

World Maritime Day 2006

Technical Co-operation: IMO's response to the 2005 World Summit

A message from the Secretary-General of the International Maritime Organization, Mr. Efthimios Mitropoulos

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 sets out, within a single framework, the key challenges facing humanity at the threshold of the new millennium; outlines the response the world community should provide to these challenges; and establishes concrete measures for judging performance.

The measures necessary to realize those challenges are embodied in the Millennium Development Goals – universally known as the MDGs. The MDGs pursue the quest for a peaceful, secure and poverty-free world, and emphasize the need to focus development efforts on areas in which they can be translated into clear, measurable and sustainable improvements in the quality of the lives of people, especially the poor.

Last year, as a follow-up to the Millennium Summit, a World Summit was organized at the UN Headquarters in New York, in conjunction with the sixtieth session of the General Assembly. This Summit was the largest gathering of world leaders in history, attended by Heads of State or Government from more than 150 countries, observers representing various UN specialized agencies and programmes, as well as intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations. I had the privilege and honour to represent IMO at the Summit and later to report on its outcome to the IMO Council and Assembly.

The 2005 World Summit endorsed and re-affirmed the eight MDGs that were enshrined in the original Millennium Declaration. Which brings me to the theme of this year's World Maritime Day which is "**Technical Co-operation: IMO's Response to the 2005 World Summit**". It reflects how important it is that the work of the Organization should be seen, not just in terms of the service it provides to the maritime community itself, but also in the wider context of the international agenda set by the United Nations.

At a cursory glance, you might wonder how, beyond professing general support, we, in IMO, can make a really positive contribution to the achievement of the MDGs. The answer, of course, is that we simply have to. It has been widely acknowledged that the scale of the MDGs means that achieving them is beyond the responsibility or the capability of individual Governments. The challenges they present are too massive to be tackled by a single entity or a single agency or even by a single strategy.

It, therefore, falls to the international community as a whole to take action to address them. We should all be aware of the unsustainability and unacceptability of the current situation. The knowledge that hundreds of millions of people are, for example, left defenceless against hunger, disease and environmental degradation, even though the means to rescue them are there, must galvanize us all. Within its sphere of responsibility, IMO – and the maritime community as a whole – has to make its own contribution.

IMO's work strongly supports certain of the MDGs and will contribute substantively to the delivery of the 2005 World Summit Outcome. In particular, the Organization's technical co-operation activities make a valuable contribution to the UN's wider goals by promoting sustainable development, human resource development and capacity-building. Although IMO adopts international shipping regulations, it is the responsibility of Governments to implement those regulations. IMO's technical co-operation programme is, therefore, designed to assist Governments that lack the technical knowledge and resources needed to oversee a shipping sector successfully.

Thus, by fostering capacity-building in the maritime sector, IMO's technical co-operation activities help countries to ensure safe, secure and effective shipping services and protect their waters and coasts from the environmental degradation that can be caused by ships and related maritime activity.

The effectiveness and efficiency of maritime transport and, by extension, IMO's technical co-operation work, can have a major and direct impact on at least five of the MDGs. It can help to **eradicate extreme poverty and hunger**; to **promote gender equality and empower women**; to **combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases**; to **ensure environmental sustainability**; and to **develop a global partnership for development**.

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 such activities as the registration of ships, the supply of sea-going manpower and ship recycling, as well as shipowning and operating, shipbuilding and repair and port services, among others. But, seen in a wider context, shipping has an even more important role to play. Sea transport remains by far the most cost-effective way to move goods and raw materials *en masse* around the world, and the vast majority of global trade is carried in ships.

The part played by the maritime sector as an enabler of global trade and thereby global prosperity, as well as its direct, beneficial input to many developing economies, has made and continues to make a substantial contribution towards the goal of **halving poverty** by the year 2015. Such a welcome development will lead, in time, to progress with other Millennium Goals, particularly those related to education and health. For shipping moves the world's burgeoning trade, while international commerce promotes production, job creation and greater socio economic prosperity. And the combination of all these has, undoubtedly, the potential to lift people from hunger and poverty and also **eradicate life-threatening diseases**.

