25th IMO Assembly

IMO has a good and improving record in enhancing safety and security at sea and preventing marine pollution from ships, but more needs to be done, the Secretary-General told delegates at the opening on 19th November of the 25th Session of the Organization’s governing body, the Assembly.

The meeting is being attended by more than 1,000 delegates from IMO Member States as well as international and non-governmental organizations.

In his opening address, Admiral Mitropoulos pointed out that, during the last ten years, the amount of cargo carried by sea has tripled, ships have increased in numbers, size and complexity, and their service characteristics (including speed, endurance, propulsive efficiency, emissions, automation, strength, fatigue life and even coatings) have significantly improved. At the same time, he added, safety has increased threefold; loss of life, cargo and ships have fallen, security has improved and oil spills have been reduced to one-third or less of the level they were at ten years ago.

He told delegates that, “Much still remains to be done if we are to continue serving safety, security, efficiency and environmental protection with the vigilance, preparedness to respond and meticulous care they deserve. The fact is that we operate from a solid foundation, which allows grounds for optimism that even better days lie ahead.”

The Secretary-General went on to highlight the Organization’s work in preventing marine pollution from ships, noting the current action plan to address greenhouse gases and other harmful emissions from ships. The World Maritime Day theme in 2007 focused on environmental challenges, enabling the Organization to draw attention to the work IMO and the shipping industry have done, and continue doing, to tackle environmental issues.

He went on, “Our aim has been both to showcase the good story that IMO and shipping have to tell about what we have already achieved on the environment and to highlight the fact that we are very aware of what still needs to be done and that we are proactively and responsibly addressing the situation in search of still further improvements.”
Jim Fitzpatrick, Minister of State for Transport, United Kingdom, welcomed delegates to the Assembly on behalf of the host Government. Ministers, Ambassadors and Coast Guard Commandants from 36 other countries also addressed the Assembly. The outgoing President of the Assembly, His Excellency Mr. Zha Peixin, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the People’s Republic of China, and the incoming President, Mr Gedah Madi, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Egypt, also addressed the meeting.

At the time of writing the 25th session of the IMO Assembly was due to run until 14th December; it took place at London’s Royal Lancaster Hotel as IMO’s HQ is currently undergoing major refurbishment. IMO’s Assembly is its highest governing body. All 167 Member States and three Associate Members are entitled to attend, as are the intergovernmental organizations with which agreements of co-operation have been concluded, and non-governmental organizations in consultative status with IMO. The Assembly normally meets once every two years in regular session. It is responsible for approving the work programme, voting the budget and determining the financial arrangements of the Organization. It also elects the Council.