So please, if you are a young person seeing this message, wherever you are, I urge you to consider seafaring as a career; if you already understand the value of seafaring or are part of the maritime sector yourself, please share your passion about the maritime world with others, particularly young people, on this special day. And if you are a serving seafarer, today we salute you, we thank you and we want you to know we appreciate very much the essential and vital work that you do.