



**GENERAL STATEMENT BY THE PRINCIPAL SECRETARY,
STATE DEPARTMENT FOR SHIPPING AND MARITIME,
MINISTRY OF TRANSPORT, INFRASTRUCTURE, HOUSING,
URBAN DEVELOPMENT & PUBLIC WORKS, OF THE REPUBLIC
OF KENYA DURING THE OPENING OF THE 31ST SESSION OF THE
GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE INTERNATIONAL MARITIME
ORGANIZATION, LONDON ON 26TH NOVEMBER, 2019**

**Madam President, Secretary General, Distinguished Delegates of this
Assembly, Ladies & gentlemen**

The Republic of Kenya wishes to stand in solidarity with the people of Albania following the Earthquake that hit their country this morning. The Republic of Kenya is currently undergoing unprecedented heavy torrential rainfall that has caused significant loss of lives and displacement of large swathes of the populations. The Government has heavily mobilized resources and personnel to assist the affected parts of the country."

Madam President, please accept our congratulations with your Vice Presidents and other officials on your election as office bearers to the 31st Assembly which most certainly has come at a timely manner.

Madam President,

Kenya holds special interests in maritime transport and navigation as a Coastal, Port and Flag State. The Kenyan coastline lies along major maritime

trading and tanker routes connecting Africa to Europe, the Far East and the Americas and due to this strategic location along the East African coast, the country is central to regional shipping and the Port of Mombasa in Kenya has remained the largest and most strategic gateway to the Eastern and Central Africa region serving a combined population of over three hundred (300) million, in a large number of countries in what is commonly referred to as the Northern Corridor,

Kenya has therefore taken her role in the maritime industry very seriously and has ratified and/or acceded to 32 of the Conventions emanating from this Organization as well as the United Nations. Indeed, Kenya is aware of and greatly appreciates the huge role that the maritime sector plays in the socio-economic fabric of society both to the region and in the global maritime community. It is for this reason that Kenya has taken the lead in supporting and implementing the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (2030 Agenda) aimed at fostering the sustainable use of the Blue Economy domain. Furthermore, Kenya leads the Blue Economy Action Group under the Commonwealth Blue Charter and encourages better stewardship of 'blue' resources. Kenya is also scheduled to co-host the upcoming Oceans 2020 Conference.

Madam President,

Distinguished Delegates, Ladies & Gentlemen,

Kenya has in recent years seen a renaissance of its fishing industry and therefore appreciates the integral role that IMO play's in securing the safety of fishers and fishing vessels. Fishing at sea however still remains a hazardous occupation and the sector experiences a large number of violation of fundamental rights of fishers some of which do result in fatalities. Following the deliberations at the Torremolinos Ministerial Conference, held in October 2019 and in which Kenya participated, we join others in urging the

Assembly to endorse the “Torremolinos Declaration” so as to ensure that the 2012 Cape Town Agreement reaches its entry into force criteria by 11 October 2022. We strongly believe that the Cape Town Agreement will complement the application of the International Convention on Standards on Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Fishing Vessel Personnel (STCW-F), 1995 and the International Labour Organization (ILO) Work in Fishing Convention, 2007 (No. 188) among other existing Agreements on Port State control measures.

Madam President,

The weighty issue of IUU fishing sits heavily on our hearts and minds not just as a country but the region at large. To support the region’s initiatives in this regard, Kenya recently hosted a high-level meeting towards the implementation of the Djibouti Code of Conduct (DCoC), the regions joint strategy towards the repression of piracy and armed robbery against ships in the Western Indian Ocean and the Gulf of Aden.

Madam President, through the Jeddah Amendments the strategy has significantly broadened the scope to cover other illicit maritime activities, including human trafficking, drugs trafficking and illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing due to the importance of a broad-based approach of these joint challenges.

Kenya continues to play a key role in maritime security in the region particularly in efforts aimed at securing the maritime domain within the Western Indian Ocean and is a signatory to both the Djibouti Code of Conduct (DCOC) as well as the Contact Group on Piracy off the Coast of Somalia (CGPCS), both instruments of the United Nations Security Council,

continuing to play a key role in these regional mechanisms to address maritime security challenges.

In recognition of Kenya's role and contribution to maritime security in the West Indian Coast, the country has been elected to chair the Contact Group on Piracy off the Coast of Somalia (CGPCS) from January 2020 for a period of two years. The government reiterates Kenya's commitment to ensuring that the Contact group remains an effective mechanism to combat piracy in the region as well as enhance collaboration in regional initiatives towards tackling other maritime crimes.

Madam President,

The issue of plastic litter has been disconcerting, especially with expert advice that if pollution from plastics continues at the current rate, the ocean will contain more plastic by weight than fish by the year 2050. For this reason, Kenya notes with great appreciation the direction this Organization has taken in such matters, especially those pertaining to effective implementation of the 1972 London Convention and the Protocol to the London Convention.

