

## WORLD MARITIME DAY 2014

On 25 September, 2014, the International Maritime Organization (IMO) celebrated World Maritime Day. This is an annually event celebrated by the Organization and each year has its own special theme which reflects IMO's work throughout that year. The day is used to focus attention on the importance of shipping safety, maritime security and the marine environment and to emphasize a particular aspect of IMO's work. The theme of the World Maritime Day 2014 “**IMO conventions: effective implementation**”.



*Mr. Koji Sekimizu (Secretary-General, IMO)*

In his World Maritime Day message, Mr. Koji Sekimizu, Secretary-General, IMO explained the background for this year's theme. He stated that over the years, IMO has built up an enviable track record for developing and adopting new international conventions all of which total over 50. The conventions, he stated further, collectively aim at either the prevention of accidents or environmental damage, mitigating the negative effects of accidents when they do occur, or ensuring that adequate compensation is available for the victims of such accidents.

Mr. Sekimizu stated that while most of these are in force and have done so much to make shipping safer, more efficient and more environmentally friendly, there are still several conventions for which a slow pace of ratification and a lack of implementation are serious causes for concern.

He reiterated that for an IMO convention to be properly effective, it needs widespread ratification, early entry into force, effective implementation, stringent oversight of compliance and vigorous enforcement. He stated that even those conventions that command almost universal coverage of the global fleet, such as SOLAS and MARPOL, only have teeth if they are backed up by an effective implementation infrastructure at the national level.

Mr. Sekimizu declared that this is why he is convinced that the theme selected for World Maritime Day 2014 is so important, stating further that through it, his Organization has taken the opportunity to shine a spotlight on its treaty instruments which have not yet entered into force, as well as those for which ratification by more States would lead to more effective implementation.

The Secretary-General concluded his World Maritime Day message by stating that:

*During the course of this year, our theme has enabled us to make genuine progress towards ratification, entry into force and implementation of all IMO conventions – but especially those which have yet to be widely accepted. And this is what IMO is really all about. Debates, discussions and resolutions in committees and sub committees are all very well: but it is how we apply what emerges from that process to the ships, ports and seafarers who operate daily at the “sharp end” of shipping that really matters.*

The theme of this year’s World Maritime Day reflects at its best IMLI’s work over these past 25 years which has been designed to respond to this particular need and to provide States with the necessary practical expertise to advise Governments on the implementation of international conventions and their enforcement.

It is for this reason that it was recognized by Mr. Sekimizu in his IMLI graduation message of 2014, when he stated that since its inception, the Institute has been one of the cornerstones of IMO's mission to enhance and build global capacity within the maritime sector. He continued that by providing a steady influx of highly trained legal professionals, the Institute has been instrumental in the effective implementation of international instruments and has thereby played a central role in helping to establish the solid legal foundations needed for the maritime sector to thrive.

Mr. Koji Sekimizu recognized the work of the Institute further by stating that IMLI graduates now occupy positions of great responsibility throughout the world and their knowledge, expertise and influence has been of immense and tangible benefit, particularly for the developing world, and indeed for all the economies and communities that rely on the safe and secure passage of their goods across the seas.

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