

**SPEECH DELIVERED BY DR, KOFI MBIAH, MANAGING CONSULTANT, SHIPMAN CONSULT AS THE GUEST SPEAKER ON THE OCCASION OF THE CELEBRATION OF THE WORLD MARITIME DAY HELD ON THE 27<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER 2017 AT THE AFRIECAN UNITY AUDITORIUM- REGIONAL MARITIME UNIVERSITY.**

MR. CHAIRMAN,

HONOURABLE MINISTERS, & MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT,

HEADS OF MARITIME FRATERNITY;

DISTINGUISHED INVITED GUEST

THE MEDIA

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN.

Today, under the auspices of the Ministry of Transport and in collaboration with the Ghana Maritime Authority and the Regional Maritime University, Ghana celebrates World Maritime Day.

It is indeed a pleasure and an honour to be with you and to serve as the guest speaker for this auspicious occasion.

The World Maritime Day is a day set aside by the United Nations and celebrated through its specialized organ, the International Maritime Organization (IMO).

The World Maritime Day is thus a day recognized by the International maritime community for drawing attention to the contribution of the maritime industry towards the growth and sustainability of the global economy. The day first instituted in 1978 to commemorate the entry into force of IMO convention, is also meant to increase the awareness of the international community in respect of issues relating to maritime safety and security as well as the protection and promotion of the marine environment.

Each year, the World Maritime Day is celebrated with a theme. This year's theme, "Connecting Ships, Port and People" dovetails into the theme for the year 2016 – "Shipping Indispensable to the World". Last year, the focus was on highlighting the important role that shipping plays in the world economy. It is important to note that if shipping should effectively perform that role then it would be through the medium and connecting of Port, Ships and People. The theme for the World Maritime Day celebrations for 2017 is therefore apt.

This year, the World Maritime Day parallel event is scheduled to take place in Panama City, South America. (I have an invitation to be there but could not resist the tempting offer to serve as the guest speaker for the auspicious occasion in my own country).

This year's event was launched at the Port of Felixstow in the United Kingdom on the 17<sup>th</sup> of January, 2017. In a speech to launch the World Maritime Day, the Secretary General of the International Maritime Organization reiterated the significant role played by Port and Ships in creating the right conditions for increased employment, prosperity and stability. He also underscored the important role played by shipping in promoting global maritime trade.

He added that the theme chosen for 2017 “would enable IMO and the wider maritime community to shine a spotlight on the existing cooperation between ports and ships to maintain and enhance a safe secure and efficient maritime transport system”.

Indubitably, the connectivity between ports and ships, its impact on people and the role played by people in the realization of global economic goals as well as the objectives that underpin a Blue Economy cannot be over-emphasized.

Today, the original concept of the Blue economy as espoused by Gunter Pauli and captioned “The Blue Economy 10 years – 100 innovations – 100 million jobs” which sought to engender new ways of tackling issues that have deleterious effects on our environment and yet promote healthy living and prosperity has assumed new dimensions.

Today the Blue Economy underpins a new model for development, prosperity and sustainability and is inextricably tied to the oceans as an invaluable resource.

A World Bank study points out that – the Blue Economy is the sustainable use of oceans resources for economic growth, improved livelihoods and jobs and oceans ecosystem health.

It goes further to indicate that it encompasses Renewable Energy and Maritime fisheries which contribute annually more than USD 270 billion to global GDP.

Considering also that Maritime Transport serves as the vehicle for the movement of the 80% of international merchandise, the contribution of the oceans to global economic development is privileged. In 2016 the pace of growth in total seaborne trade slowed down compared to recent average but grew by 2.1% recording over 10 billion tons of cargo moved across the oceans.

It is also estimated that coastal least developed countries and small island developing states receive more than 41 million visitors a year. A boost to the economies of ocean and coastal townships.

Mr.Chairman, distinguished invited guests, Ladies and Gentlemen, the impacts of climate change on ocean – rising sea levels, coastal erosion, changing ocean current patterns and acidification are staggering. But more importantly, according to the World Bank study, is the fact that the

oceans still remain an important carbon sink that can mitigate the effects of climate change. Over 80% of litter in the oceans is from land based sources. For how long will the ocean serve as the World's dustbin? Our quest for sustainability of the oceans should lead us to better manage our waste on land in order to preserve the oceans.

