

## IAEA Ministerial Conference on Nuclear Safety

20 to 24 June 2011

Vienna, Austria

**Statement by Mr. K. Sekimizu, Director, Maritime Safety Division,  
International Maritime Organization (IMO)**

**Mr. President,  
Excellencies,  
Distinguished participants,  
Ladies and gentlemen,**

It is a great pleasure for me to attend this IAEA Ministerial Conference on Nuclear Safety and I sincerely **thank** the International Atomic Energy Agency for inviting the International Maritime Organization to participate in this distinct forum.

Particularly, I wish to thank the IAEA Director General, Mr. Amano, for having taken the initiative, with broad support from Member States, to convene this conference in such a timely manner.

Along with the IMO Secretary-General, Mr. Efthimios Mitropoulos, the IMO Membership and my colleagues in the IMO Secretariat, I too would like to join others to convey profound sentiments of sympathy and solidarity to the Government and people of Japan for the untold loss of life and destruction inflicted by the unprecedented natural disaster of 11 March. With courage and determination, I am sure that the Japanese people will overcome the calamity and bounce back and rise again from the devastating grounds of the Tsunami.

Being aware of the very difficult circumstances and the immense challenges that still lie ahead for the Government and the people of Japan, IMO has pledged to continue to provide all possible support and any practical assistance within the purview of its mandate. We will continue to maintain close contact not only with the Government of Japan, but also with all relevant international organizations, including the International Atomic Energy Agency, the World Health Organization, the World Meteorological Organization, the International Civil Aviation Organization, the World Tourism Organization, the International Labour Organization and others. In so doing, we will at all times stay focused on the need to ensuring a **coordinated** international response and **harmonized** messaging.

Upon hearing of the Fukushima incident, we, at IMO, immediately activated our emergency response team and subsequently issued regular updates providing masters of ships sailing off the eastern coast of Japan with suitable advice and referring them to the **navigational warnings** issued by the Japan Navigational Area Coordinator in accordance with the established procedures of the Joint IMO/IHO/WMO Manual on Maritime Safety Information. We also provided a detailed update of current maritime and port conditions in Japan in relation to the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant and, in this regard, we have greatly appreciated the co-operation of all concerned, not least the tireless efforts of the Japanese Government.

**Ladies and gentlemen,**

The importance of this Conference cannot be overstated. Not only will it provide the **first opportunity** to undertake, at the international ministerial and senior technical levels, a thorough assessment of the Fukushima incident. It will also discuss broader issues relating to nuclear safety, including emergency preparedness and response.

Let me touch upon maritime transportation of radioactive materials. There is no doubt that we should at all times strive to **prevent accidents** from happening. To this effect, a plethora of both national and international regulations to ensure the safe storage, handling and transport of radioactive materials have been developed and they are implemented and enforced by the industry and authorities, in countries around the world. IMO has made its own, distinct contribution to the establishment of IMO codes and standards for the safe transport of radioactive materials by sea. Noteworthy among them are the International Maritime Dangerous Goods or **IMDG Code** and, complementarily, the International Code for the Safe Carriage of Packaged Irradiated Nuclear Fuel, Plutonium and High-Level Radioactive Wastes on Board Ships – the **INF Code**. These codes serve as a vehicle for compulsory implementation of IAEA's essential Transport Safety regulations and Energy Response Procedures.

Fortunately, there have been no reported maritime transport accidents with serious radiological consequences. However, in spite of all the safety measures taken, we cannot afford to ignore the possibility of incidents. In recognition of this, IMO has developed **Guidelines for the development of emergency plans for vessels transporting irradiated nuclear fuel**. There is no doubt, however, that IMO would need to call upon highly

specialized technical expertise resident in other UN agencies when dealing with a nuclear or radiological emergency involving ships at sea.

In cases of radiological emergencies, the UN family and its international partners have an important role to play to ensure a coordinated international response, drawing on expertise under the umbrella of the **Joint Radiation Emergency Management Plan of the International Organizations**. The J-Plan, as you are aware, was activated during the nuclear crisis at Fukushima, serving as an excellent example of cohesive multi-agency cooperation, fully aligned with the current UN initiative of “Delivering as One”.

This was **the first time** that IMO actively participated in the J-Plan, recognizing the potential that a nuclear or radiological incident may occur on board a ship or at the ship-shore interface and recognizing the need to ensure the provision of accurate information to the mariners and, at the same time, to restore public confidence in safety at sea. This was, therefore, an important step for our Organization and we remain fully committed to meeting our obligations under the J-Plan and its future activities.

**Excellencies,**

**Distinguished participants,**

**Ladies and gentlemen,**

I **conclude** my remarks by wishing you a fruitful and successful Ministerial Conference. IMO eagerly participates in this Conference and working sessions and awaits its outcome, which will help to ensure that the Fukushima incident will be better and more widely understood so that lessons for its future prevention may be learnt by all concerned. You may rest assured that IMO stands ready to make its contribution to efforts to continuously improve the international regimes in place on nuclear safety and emergency preparedness and response.

Thank you.