

**International Maritime Prize 2016 Receiving Speech by Koji Sekimizu  
(As delivered on 27 November 2017 at IMO Headquarters Conference Hall)**

Secretary-General,  
President of Assembly,  
Chairman of Council,  
Vice Minister Narahira,  
Secretaries-General Emeriti,  
Excellencies and Distinguished Heads of delegations to Assembly,  
Distinguished Guests,  
My Dear friends,  
Ladies and gentlemen

It is a real pleasure and great honor for me to receive International Maritime Prize for 2016 at this great Conference Hall where I spent my life for more than a quarter of a century. It is a great honor for the Government of Japan and also for my wife and members of my family in Japan.

I am grateful for Council members for their decision to bestow upon me the Prize of 2016 and I am grateful for the Government of Japan who proposed me. I am also grateful for the Secretary-General to have arranged today's Award Ceremony at the very busy opening day of the Assembly.

Let me say a few words on this truly great occasion and moment in my life.

Before I say anything, I would like to report, with pleasure and relief that my wife Chiho is doing well in our home in a pastoral area of Japan. Her new surroundings at the familiar home province is greatly helping her to survive but she is still suffering and could not travel with me to come over to London. Nevertheless, I think my decision to return back to our home country was the right one and, although she is still under a number of health care programs, we hope that our new life in Japan would continue and last long.

My life at the Ministry of Transport of Japan and later at IMO was a life to rigorously pursue a better maritime governance. I started my career at Nagasaki Local Branch of Maritime Bureau as a government ship inspector. I was extremely lucky to be appointed to deal with IMO matters at the Headquarters at an early stage of my work at the Ministry.

In the early 1980s, I was so fascinated in the work of IMO and excited in preparing Japanese proposals such as creation of the Weather criterion in the stability regulations or international standards for ship maneuverability. Since I moved in to the Secretariat, I was so deeply involved in the work of creating the new annex on air pollution, response to Estonia disaster, Erika and Prestige oil spills, anti-piracy actions, implementation of the Ballast Water Management Convention, mandatory member State Audit scheme. I spent whole of my professional life in the development of international rules and regulations at IMO for the safety at sea and prevention of pollution from ships and ensuring maritime security. It was a great honor for me to serve IMO and the international maritime community as the Secretary-General and I am proud of my life totally devoted to IMO.

IMO has a great history during the last 60 years of intensive work responding to the needs of the international shipping with remarkable achievements. But who carried out the real work of IMO? Who made real progress in the work of IMO? They were not politicians, not diplomat but those numerous technical experts in the Governments, training institutions, maritime Administrations and the Secretariat who believed in the objectives of this great Institution. In other words, numerous technical and legal experts working in creation of better maritime governance. I am sure, Mr. O'Neil, Mr. Mitropoulos and Mr. Lim, you agree with me. I am not different in this respect. I was not a politician. I was not a diplomat but I am still a humble naval architect and a student of international law, a student of maritime governance. Today I feel, I receive this Prize, on behalf of and as a representative of all those countless number of technical experts who supported IMO.

Since the establishment of the United Nations at the end of the last war in 1945, the world economy has continued to grow. Because of this, the living conditions and the quality of life of mankind have been significantly improved and poverty of people in the developing countries has been mitigated. In this remarkable development, international shipping has made a major contribution, because shipping is indispensable for the world trade and the systemic arteries for the world economy. World needs shipping.

During the past 60 years since IMO was established and started its work in 1958, the structure and operation of international shipping have been seriously globalized. In the field of ship registration, shipbuilding and provision of seafarers, we have seen significant changes. A large portion of domestic or national fleets in 1950s have now been flagged

in a handful of so-called open registry countries and those ships are manned by seafarers of various nationalities mainly trained in developing countries, Shipping has been largely globalized in the past 60 years. During the same period, we have also seen tremendous amount of new technologies applied to the maritime industry.

Ideal of IMO and its Maritime Governance is “Global Implementation of Global Standards established by IMO”. Nowadays, flag States, port States and States providing seafarers are cooperating to ensure implementation and enforcement of IMO Conventions. This global system of responsibility sharing was established through the intensive and continuous effort of IMO in the past 60 years of activities. Such IMO Maritime Governance system is always under the pressure and threat of unilateral imposition of national standards which would go beyond the established international standards, however, IMO has been providing an effective forum for the international community for continuous constructive consultations and discussions to improve international standards.

International shipping will continue to change in responding to future challenges and I believe strongly that IMO will continue to provide essential governance systems to international shipping, because the technical experts who believe in the objectives and the value of IMO will continue to come to IMO, providing their contribution to the work of IMO aiming at a better maritime governance and the future of IMO is bright.

Although I believe that such technical experts will continue supporting the work of IMO in future, in order to get more people to support IMO, I think we should do more. And I am promoting a Study of Maritime Governance at academic Institutions, Universities and Law Schools.

In order to ensure proper future developments, it is essential to learn from the past and I think that the past 60 years of activities of IMO should be studied as the process of development of contemporary maritime governance. Such study would evaluate the values of international cooperation in the field of maritime governance and provide a basis for support to the future of IMO activities and I am considering preparing a short paper on this subject and submit it to the Organization as an associated work of receiving the International Maritime Prize.

In addition, I would like to promote Maritime history and heritages. Shipping is essential

for the prosperity of mankind and welfare of people living on this planet earth, but it seems to me that the general public do not understand this well. In order to ensure the essential support from the wide general public to the activities of IMO for the sustainable shipping, we must get people to first become interested in maritime activities and I believe that maritime history and heritages are good ways to attract the minds of people. And I am encouraging Maritime Museums to collaborate with maritime Administrations to highlight achievements of IMO during the past 60 years as an important maritime heritage.

These are the main subjects of my retirement life and the rest is my own life deeply enjoying the Asian cultures and Japanese ways of living in our province of my truly wonderful and amazing home country. I spent too much of my life in the work of IMO and, although I do not regret at all for that, now I need to catch up my own personal and private living in Japan with my wife Chiho from all angles of our living including local religious life.

In closing my short statement at today's Award Ceremony, I would like to thank once again Member Governments and the Secretary-General for this splendid Prize bestowed upon me and wish everybody gathering at the august Assembly all the best and a successful meeting.

Thank you.