

**ADDRESS BY THE HON. MINISTER OF TRANSPORT MR. KWAKU OFORI ASIAMAH TO
MARK WORLD MARITIME DAY CELEBRATION ON 28TH SEPTEMBER 2017**

MR. CHAIRMAN

DEPUTY MINISTER

DIRECTOR GENERALS & CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICERS OF THE MARITIME INDUSTRY

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LA MANTSE

HONOURABLE MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT

ALL PROTOCOL OBSERVED

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

It is indeed an honour and a great pleasure for me to be here today to join you to celebrate the World Maritime Day which is being marked under the auspices of the Ghana Maritime Authority in collaboration with the Regional Maritime University.

I would first of all want to express my gratitude to the organizers of this event and to all stakeholders in the maritime industry who have in their various ways contributed positively to sustain activities in the industry.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

World Maritime Day is an official United Nations day which provides an opportunity to focus attention on the importance of shipping and other maritime activities. It is also used to highlight the significant contribution of the International Maritime Organization (IMO) and its Member States to global efforts in improving the safety, security and efficiency of shipping and protection of the marine environment.

Mr. Chairman

We are all aware that over 70% of our planet is covered by oceans which transcends across nations and connecting us all together. We are also aware that every country relies, to some degree, on selling what it produces and acquiring what it lacks. It is also estimated that about 80% of global trade by volume and over 70% of global trade by value are carried by sea and are handled by ports

worldwide. The bulk transport of raw materials and the import / export of affordable food and goods to sustain the global economy would simply not be possible without shipping. Seaborne trade continue to expand, bringing benefits to consumers across the world through competitive freight costs, and almost everyone in the world today relies on shipping to some extent thus making ***shipping indispensable to the world.***

According to reliable statistics, there are more than 50,000 merchant ships trading internationally, transporting every kind of cargo. The world's fleet is registered in over 150 nations with about 75% of international ships under developing countries' flags which are manned by more than a million seafarers of virtually every nationality.

Ladies and Gentlemen

Shipping and international trade have always grown hand in-hand and it is considered as the only cost-effective, energy-efficient and sustainable means of transporting commodities, fuel, food, goods and products. It provides a dependable, low-cost means of transporting goods globally thereby facilitating commerce and helping to create prosperity among nations and peoples.

International trade is equally critical to almost all African economies. An estimated 90% of African imports and exports are conducted by sea transport and efforts are being made to place maritime development at a high position in the Post 2015 Development Agenda. Considering also the vast maritime opportunities in Africa, promotion of seaborne trade within Africa and the development of intra-African trade by sea is fundamentally important to sustainable economic growth. This is in line with the African Union's 2050 Integrated Maritime Strategy.

Ladies and Gentlemen

As we celebrate today, i would like to mention that each World Maritime Day has its own theme which reflects existing / current events or wider United Nations initiatives.

The 2017 theme for the World Maritime Day is "***Connecting Ships, Ports and People***". I have been informed that the International Maritime Organisation chose this theme to build on the 2016 theme - ("***Shipping indispensable to the world***") and it is intended to provide an opportunity to focus on the many diverse actors

involved in the shipping and logistics areas. The theme will also enable the IMO and its Member States to bring to light the existing cooperation between ports and ships to maintain and enhance a safe, secure and efficient maritime transportation system.

Mr. Chairman

The World Maritime Day themes for 2016 and 2017 are therefore complementary and may also be seen as a response to United Nations post-2015 sustainable development agenda and, in particular, the Sustainable Development Goals.

As a UN agency, IMO has a strong commitment to helping achieve the aims of the Sustainable Development Goals. Shipping and ports can play a significant role in helping to create conditions for increased employment.

The maritime sector, which includes **shipping, ports and the people** that operate them can be wealth creators both on land and at sea. The maritime sector plays a significant role in creating conditions for prosperity and stability ashore through promoting trade by sea.

Ultimately, more efficient shipping, working in partnership with a port sector supported by governments, ability to streamline procedures and remove excessive barriers to trade, embrace new technologies, root out corruption and treat safety, security and reputation as both desirable and marketable, will be a major driver towards stability and sustainable development for the good of all people.

For the connections between **ships, ports and people** to be sustainable, they must also be secure. To this end, International Maritime Organisation is encouraging Member States to enhance maritime security, focussing on what both the shipping and port sectors can do to protect itself and to assist governments to protect global maritime trade.

Ports are viewed as critical infrastructure and their security is a facet of national security. However, without clear national legislation, policies and direction to coordinate the activities of all stakeholders, security responses in port facilities may be fragmented. A well-coordinated, risk-based preventive strategy is critical to the success of port and port facility security regimes, and this is a vital element in IMO's efforts to **connect ships, ports and people**. Coordination and cooperation

between ships and ports is vital for the provisions of many international maritime instruments to be effectively implemented.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

As we celebrate this important event, I would like to urge all participants here whom I believe are key stakeholders in the maritime industry, to work closely together to promote best practices and to build bridges between the many diverse actors involved in this sector.

Finally, distinguished ladies and gentlemen

Before I end my speech, I wish to mention again that this year's theme for the World Maritime Day celebration "***Connecting Ships, Ports and People***" was chosen to enable the IMO and its Member States to shine a spotlight on the existing cooperation between ports and ships to enhance and maintain a safe, secure and efficient maritime transportation system; bearing in mind that the maritime sector is indeed a wealth creator both on land and at sea.

I thank you for your attention.