Mr. Chairman, coupled with the tenets of the blue economy is the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG's) of the United Nations to which Ghana has subscribed. The international Maritime Organization has a strong commitment towards the achievement of the aim that underlies the Sustainable Development Goals. To this end, the Ghana Maritime Authority and the Regional Maritime University not to mention other maritime institutions, have a significant role to play in the development of a sustainable blue economy within the framework of the Sustainable Development Goals aimed at creating a better world for all by 2030.

The task of the Ghana Maritime Authority and the Regional Maritime University is made even more onerous in view of the recent commitment by His Excellency President Nana Addo Dankwa Akufu-Addo made at the United Nations Assembly that Ghana would work hard towards the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals.

The theme for this year's celebration is apt; because in the attainment of the objective of a blue economy underpinned by the objects of the Sustainable Development Goals, the contribution of ports, ships and people would be paramount.

To this end, the Regional Maritime University should be well positioned and resourced to build the requisite human capacity that is necessary for the accelerated transformation urgently required for the attainment of these goals.

Safety skill courses such as Rigging and signaling, crane operations, welding and grinding should be emphasized. Training courses should also encompass safety management, including incidents investigation at highest professional levels, jobs safety analysis, crisis and emergencies management courses etc. without these we are likely to produce a lot of graduates who may not have the requisite skill sets especially for employment into our expanding oil and gas industry. We would thus not be able to give true meaning to our Local content policies.

So, while we enhance our graduate and management courses, it should not be the detriment of the attainment of these skill sets, crucial for the attainment of these skill set, crucial for the attainment of our objectives. The Regional Maritime University should have appropriate and competitive remuneration packages in order to attract highly qualified personnel otherwise the students we churn out would not meet the requirements of industry.

Mr. Chairman, the Ghana Maritime Authority also has a very important role to play towards the attainment of the blue economy within the framework of the SD Goals.

In the nexus of ships, port and people, certification of appropriate personnel is paramount. The Ghana Maritime Authority would thus have to step up its role in this respect and increase the confidence of the international community in marine certificates issued by Ghana.

The recent decision of ITLOS in respect of the maritime boundary disputes between Ghana and Cote D'ivoire which in favor of Ghana, places an even more onerous duty on the Ghana Maritime Authority in respect of its role regarding, maritime safety, security and the protection of the marine environment from pollution. As the potential for increased exploitation of Ghana's oil and gas resources increased risk of catastrophic pollution. The Authority would therefore have to put in place measures that make Ghana equipped to the teeth in dealing with all forms of pollution likely to have impact on our marine environment.

The creeping phenomenon of increased maritime cyber-attacks has become a source of concern to the international shipping community. In the era of autonomous ships and other advanced technologies, ships have become vulnerable to cyber-attacks as Global Positioning Systems (GPS) Automatic Identification Systems (AIS) and Long Range and Tracking and identification (LRIT) systems have become increasingly at risk. As we seek to reap the benefits of a blue economy with the aim of sustainability this should engage the attention of Ghana Maritime Authority and the Regional Maritime University.

Also to engage the attention of the Ghana Maritime Authority and the Regional Maritime University should be the increasing concern of Co2 emissions and adopted to ensure that the impacts of new legislation introduced to deal with these have little impact on our economies.

Within the framework of the African Integrated Maritime Strategy (AIMS) [2050], Ghana working through its maritime sector should come out with a comprehensive maritime policy that encompasses the tenets of the blue economy underpinned by the Sustainable Development Goal and that takes into consideration the derivative benefits of the establishment of maritime clusters.

Mr. Chairman, distinguished invited guest, the theme, connecting ships, ports and people goad us on to the attainment of a vibrant maritime industry that employs the resources of the ocean, mindful of the need for sustainability for the attainment of a healthy living, well-being and prosperity of our people. The oceans must be a driving catalyst for Ghana's development.

On this occasion, as we celebrate World Maritime Day, permit me to salute the organizers of this event, the seafarers who man the ships in the face of the risks at sea the stalwarts of the maritime industry and all who work day in and day out to ensure the growth and sustainability of Ghana's maritime industry.

I sincerely salute you all

Thank you for your attention.