



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

STCW/CONF.2/INF.8
25 June 2010
ENGLISH ONLY

**CLOSING STATEMENT BY MR. E.E. MITROPOULOS,
SECRETARY-GENERAL,
INTERNATIONAL MARITIME ORGANIZATION**

Friday, 25 June 2010

Mr. President, Honourable Ministers, Excellencies, MARINA Administrator, distinguished delegates and observers, media representatives, ladies and gentlemen,

Let me start these closing remarks by congratulating you all on your achievement in adopting the **2010 Manila Amendments to the International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Seafarers, 1978** and the **Seafarers' Training, Certification and Watchkeeping Code**. By doing so, you have added yet another success story to IMO's impressive list of outstanding achievements and **Manila**, the capital city of a seafaring nation *par excellence*, has taken its rightful place among other cities around the world – namely, Athens, Hamburg, Hong Kong, Nairobi, Rome and Torremolinos – that have been associated with the adoption of IMO instruments.

Praise is, therefore, due to all of you who worked hard and efficiently throughout this week to reach the enviable stage we find ourselves at today. By so doing, you have done a good service to safe, environmentally sound and secure shipping, to IMO, the shipping industry, the maritime education and training sector and, most of all, to the **1.5 million seafarers** around the world, who tirelessly serve international trade and civic society through carrying out their daily duties 7 days a week, 365 days a year in a challenging and often hazardous work environment, often for long periods of time during which they endure separation from their loved ones and forego the comforts of home life that we, shore dwellers, tend to take for granted.

Mr. President,

Looking back over these five days of deliberations and, indeed, over the almost four years of preparations for this Conference, I believe everyone who has played a role – no matter how big or small – is entitled to feel both satisfied and proud for having contributed to the successful conclusion of the concerted effort undertaken by so many – Governments and the industry alike, dedicated seafarer representative bodies, maritime training institutions, and the many other interested organizations. If I were asked to sum up in a nutshell the main ingredients that have led to this outcome, I would single out:

- **one**, a shared determination to serve the causes of safety of life at sea, maritime security and protection of the marine environment;
- **two**, a strong willingness to play fair in the negotiations and genuine preparedness to compromise; and
- **three**, a positive attitude to decision-making **by consensus** – the successful outcome of which can nowhere be found more applicable than in the decisions concerning **medical standards** and **fitness for duty**.

All three are among the hallmarks of the renowned IMO “spirit of co-operation” and I am delighted that the outcome of the Manila Conference has also been obtained in the best traditions of the Organization, securing a **robust, effective and workable** regulatory regime.

However, no success story can last into the future if those who work together to accomplish it merely rest on their laurels, as what was achieved here simply marks the **end of the beginning**. Our work in the STCW arena must continue to give effect to the decisions of the Conference and implement the **resolutions** adopted. I would urge all concerned to take guidance from them in any effort to carry the work forward in a proactive manner.

The immediate task at hand is to promulgate the standards of maritime excellence we have just come to adopt amongst those working at the sharp end of the industry and to promote their proper implementation and enforcement through the usual means of enacting legislation and introducing enabling measures in maritime administrations and training establishments. I would suggest that the successful closure of the Conference should be seen as marking **the beginning** of strenuous efforts at three levels:

- **first**, to commence, at the earliest possible opportunity, work to translate the revised STCW requirements into national regulations – with the aim of expediting their implementation;
- **second**, to deliver technical assistance through IMO’s Integrated Technical Co-operation Programme – with the aim of familiarizing STCW Parties with the revised requirements, and to provide useful technical advice on the STCW Convention and Code as a whole; and
- **third**, to initiate action to ensure the full and effective implementation and rigorous enforcement of the revised Convention and Code when the amendments come into force on the agreed date of 1 January 2012.

Distinguished delegates,

The success of the Conference would not have been possible without the goodwill, co-operation and understanding on the part of all its participants (delegates and observers alike) and, of course, the spirited leadership and firm hand displayed by its officers. An expression of deep appreciation is, therefore, due to all of them, **starting with you, Mr. President**. Your opening address inspired confidence as well as providing encouragement for the task ahead. Thereafter and throughout the week, you worked quietly behind the scenes to ensure that complex issues

were addressed in the best possible manner. The significant contribution you have made to the success of the Conference is, therefore, fully recognized and appreciated. Thank you.

The support provided by your five **Vice-Presidents (H.E. Mr. Dwight C.R. Gardiner of Antigua and Barbuda, Mr. Koffi Bertin Tano of Côte d'Ivoire, Mr. Rajeev Gupta of India, Admiral Giancarlo Olimbo of Italy and Mr. Abdel Hafeez Kayssi of Lebanon)** also deserves our special thanks and this is the moment to recognize it with appreciation.

In acknowledging the crucial role played by the **Chairman of the Committee of the Whole, Admiral Peter Brady of Jamaica**, you were not alone, Mr. President. In his usual expert and professional manner, and with his customary gentle way of exercising strong leadership, Admiral Brady helped participants, both in the Committee and behind the scenes, to grapple with some of the more complex and sensitive issues before the Conference and, eventually, to achieve the pragmatic approach needed to resolve them through compromise and to arrive at the unanimous consensus we all set out to achieve. The two Vice-Chairmen of the Committee of the Whole, **Mr. Sibrand Hassing of the Netherlands and Mr. Zheng Heping of China**, also deserve our special thanks for their unfailing commitment and expert contributions.

