



MERCHANT NAVY COMMEMORATIVE THEME PROJECT (MNCTP)



NEWS RELEASE

UNITED NATIONS
INTERNATIONAL MARITIME ORGANIZATION (IMO)
CELEBRATES WORLD MARITIME DAY

SEPTEMBER 24, 2020

Today – Mr. Stéphane Ouellette, President and Chief Executive Officer, Merchant Navy Commemorative Theme Project (MNCTP), joined members of the international shipping community in celebrating World Maritime Day.



The theme for this year is "Sustainable shipping for a sustainable planet." which

provides an excellent opportunity to raise awareness of the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and to showcase the work that the International Maritime Organization (IMO) and its Member States are undertaking to achieve the targets. The shipping industry, with the support of the IMO regulatory framework, has already started the transition towards this sustainable future. IMO has adopted and will continue to develop measures to cut greenhouse gas emissions, reduce the sulphur content of ships' fuel oil, implement the Ballast Water Management Convention, protect the polar regions, reduce marine litter, improve the efficiency of shipping through the electronic exchange of information, meet the challenges of the digitalization of shipping and enhance the participation of women in the maritime community.

The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the professionalism and sacrifice of the two million seafarers who serve on the world's merchant fleet. Shipping has continued to transport more than 80% of world trade, including vital medical supplies, food and other basic goods that are critical for the COVID-19 response and recovery – but hundreds of thousands of seafarers face a humanitarian crisis as they have been stranded at sea, unable to get off the ships they operate with contracts extended by many months. This needs to be addressed urgently, through Governments designating seafarers as essential workers and ensuring safe crew changes can take place (*Source: [IMO–World Maritime Day September 24, 2020, Website](#)*).

Shipping has maintained a constant presence in the history of human development. From the times of imperial expansion to the First and Second World Wars, the merchant navy/marine served as an important lifeline to the overseas colonies, and bridged the physical spaces between the western and home fronts. During the Second World War, the Allied Merchant Navy and the American Merchant Marine experienced the highest casualties among Army, Navy, and Air Force combined. They were also the mainstay of the Allied Forces victories in both World Wars.

Seafaring remains one of the most perilous and indispensable jobs on Earth. It is the world's most important and widespread concentrated 'human effort' that is essential to ensuring security, defense, and prosperity for our global society. It is high time that we demonstrate our gratitude to our brave mariners for the risks and personal costs to life they face at sea, so that we may continue to enjoy our life on shore.

Quotes

"The pandemic has shown that shipping, the most reliable, efficient and cost-effective method of international transportation that carries more than 80% of global trade, remains the leading facilitator of the global economy. Therefore, shipping and maritime will be at the heart of the economic recovery and future sustainable growth far into the future, both at sea and ashore, supporting an inclusive and resilient economy to underpin the achievement of the sustainable development goals. "Sustainable shipping for a sustainable planet", our theme for 2020 couldn't be more relevant now and for years to come."

– IMO Secretary-General Kitack Lim (Source: [World Maritime Theme 2020 Message](#))

"World Maritime Day is a great opportunity to remind Canadians of our commitment to safe, clean, and efficient marine transportation that improves marine safety and responsible shipping, while supporting economic growth. A strong economy and a clean environment go hand-in-hand. Through our \$1.5 billion Oceans Protection Plan, we will help create economic opportunities for Canadians today, including jobs for middle-class Canadians, while protecting our waters for future generations. We will continue to work with stakeholders, Indigenous and local communities to better protect our marine environment."

– The Honourable Marc Garneau, Minister of Transport (Source: [Government of Canada marks World Maritime Day 2018](#))

Associated Links

- [World Maritime Day 2020: Theme, history, significance and all you need to know](#)
- [World Maritime Day: COVID-19 Crisis And The Importance Of Shipping](#)
- [Betrayed–Story of the Post–War Struggle of the Canadian Seamen's Union](#)
- [Merchant Marine veterans of World War II still waiting for full compensation decades later](#)
- [10 Reasons You Must Thank Seafarers](#)

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