

In appreciation of seafarers, MARPOL and the marine environment

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Transport Minister Anthony Loke (2nd from left) presenting the Seafarer Award 2023 to Captain Nor Shukri Muhammad (2nd from right) at the 2023 National Seafarers Day celebration at the Putrajaya Marina. Also present were ministry secretary general Datuk Jana Santhiran Muniayan (right) and Marine Department director general Captain Mohamad Halim Ahmed (left). - Bernama pic

EVERY year on June 25th, the International Day of the Seafarer is celebrated around the world under the auspices of the International Maritime Organisation (IMO), in order to highlight the vital contribution that seafarers make to the world's trade and economy.

Since its inception in 2011, the International Day of the Seafarer has provided a wonderful platform to raise awareness of the vital role that seafarers undertake and educate the public about the significance of seafarers, who keep the world's commodities moving behind the scenes.

Many seafarers around the world viewed the commemoration as a success for breaking the veil of secrecy and highlighting the unsung heroes of the sea.

As the maritime industry strives to make shipping more environmentally friendly and sustainable, seafarers play an increasingly crucial role in protecting the health of our oceans and world.

For 2023, the celebration will look at seafarers' contribution to protecting the marine environment, in line with the World Maritime theme which marked the 50 years of celebration International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships (MARPOL).

The 2023 celebration theme will allow us to honour the significant cultural heritage of ensuring sustainable marine environmental protection while emphasising the dedication of all engaged parties as we work together to build a better future.

As one of the primary pillars of international maritime law, MARPOL is the instrument in the IMO international convention in preventing marine pollution with regard to the operational and accidental cause.

Since the adoption of MARPOL in 1973, shipping industry has transcended from a very basic standard into a comprehensive set of governing policies and regulation in environmental preservation. Seafarers' contribution to protecting the marine environment is undeniable as they involved first hand with MARPOL implementation that is important in pollution prevention.

The MARPOL implementation has received the seafarers' unwavering support over the course of the years. Current MARPOL phases has evolved which linked to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development goal.

Protecting the marine environment requires shared action especially to tackle other issues including protecting biodiversity, biofouling, the transfer of invasive species, and plastic and noise pollution.

The competence of seafarers is the most critical factor in the safe and efficient operation of ships and has a direct impact on the safety of life at sea and the protection of the marine environment.

The success of maritime activities is also depending on the talents, contributions, and sacrifices of seafarers. They spend a great deal of time at sea, playing a crucial part when it comes to protecting the marine environment.

Seafarers' engagements are crucial to achieving a just transition to a zero-carbon future as the shipping industry steps up its support of global efforts to address climate change by moving towards decarbonization.

Perhaps, seafarers deserve to work for organisations that are concerned about their safety and the marine environment in which they operate.

They require the necessary resources to apply international standards, and in an already stressful work environment, they require our assistance and support. This is significant because the maritime sector relies on seafarers for growth and is the country's economic and commercial backbone.

On this day, let us honour the courageous women and men, from master to deck hand, from sandy coastlines to the deepest ocean blue, from every part of the globe, who enable the maritime sector to support our global economy and create greater progress for all.

We wish all fellow seafarers a Happy seafarers' Day. We cannot thank you enough for your enormous contribution. Your efforts and commitment have enabled international trade and the global economy's throughput to be sustained and operated indefinitely.

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