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## World Maritime Day 2004

### IMO 2004: FOCUS ON MARITIME SECURITY

#### A message from the Secretary-General of the International Maritime Organization Mr. Efthimios Mitropoulos

Every year, the International Maritime Organization and its 164 Member States and 3 Associate Members celebrate World Maritime Day, when we take the opportunity to bring the objectives and achievements of the Organization to the attention of a wider audience and, at the same time, increase overall public awareness of the vital role that the shipping industry plays in all our lives.

In 2002, IMO acknowledged its changing priorities by endorsing a new mission statement, an evolution from the then theme of “Safer Shipping and Cleaner Oceans” to “Safe, Secure and Efficient Shipping on Clean Oceans”. This better reflects the broader objectives of the Organization and provides a blueprint for future action. In selecting our World Maritime Day theme for this year, we have chosen to highlight the increased emphasis that IMO has placed recently on maritime security.

If the natural perils of the sea were not sufficient, today, as we all know, shipping has additionally to confront the man-made threat of crime at sea, which is often violent and brutal, along with the scourge of international terrorism. Regrettably, this is not a new phenomenon. As long ago as the late 1970s, IMO was forced to turn its attention to unlawful acts such as barratry, the unlawful seizure of ships and their cargoes and other forms of maritime fraud; and, since 1982, we have been monitoring acts of piracy and armed robbery against ships in various parts of the world and have taken measures to combat them in those areas that suffer most. Perhaps the most disconcerting aspect in all these efforts is that the degree of violence in incidents involving piracy and armed robbery seems to be increasing.

Following the 1985 incident, in which terrorists hijacked the Italian cruise ship **Achille Lauro** and killed a passenger before agreeing terms to end their siege, IMO developed a series of technical measures to prevent unlawful acts against passengers and crews on board ships and later on, in March 1988, adopted the Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts Against the Safety of Maritime Navigation - the SUA Convention - and its Protocol relating to offshore platforms.

The principal purpose of the SUA instruments is to ensure that persons committing unlawful acts against ships will not be given shelter in any country but will either be prosecuted or extradited to a State where they will stand trial. Unlawful acts covered by the SUA Convention include the seizure of ships by force; acts of violence against persons on board ships; and the placing of devices on board a ship which are likely to destroy or damage it.

The dreadful events of 11 September 2001 gave unprecedented impetus to IMO's concern about unlawful acts which threaten the safety of ships and their passengers and crews. In the wake of 9/11, it became clear that the shipping industry needed a new, more stringent and more comprehensive set of measures to address the question of maritime security. In November 2001, the IMO Assembly called for a thorough review of all existing measures to combat acts of violence and crime at sea. At the same time, Contracting Governments to the Safety of Life at Sea Convention attending the Assembly agreed to hold a diplomatic conference on maritime security in December 2002 to adopt any new security regulations and measures that might be deemed necessary. The Assembly also agreed a significant boost of £1.5 million to the Organization's technical co-operation programme to help developing countries address maritime security issues.

The 2002 Conference adopted a series of wide-ranging new security measures, along with 11 associated resolutions, which represented the culmination of a great deal of intense and detailed work in IMO during the preceding year. These new measures entered into force on 1 July 2004.

The most far-reaching of them is the International Ship and Port Facility Security Code – the ISPS Code. It provides a consistent, standardized framework for evaluating risk, enabling Governments to offset changes in threat with changes in vulnerability for ships and port facilities through the determination of appropriate security levels and corresponding security measures.

IMO's efforts to improve maritime security have been part of an all-embracing initiative across the UN system to tackle terrorism. UN Security Council resolution 1368 was adopted the day after the 9/11 attacks and, since then, several more UN resolutions have been adopted to counter terrorism. Security Council resolution 1456, for example, adopted in January 2003, requested States to assist each other to improve their capacity to prevent and fight terrorism and invited the Counter-Terrorism Committee to facilitate the provision of technical and other assistance by developing targets and priorities for global action. This resolution also calls on international organizations, such as IMO, to evaluate ways in which they can enhance the effectiveness of their action against terrorism, including by establishing dialogue and exchanges of information with each other.

To this end, IMO has participated in UN-organized activities such as the Special Meeting of the Counter-Terrorism Committee in March 2003 and the meeting of the Counter-Terrorism Action Group in February this year. That group was established by the G-8 Leaders in June 2003 to serve as a forum for co-ordinating and expanding the provision of counter-terrorism training and assistance.

The boundaries between acts of terrorism and crime are often indistinct and, within the overall perspective of the UN's fight against terrorism, it is important also to mention the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, adopted by the General Assembly in November 2000 and which entered into force in September 2003. IMO has been working with the UN Office on Drugs and Crime in this context. Also adopted by the General Assembly was a Protocol, developed to supplement the Convention, aimed at combating the smuggling of migrants by land, air and sea. This Protocol reflects the relevant provisions of IMO's own measures for combating unsafe practices associated with the trafficking or transport of migrants by sea, which were updated in 2001.

