

THE INTERNATIONAL TANKER OWNERS POLLUTION FEDERATION LIMITED
(ITOPF)
CHALLENGES FOR INTERNATIONAL SHIPPING IN THE YEAR OF THE
SEAFARER

Attracting and retaining quality seafarers.

Thank you
Distinguished participants,
Ladies and Gentlemen

First of all, let me formally express my sincere appreciation to the organizers for the invitation extended to me to participate in today's event and to speak on the topic of "Attracting and retaining quality seafarers". My name is Naim Nazha, and I am the Director of the Personnel Standards and Pilotage Branch of Marine Safety, which has the responsibility for the certification, training and examination of seafarers in Canada.

Many of you present will remember learning about the great voyages of discovery, which opened the eyes of our forebears to the vastness of our planet, to the diversity of its cultures and the richness of its resources. Most of these voyages were made by sea. Most of them required for their success openness to new ideas, meticulous planning, courage and determination. As time went by, they not only opened up previously uncharted areas of the globe, they also generated new technologies such as the chronometer to allow for the exact calculation of longitude and the steam turbine to bring independence from the tyranny of prevailing winds.

This year's theme the "Year of the Seafarer" has been chosen, by the International Maritime Organization (IMO), in order to provide the maritime community with an opportunity to pay tribute to seafarers for their unique contribution to society and in recognition of the vital part they play in the facilitation of global trade.

In today's global economy, we know that about 90% of world trade is moving by ships and that qualified seafarers man these ships. Capital and goods are moving freely from one country to another. However, the same freedom does not exist for the seafarer. In this context the Seafarer's Identification Document Convention (Revised), 2003 (C-185) that was adopted by the ILO is very important both for the wellbeing of seafarers in relation to shore leave and transit and for strengthening security.

The worldwide population of seafarers serving on internationally trading merchant ships is estimated to be in the order of: 466,000 officers and 721,000 ratings. According to the 2005 BIMCO/ISF Manpower update, the present shortage of officers is estimated at 10,000 or 2% of the total workforce of officers. For ratings, we are still enjoying a significant surplus, however it is estimated that, by 2015, the expected shortage of officers would be 27,000.

We should note that the quality of a ship's performance is only as good as the quality of the seafarer it employs, which makes the seafarer the principle assets of any ship manager. Recruiting well trained and competent seafaring crews in sufficient number is crucial for the survival of the maritime industry for safety reasons. Many sectors, such as port state control authorities and classification societies require a steady flow of former seafarers, particularly officers, pilots, engineers, shipyard managers, ship safety inspectors and instructors.

A key factor to reverse the downward trend of seagoing employment is to encourage job mobility between sectors. This depends on the recognition and implementation of the concept of maritime clusters. Mobility has a particular role to play in providing alternative employment to seafarers. Maritime education and training should be designed to provide potential recruits with skills which are of the highest quality, and which can provide multiple employment opportunities. Legislative barriers such as the lack of mutual recognition of qualifications or national requirements for officers should be eliminated.

In 2010, Transport Canada, Marine Safety ratified several international conventions and protocols respecting pollution prevention, protection of biodiversity, safety of vessels and safety & well being of crews. Ratification of the conventions through regulatory implementation supports the department's goal of "a safe and secure, efficient and environmentally responsible transportation system". Of relevance to note that the Maritime Labour Convention, 2006 adopted by the International Labor Organization (ILO) is one of the conventions that Canada ratified this year in June of 2010. The MLC, 2006 provides a solid, comprehensive and global basis for worldwide employment standards.

There are enough cases of single companies or of collective agreements to suggest that higher wages, better conditions, improved operational efficiency and safety can be combined. The objective for all of us here should be to have quality ships, manned by highly skilled employees, working under the best conditions.

In conclusion, we hope indeed that this year will provide an excellent opportunity to convey to our Canadian seafarers and to the seafarer of the world a clear message that the entire shipping community understands and cares for them.

Thank you