



CONFERENCE OF PARTIES TO THE
INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION ON
STANDARDS OF TRAINING,
CERTIFICATION AND WATCHKEEPING
FOR SEAFARERS, 1978

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**THE UNITED NATIONS SECRETARY-GENERAL'S
MESSAGE FOR WORLD MARITIME DAY "2010: YEAR OF THE SEAFARER"
AT THE CONFERENCE OF PARTIES TO THE 1978 STCW CONVENTION**

Ships transport more than 90 per cent of world trade safely, securely and efficiently, at a fraction of the environmental impact and cost of any other mode of bulk transportation. For most cargo, there is simply no viable alternative.

But ships do not ply the seas by themselves. They are manned by a highly skilled workforce of more than 1.5 million seafarers – men and women from all over the world who, often unseen and largely unsung, bring us the wheat that makes our daily bread, the gas and oil that warm our homes or propel our vehicles, and the gifts we share and enjoy with our families and friends.

It is in recognition of the indispensable services that seafarers render to all of us that this year, the International Maritime Organization has declared the theme for World Maritime Day to be "2010: Year of the Seafarer".

I therefore wish to take this opportunity to thank each and every one of the world's seafarers for their invaluable contribution to a more prosperous and equitable society. As the world emerges from the global economic and financial crisis, the daily activities of seafarers will help nations maintain the recovery and, thereafter, build sustainable economic growth and development.

Seafaring has been a noble profession for millennia. While the shape of a ship has not changed much throughout history, technological advances in ship construction and equipment continue to make the world's highly diversified merchant fleet increasingly sophisticated. The expertise seafarers have acquired through their specialized education and training is a valuable asset on which we have all come to depend.

Shipping will continue to grow in line with increases in global trade and economic activity. So long as ships are required to carry the food, fuel and commodities that sustain modern life, seafaring skills will be very much in demand and, not least, can guarantee an exciting and rewarding professional career, with excellent long-term prospects both on board and ashore. In this, the Year of the Seafarer, I encourage young people across the globe to consider a career in shipping, not only for the benefits it may bring to them personally, but also for the undoubted contribution they will be making to society at large.

I salute the seafarers of today and tomorrow, and wish them fair winds, calm seas and, always, a safe return home.