IMO's technical co-operation activities, therefore, help ensure that developing countries are better equipped not only to play a part in this vital activity that is shipping but also to carry out their obligations as members of the wider maritime community.

While the Millennium Development Goal for **gender equality** has the target of eliminating the disparity in primary and secondary education, it could, and should, also address the disparity in vocational education and training. One of the most important of IMO's technical co-operation objectives is to help improve developing countries' human capital through training, education and other means of knowledge transfer. IMO's programme for the **Integration of Women in the Maritime Sector** continues to support measures to increase the participation of, and the establishment of formal regional associations for, women in the maritime industry.

In relation to another goal, it is a sad but almost inevitable truth that workers in transport, including maritime transport, can all-too-easily become contributors to the transmission of diseases. IMO's work in the education of the workforce is not, therefore, confined to regulatory issues and operational methods but must include health and safety training, with a specific focus on methods to prevent the spread of **HIV/AIDS**. This will not address the whole problem, but should form an integral part of an overall strategy to meet this important goal.

Of all the MDGs, perhaps those with which the work of IMO is most closely aligned are to ensure **environmental sustainability** and to develop a **global partnership for development**.

As far as the **environment** is concerned, shipping and IMO are also making a notable contribution thanks to the comprehensive array of measures developed and adopted by the Organization and put in place by its Members and by the maritime industry to improve ship safety and thereby reduce accidents. Fewer vessel casualties mean that less pollutants find their way into the sea, and there are any number of statistical indicators that reveal shipping's record of steady improvement in this regard over many years. Enhancing marine environment protection along the coasts has an impact in greater access to protein through improved catches (especially in artisanal fisheries), cleaner waters and coasts, increased tourism and integrated coastal zone management.

Moreover, within its mandate, IMO has developed and adopted a wide range of international measures designed to reduce the negative impact of shipping's everyday operations on the environment and, thereby, help promote environmental sustainability in that way. They range from the management of ships' ballast water to prevent the unwanted transport of potentially harmful micro-organisms across the globe, to the restriction of toxic substances in ships' hull coatings, the exhaust emissions from ships' engines and the quality of fuel used for the propulsion of ships.

IMO and shipping also have, I believe, a good story to tell about their efforts to promote a **global partnership for development**, another of the MDGs that was highlighted once again at the 2005 World Summit. For many years, IMO's technical co-operation programme has played a leading role in training and, therefore, in building and reinforcing the maritime capacity in developing countries to deal with the wide range of maritime activities which, as I mentioned earlier, are now helping to boost so many of their economies.

IMO's technical co-operation activities are, in fact, conceived and developed through partnership arrangements – between the recipient countries, the resource-providers and the Organization – which are based on three complementary factors: the assessed needs of developing countries, and their full ownership and direction of the assistance process; the interests of the resource-providers in supporting sustainable maritime development; and the promotion of uniform implementation and enforcement of IMO's rules and standards. Partnership development continues to be the main thrust of the Organization's strategic approach for technical co-operation. The objective is to widen the concept of partnership as broadly as possible, so as to strengthen and increase regional implementation capacities.

Once approved for execution, IMO's technical assistance activities are delivered mostly through experts stationed in the field or through institutions and networks in the developing world which, in partnership with IMO, co-ordinate and manage regional technical assistance programmes. The IMO Secretariat also provides a project execution function where regional outreach mechanisms are not present, and when the activities have a global nature that applies to all developing regions. Furthermore, the Secretariat has put in place systems to ensure project

monitoring, evaluation and impact assessment. In this manner, IMO's technical assistance activities can be adjusted to meet new challenges, and lessons learned can be assimilated for the future.

UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan has often stressed the **link between security and development**, re-iterating that **we cannot enjoy one without the other**. Developing a workable and effective international regime for maritime security has been on IMO's agenda for some considerable time and, at the 2005 World Summit, I was able to report on IMO's work in this respect. As well as adopting a comprehensive range of measures designed to raise the protective barriers of the shipping and port industries against the **threat of terrorism**, IMO has also put in place a technical co-operation programme to assist Governments to strengthen **maritime and port security**.

The importance of this programme was confirmed in the statement made by the G8 countries, during their meeting in St. Petersburg in July of this year, on strengthening the UN's Counter-Terrorism Program. The leaders of the G8 countries referred to the call in the 2005 World Summit Outcome document for the UN to do more "to assist States in building national and regional capacity to combat terrorism". The G8 warmly welcomed the emphasis on **capacity-building** in the Secretary-General's recommendations for a global counter-terrorism strategy and stressed the need for the pro-active engagement of specialized organizations and agencies such as IMO.

Meeting the **special needs of Africa** is one of the key objectives of the Millennium Declaration. Secretary-General Annan has spoken of "Africa's third wave", characterized by peace, development and respect for human rights. Most of the UN system's work in Africa is channelled through the New Partnership for Africa's Development, or NEPAD. In line with several resolutions adopted by the UN General Assembly, IMO has, since the mid-1990s, given priority to Africa in the allocation of its technical assistance resources and our Integrated Technical Co-operation Programme (ITCP) activities in that region also take into account the action plans of NEPAD. Thus, some US\$2,125,000, or 22 per cent, of the total allocation of our Technical Co-operation (TC) Fund for the current biennium was assigned to the ITCP's Africa programme; of the four IMO regional presence offices, three are located in Africa; and, through the ITCP, IMO is also addressing the "Transport Targets and Indicators related to the Millennium Development Goals", as set out in the 2005 report of the Ministers of Transport of the African Union. As part of this continuing commitment to Africa, I decided, in June 2006, to transfer an additional sum of up to US\$800,000 from the un-programmed reserves of the TC Fund to support maritime capacity-building activities in that continent.

Special mention should also be made here of the continued support to African countries through **IMO's regional presence**, with offices based in Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana and Kenya assisting in the upgrading of African maritime institutions and improving the ability of African countries to respond to the threat of marine pollution. Through technical co-operation, IMO has been able to help them establish port State control regimes – vital for countries regularly visited by ships from other countries – and to play their part in the provision of search and rescue facilities on which any vessel, regardless of nationality, may one day have to call.

This year, a massive gap in the effective search and rescue coverage along the east coast of Africa and out into the Indian Ocean was filled with the inauguration, in May, of a new **Maritime Rescue Co-ordination Centre in Mombasa, Kenya**, which I had the great honour to commission. Others are scheduled to follow soon. The successful fruition of this project has

been based on a broad co-operation between the Governments involved (namely, Kenya, Seychelles and the United Republic of Tanzania), IMO and stakeholders from the international and non-governmental sectors – another excellent example of a partnership for development that really works. IMO, as project leader within the framework of its ITCP, has collaborated with all parties concerned, co-ordinated the various responsibilities in the provision of expert advice, training and infrastructure and provided the general supervision.

Overall, there is no doubt that the world is making progress towards achieving many of the MDGs, although, as several Heads of State or Government disconcertingly acknowledged at the 2005 World Summit, not currently at the desirable rate that would ensure the achievement of the Goals by the 2015 deadline. Nevertheless, it was of crucial importance that so many Heads of State or Government took the opportunity of the Summit to reaffirm their faith in the United Nations and the vital importance of an effective multilateral system in meeting the challenges and threats confronting our world today.

IMO and its Members are playing their part. Our response to the MDGs, and to their strong re-affirmation at the 2005 World Summit, has been to emphasize, once again, the key strategic role our technical co-operation activities play in building capacity among the disadvantaged and empowering them to build a better and sustainable life for the future.

If the Millennium Development Goals are to be achieved, we will all need vision, foresight, purpose and strength of will. It can be done; but it will not happen unless we **all** take up the challenge and act together, pro-actively, positively and with due sense of responsibility towards our planet and the children of our children.

Thank you.
