Video message from UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon to IMO session on mixed migration by sea (transcript)

Mr Koji Sekimizu, Secretary-General of the International Maritime Organization, Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen.

I thank Secretary-General Sekimizu and members for your efforts to address the migration challenge.

This year we have seen an unprecedented acceleration in the numbers of people forced to flee war, famine, poverty, or human rights abuses in search of a better life.

Thousands have fallen victim to smugglers, human traffickers or unseaworthy boats.

Many more will lose their lives unless something is done. Saving lives remains an urgent priority.

The shipping industry and rescue services have saved hundreds of thousands of lives, often at considerable cost and danger to themselves. I commend those efforts.

But shipping and maritime rescue services are close to being overwhelmed. We need to find sustainable solutions.

The international community must develop more safe and regular migration pathways.

We also need to address the factors that force people to risk their lives in this way.

Our approach must be comprehensive so that it protects human rights, upholds international law and recognizes the benefits of migration.

This is a global issue that requires us all to work together.

I welcome the actions already taken since the I special meeting held at IMO in March, and look forward to further, positive outcomes from this current session. Please accept my best wishes for a productive meeting.

Thank you.

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