



MINISTER ADDRESSES IMLI STUDENTS ON THE OCCASION OF WORLD MARITIME DAY 2006



Hon. Censu Galea addressing the students of IMLI on World Maritime Day

Address by the Hon. Censu Galea, Minister for Competitiveness and Communications, at the International Maritime Law Institute, on the occasion of World Maritime Day 2006

Prof. Attard, Distinguished Guests, Students, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Once again it is my great pleasure to once again mark World Maritime Day together with yet another group of alumni of the International Maritime Law Institute, IMO's premier institution for maritime law training.

Since its inception in 1988, IMLI has trained over 360 lawyers in international maritime law. With this 18th intake, we have with us today for the first time students representing Jordan and Kazakhstan, bringing the total number of nationalities represented by IMLI graduates together with this year's future graduates to 109 countries spread around the globe. This year also marks the intake of an unprecedented 36 new students, the largest class ever. An outstanding achievement and an irrefutable proof that IMLI is living up to its motto of "serving the rule of international maritime law."

Malta is truly proud of hosting such an important institution. It is a continuation of Malta's constant commitment for the promotion of international co-operation in the global pursuit for safer seas and cleaner oceans.

This year, Malta is also marking the 40th anniversary of full membership of IMO, formerly known as the International Maritime Consultative Organisation. An already eventful year for Malta has become even more memorable with the attainment of full membership of the Paris Memorandum of Understanding on port State control and the inclusion of the Malta flag on the white list of the same MoU. This is indeed an achievement of which we are all truly proud, an official recognition of years of endeavours to enhance Malta's standing not only as one of the largest merchant flags in the world but also as a quality flag that inspires confidence. We are determined to continue with our efforts to further improve and change to ensure that we are at the front of any legislative and administrative changes that are required.

This year's theme for World Maritime Day is "Technical Co-operation, IMO's response to the 2005 World Summit". As the IMO Secretary General pointed out in his message, it is indeed a theme befitting the Organisation's raison d'être – that of being a service provider not only to the maritime community but also in the wider context of the international agenda set by the United Nations in the Millennium Declaration.

Six years ago, the adoption of the Millennium Declaration by the General Assembly of the United Nations was a defining moment for global co-operation in the 21st century. The Declaration set out the key challenges facing humanity and established measures, known as the Millennium Development Goals to meet these challenges. The Millennium Summit was followed up by a World Summit last year which re-affirmed the eight major development goals. One might indeed wonder how, beyond professing general support, the IMO and the shipping community, can, as a whole, make a positive contribution to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.

The United Nations states that, of the 49 Least Developed Countries, 31 are littoral States and there is a growing expectation that the Organisation, through its Integrated Technical Co-operation Programme, should consider tackling, in partnership with other agencies, poverty triggered by the non-existence of, or inadequacies in, maritime activity and/or resource capacity.

Maritime activity has a key role to play in the eradication of extreme poverty and hunger. It already provides an important source of income and employment for many developing countries through activities such as the registration of vessels, the supply of manpower, shipbuilding and repair and port services.

When seen in a wider context, shipping has an even more important role to play as sea transport remains by far the most cost-effective way to move goods and raw materials around the world and the vast majority of global trade is carried by ship. It is important to emphasize however, that developing countries not only partake in this global activity but also carry out their obligations as members of the wider maritime community.

Environmental sustainability in shipping is a central theme and thus it is completely in line with the corresponding development goal as evidenced by the IMO's motto Cleaner Seas – Safer Oceans. As far as the environment is concerned, shipping – represented by the world body IMO – makes a notable contribution thanks to the comprehensive array of measures developed and adopted by the Organisation and put in place by its Members and the industry. Enhancing marine environment protection along the coasts for example leads to improved fishing catches of the non-industrial kind prevalent in developing countries, cleaner waters and coasts, increased tourism and improved integrated coastal zone management.

Moreover, a wide range of international measures were introduced with the aim of reducing the negative impact of shipping's everyday operations on the environment such as the management of ballast water, restriction of toxic substances in hull coatings and exhaust emissions from ships. Malta has done its part by contributing and supporting in the formulation stage of initiatives, implementing them in its laws and monitoring their adherence.

Indeed Malta has advocated a holistic approach to maritime activity since 1967 when the Government of Malta drew the attention of the United Nations General Assembly to the need for a new comprehensive regime governing humankind's activities on the oceans. This initiative, which culminated in the 1982 UN Convention on the Law of the Sea, was based on the fundamental premise that all problems of the oceans are closely inter-related and need to be considered as a whole.

In this context, allow me to reiterate Malta's position that ideas, policies and aims have to be pushed forward within IMO and other world bodies and raise the bar for standards on a global level rather than on a regional basis. The alternative is regulatory fragmentation along regional lines whose many consequences would include reduced global effectiveness.

This does not, however preclude countries from participating in regional initiatives. On the contrary, such programmes serve to improve world wide maritime achievements.

One such initiative, the Green Paper on Maritime Policy, which is presently being discussed at European Union level should be encouraged and supported. Commissioner

Joe Borg has come forward with a proposal that can be applied worldwide, even though it originated from one particular region. The year long consultation period on this green paper coincides with your presence at IMLI. I believe that during the coming months you will have the opportunity to discuss in certain depth, the contents and relevance of this paper to both European and international maritime activities.

*A final note that concerns you as alumni of this Institute. I am sure that your varied experiences will during the coming months, help you both individually and as a group, to broaden your **maritime** experiences. Within a few months you will all be better prepared to face the challenges that maritime activities bring about, sometimes unexpectedly.*

Let us, together work for a better maritime experience.

As for the promotion of global partnership for development, the IMO has for many years played a leading role in training which in turn led to the building of maritime capacity in developing countries. A quick look at this institution and the people who passed through it is tangible proof of IMO's commitment to this goal, supported by Member States such as Malta.

In conclusion, IMO and its Members are playing their part in the realisation of the UN's Millennium Development Goals. The Organisations technical co-operation activities, to which Malta actively contributes and supports, play a leading role in building capacity among the disadvantaged and empowering them to build a better and sustainable life for the future.

Thank you.

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