As to the Drafting Committee, an expression of special appreciation is due to its **Chairman, Ms. Mayte Medina of the United States**. She was supported by **Vice-Chairmen Mr. Bradley Groves of Australia and Captain Mohammad Ali Shahba of the Islamic Republic of Iran**, who, together with the other members of that Committee, deserve our thanks for their meticulous work in ensuring that the agreement reached by the Conference on all the issues before it has been reflected in sound treaty language that will stand the test of time.

Sincere thanks also go to the **Chairman of the Credentials Committee, Mr. Levan Chichinadze of Georgia**, and all the members of his Committee for their contribution to the success of the Conference.

There are many others, largely hidden from our view, who have also made a huge contribution to the preparations for this Conference, as well as to its smooth running and successful outcome. I refer, in particular, to **Mr. Angelo Verdan and his most diligent staff at MARINA**, and to **His Excellency the Ambassador of the Philippines to the Court of St. James's and Permanent Representative of the Philippines to IMO, Mr. Antonio M. Lagdameo, and his very helpful and supportive staff**.

My **IMO colleagues** have also done sterling work, both during this week and in the long preparatory months and years, particularly the staff from the **Maritime Safety Division**, under the leadership of **Mr. Koji Sekimizu and Captain Hartmut Hesse and, in particular, Captain Ashok Mahapatra and his team** from the Human Element and STCW Section. The same can be said about the contribution of the **Documents and Conference Sections** in the Conference Division, headed by **Mrs. Olga O'Neil**, and that made by the translators and interpreters. They were all expertly assisted by **Mr. Gaetano Librando and Mr. Chris Young of the Legal Office, Ms. Rouba Ruthnum of the External Relations Office and Mrs. Jane Thompson, the Executive Head of my Office**.

Once again, I wish to express my appreciation for the presence of **training ships**, here in Manila, from China, the Republic of Korea, the Russian Federation and the Philippines. I am sure that those of you who visited the ships enjoyed seeing first-hand the advanced training methodologies that were on display and, more importantly, talking with the students and their teachers. Surely, this splendid initiative will be remembered as one of the highlights of this

Year of the Seafarer and will serve as a much needed encouragement that investment in maritime training is as urgently needed as it is worthwhile.

And as for me, I will always remember my visit, on Tuesday, to the Maritime Academy of Asia and the Pacific at the Bataan Peninsular (the same Academy that has provided the uniformed cadets, who brightened with their presence, style, discipline and excellent manners the corridors of this Conference Hall); and my encounter, yesterday, with wives and children of Filipino seafarers currently held captive by Somali pirates. And I look forward to visiting the Seamen's Hospital in Cebu on Sunday.

Once again, I want to thank the **President of the Republic of the Philippines, Her Excellency Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, and her Government**, for inviting us to Manila and making this state-of-the-art venue available, and also for bearing the substantial cost of moving the IMO staff over here and providing logistics support in the preparation and running of this Conference. They really did pull out all the stops to ensure its success and to make our stay here very pleasant and enjoyable, as well as very productive. Of them all, the Secretary for Labour and Employment, **the Honourable Marianito Roque**, and the Acting Secretary of Transport and Communications, **the Honourable Anneli Lantoc** deserve a special mention and a big thank you. To name the adopted amendments to the STCW Convention and Code after their capital city was the least we could do in return. When we leave the Philippines tomorrow and in the ensuing days, we will take with us the fondest memories of this most beautiful country and the exceptionally friendly and hospitable noble people of the Philippines.

Distinguished delegates,

When launching the **Year of the Seafarer** early in January, I said that, during its course, we should try to achieve three objectives:

- **One**, that we increase awareness among the general public of the outstanding services seafarers render to civil society;
- **Two**, that we send to seafarers themselves a clear and strong message that we recognize their contribution to shipping, international trade and the world economy; that we appreciate the severity of the conditions under which they operate and the sacrifices they are subjected to while in the service of shipping; and that we do care about them and work to ensure that they are treated fairly when life and the circumstances of their profession are unkind, even hostile, to them or that they are protected when sailing through areas of known dangers, e.g., through piracy-infested areas or when found in distress at sea; and
- **Three**, that we go about our regulatory duties with their safety and security uppermost in our minds.

I then went on to say that, if we were to make a real difference in this, the **Year of the Seafarer**, I considered this Conference to be the pinnacle of all our efforts in the regulatory regime area.

So, now that we have successfully reached the end of the road, we can allow ourselves a sense of satisfaction that, through adopting the **Manila Amendments**, we have done our duty *vis-à-vis* the seafarers in the knowledge that, once the new STCW provisions start being implemented, they will be better educated and trained to face the vigours of the sea. And also, when, as a result of

better educated and trained seafarers, the safety record of shipping improves, security on board ships and in port facilities becomes stronger and there is a noticeable reduction in marine pollution and, when then, analysts attribute these improvements to the betterment of the overall situation brought about by the introduction of the Amendments you voted in this week, then you can say “I was there!” and claim, not without undue pride, that you were in Manila when they took shape and were incorporated in the STCW Convention and Code.

In closing, I wish all delegates, observers and colleagues a safe return journey. May God keep us all in good health to celebrate the entry into force of “the Manila Amendments”. But, before that, we should prepare to celebrate a successful outcome to the tournament that is still on in the Rainbow Nation. I feel sorry for those teams that have been eliminated and, as a good international civil servant, I wish **all** the remaining teams success and good luck – until, at the end, ... Germany wins (in accordance with the well versed definition of “football”). Goodbye and *au revoir* – not least at the FSI meeting in ten days time!...

Thank you.