As a sign of our commitment to a sustainable environment, two years ago Kenya government banned the use, manufacture and importation and sale of environmentally harmful single use plastic bags, polythene bags and packaging materials in order to reduce the amount of plastic litter which not only causes pollution on land but extends to oceans and seas, posing a hazard on flora and fauna. As the only country in the developing world currently hosting a UN Headquarter office, we are proud to note that the UN Gigiri compound in Nairobi has become the first UN headquarters to ban single-use plastics in its cafeterias and on this year's World Environment Day, the

Government announced a ban of single-use plastics in eateries in all protected areas such as national parks, forests and beaches. In an effort to further raise the awareness of the effects of single use plastic Kenya is proud to have supported the construction of the first ever sailing boat to be built solely from plastic litter . The flip floppy dhow has successfully undertaken a 500km maiden sea voyage from the Lamu archipelago to Zanzibar, Tanzania.

Kenya seeks this Assembly to place heavy focus on matters marine plastic litter from ships as a matter of great concern to member States. Kenya notes the progress made by MEPC with regard to the IMO Action Plan to address marine plastic litter from ships; the GESAMP Working Group on Sea-based Sources of Marine Litter including fishing gear and other shipping related litter; the proposed GloLitter project, which will support the IMO Action Plan to address marine plastic litter from ships. Kenya welcomes the IMO Study on marine plastic litter from ships as well as a draft strategy to address marine plastic litter from ships.

The above focus will go hand in hand with the international strategies developed to reduce plastics from the oceans/seas.

Madam President,

Considerable efforts have been made by this Organization to support the shipping industry and member States towards the consistent implementation and enforcement of the 0.50 per cent sulphur limit. Kenya has initiated and continues to sensitize and engage shipowners, ship operators, fuel oil suppliers to the 2019 Guidelines for consistent implementation of the 0.50% sulphur limit under MARPOL Annex VI for purposes of compliance with the required sulphur content limit of 0.50% by 1 January 2020. Indeed as has been said by various delegates, implementation of any action plan must be realistic, consistent and systematic. Kenya believes that no task is without

challenges, and we as the Assembly should therefore play our role and appreciate that challenges will be experienced.

Climate change remains a key area of concern for the international maritime community. Kenya has joined the global efforts in the reduction of greenhouse emission from Shipping and in this regard hosts the Maritime Technology Cooperation Centre (MTCC) for Africa, one of the five (5) centers under the Global Maritime Network set up to support the Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emission reduction strategy. The center serves to build capacity for the mitigation of the effects of climate change for the shipping industry and promote adoption of energy efficient technologies in the maritime sector.

Madam President,

This delegation notes with concern emerging reports of fraudulent registration and related practices as well as fraudulent registries of ships that continue to be received by this Organization. Such practices undermine the tremendous work undertaken by IMO and raises serious concerns affecting the safety, security and protection of the marine environment. Once again we raise this matter on behalf of an affected region and urge members of the Assembly to embrace the proposal by this Organization to deter such malpractice(s) which interfere with the integrity of already established and recognized systems within member States.

Madam President,

As a maritime nation, Kenya is keen to advance the inclusion, participation and empowerment of women in the maritime sector and the wider Blue Economy.

In this regard, Kenya supports IMO's agenda on empowering women in the maritime sector by fostering an environment that attracts women to the

maritime and shipping sector as well as the Blue Economy generally. In support of the IMO program for the integration of women in the maritime sector, Kenya continues to raise awareness on the importance of gender equality in the sector in line with SDG 5. Such efforts have seen the Country, produce the 1st female International Transport Federation (ITF) Ship Inspector in Africa and recently, Kenya was proud to receive the 2019 Institute of Chartered Ship Brokers (ICS) Global Lady Award.

The Kenyan Government further supports regional initiatives towards this goal by hosting the Association for Women in the Maritime Sector for East and Southern Africa (WOMESA) which covers a region of twenty-five countries in the Eastern and Southern African Region.

Madam President,

There are other areas this Organization may seek to deliberate further in the coming term. We may mention here:-

- a) The need for general guidance on how member States may regulate, address and/or handle matters pertaining the laying and maintenance of submarine cables by private entities vis-à-vis the safety, security and protection of the marine environment; and,
- b) Consideration for a scoping exercise to determine how safe, secure and environmentally sound the operation of Maritime Autonomous Surface Ships (MASS) is, noting the rapid technological advancement.

Madam President,

Kenya re-affirms her commitment in strengthening her relationship with the IMO and its Member States.

Once again felicitations from the Republic of Kenya on your appointment.