IMO has also been working in co-operation with the International Labour Organization and the World Customs Organization on key issues with a bearing on maritime security. In July 2002, IMO and WCO signed a Memorandum of Understanding for co-operation on such issues of mutual interest as container examination and integrity in multimodal transport and matters relating to the ship/port interface. Following a request by the 2002 International Conference on Maritime Security, a new seafarers' identity document was developed by ILO establishing a more rigorous identity regime for seafarers, whilst a joint ILO/IMO Working Group has developed an ILO/IMO Code of Practice on Security in Ports, which was adopted by the two Organizations earlier this year.

In the broader scheme of things, IMO's work in the realm of maritime security provides support for its objectives in enhancing safety and also preventing pollution of the marine environment. The detrimental impact on the environment of a successful attack on a ship laden with oil, chemicals or other hazardous or noxious substances could be immense and, by raising our defences against terrorists, we are providing further protection in this respect.

It is very much in the spirit of international co-operation to counter the universal threat of terrorism that IMO has undertaken a far-reaching and multi-faceted programme of technical assistance aimed at helping Governments strengthen maritime and port security, particularly in the developing world.

IMO actually launched its global technical co-operation programme on maritime security in January 2002, that is 11 months before the package of new maritime security measures was adopted. The aim of the programme initially was to raise awareness of maritime security threats and of the possible future regulatory measures which, at that stage, were still under development, through activities such as regional and sub-regional seminars, workshops, training courses and advisory missions. Subsequently, the emphasis has moved on to practical matters and implementation of the new regulatory regime, with the development of training programmes and materials, lesson plans and model courses. Furthermore, a Maritime Security Trust Fund has been established to provide a dedicated source of financial support for our maritime security technical co-operation activities.

Governments and the shipping and port industries made major efforts to improve maritime security in the weeks and months that followed the 2002 Conference leading up to the entry into force of the ISPS Code and all the related security measures. All over the world, a huge amount of work was undertaken to ensure the highest possible level of compliance. Figures made available by IMO regularly to keep the maritime community updated on progress being made indicated that more than 86 per cent of ships and 69 per cent of port facilities had their security plans approved by 1 July 2004. Coming close to 100 per cent compliance, I applaud all those involved for the work done.

Having agreed that the prime objective of the work done was to increase awareness of the real and present threat of terrorism and explain the implications of the ISPS Code and how best to implement it and, in so doing, raise the shipping industry's defences to protect it and seaborne trade from any terrorist attack, we must now ensure that we remain vigilant and alert in all respects and in all circumstances.

There were, however, administrative bottlenecks in the run up to the entry-into-force date. Without them, the reported 56 per cent of International Ship Security Certificates issued by 1 July would have been much higher. But, although certification is undoubtedly important, what really counts is the work that has been done on the ground: security officers appointed on ships, in companies and port facilities; training undertaken; security plans drawn up; awareness raised; and vigilance heightened.

It goes almost without saying that significant and far-reaching measures such as these cannot be implemented without cost. The OECD, for example, has estimated the initial burden on ship operators to be at least US\$1.27bn and US\$730m per year thereafter. On the plus side, however, efficiency gains and reductions in theft and fraud are anticipated to exceed the expenses involved.

However, the price of inaction could potentially be far greater, as a large, well co-ordinated attack could result in the shutting down of the entire maritime transport system, with costs likely to be measured in billions of dollars. Moreover, potential savings resulting from the introduction of the new measures are also identified in the OECD report due to reduced delays, faster processing times, better asset control and fewer losses due to theft.

Another important element in all this is to realize the need for balance, not just in the cost/benefit equation but in other aspects, too. We must try to achieve the right balance between the need to implement the new security regime strictly and robustly and yet ensure that disruption to global trade, as a result of the introduction of security measures, is kept to a minimum; we must find a balance between the traditional and legally enshrined right of ships to enjoy freedom of navigation on the high seas and the need to make sure that strategic and potentially vulnerable sea lanes have the special protection they may need; and we must find a balance between the need to tighten security provisions so that criminals and terrorists cannot gain access to ships and port facilities by posing as seafarers, while ensuring that innocent seafarers are not themselves unfairly penalized as a result.

If shipping really is to continue on its path towards being safer, cleaner, more secure and more efficient, it needs to attract staff of high quality and high calibre and I look to all involved to recognize and appreciate the contribution seafarers the world over make towards safety, security and environmental protection.

To conclude: even though the new international maritime security measures are now in force, we must not make the mistake of resting on our laurels and assuming the work has been completed. The risks are too high to allow for any hint of complacency and we must make sure that high levels of vigilance and awareness are maintained and built upon until they become second nature throughout the shipping and port industries. Terrorism is not a matter of concern to one country or a group of countries – it is a global issue that affects us all and we should spare no effort to ensure that, together, we build a robust and resilient defence.

May we never experience the bitter and painful experience of a terrorist act against shipping.