Mr. Chairman, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

The IMO Secretariat is very pleased to provide SBSTA 35 with an update on its work on improvement of energy efficiency in international maritime transport and corresponding reduction of all kinds of emissions from ships; both air pollutants and greenhouse gases. It is a particular pleasure to do it here in the beautiful and vibrant port city of Durban, which serves as a trading hub for this part of the world and where a significant part of the world fleet calls or sails past.

July 2011 was marked by a breakthrough at IMO, when, in response to the call for action by IMO in article 2.2 of the Kyoto Protocol, 30 Parties listed in Annex I of the Convention, joined by 19 non-Annex I Parties, adopted the first ever energy efficiency standard for any economic sector and thereby put in place a mandatory global solution for a global industry. The 49 States that adopted relevant amendments to Annex VI of the MARPOL Convention, which is the paramount legal treaty to prevent pollution from ships, represent some 80% of the world's merchant shipping tonnage; both developed and developing countries from all regions of the world; both exporters and importers, as well as the largest flag States, most of the large ship building nations, many of the countries that are most likely to suffer first from the effects of climate change; and, perhaps most importantly, they represent about 75% of CO₂ emissions from international shipping. The universality of those States’ representation therefore augurs well for the environmental integrity and effectiveness of the new IMO treaty obligations.

The measures adopted incorporate a new chapter 4 to MARPOL Annex VI that includes a package of mandatory technical and operational measures to increase energy efficiency for international shipping through a design index for new ships, where the efficiency level will be tightened every five years, through improvements in design and propulsion techniques, to keep pace with technological development, and through operational practices applicable to all ships. These mandatory measures are expected to enter into force on 1 January 2013.

By 2020, about 150 million tonnes of annual CO₂ reductions are estimated from the introduction of the design index for new ships and the operational practices for all ships, a figure that, by 2030, is projected to increase to 330 million tonnes of CO₂ annually. In other words, the average reduction will, in 2020, be approximately 14% and, by 2030, approximately 23%, when compared with business as usual. Because they deal with energy efficiency, the reduction measures will also result in a significant saving in fuel costs to the shipping industry.
IMO Member States, all of which are Parties to UNFCCC, recognize that an effective regulatory regime for international shipping requires global standards that apply universally to all ships and thereby maintain a level playing-field for all. And although decisions on IMO’s energy efficiency strategy were not reached by consensus but by an overwhelming majority, nevertheless, a global and efficient emissions control regime is now in place through the amendments to MARPOL Annex VI adopted in July – one that will lead to significant emissions reductions.

For further information on the adopted measures and their effect on future emissions, please refer to IMO’s submissions to SBSTA 35, the IMO website: www.imo.org, or visit the IMO stand in the exhibition area or join us at a joint side event with ICAO on emissions from international transport tomorrow Tuesday, 29 November, and another with the Republic of Cyprus on Saturday, 3 December at the EU pavilion. You are all warmly welcome.

Mr. Chairman, to conclude, I would like to turn to next steps for IMO. In this regard, it has been recognized that, in spite of the expected emissions reductions, the adopted technical and operational measures may not, by themselves, be sufficient, over the longer term, to meet the overall reduction objectives and the two degrees target agreed in Cancun last year – particularly in view of the growth projections for world trade and, as a consequence, of shipping. IMO has, therefore, concluded that additional technical and operational measures are required, together with a market-based measure (MBM) that would provide incentives for ever greater energy efficiency and revenues for climate change mitigation and adaptation action. IMO is, therefore, presently engaged in the analysis and development of such measures and we hope to have yet another good story to tell in a few years time.

It is for these reasons that IMO – the established global regulator for a unique, global industry – is participating in the Durban Conference, expecting that, as the Kyoto Conference did fourteen years ago, the global community will continue to place its trust on the Organization, confident that its solidly established regulatory work and track record can and will pave the way for international shipping to make its fair and proportionate contribution towards realizing the objectives that this Conference and the global community pursue.

Thank you.