



MARITIME INDUSTRY AUTHORITY

PRESS RELEASE

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MARINA PUSHES INITIATIVE TO PROTECT MARINE ENVIRONMENT

The Maritime Industry Authority (MARINA) today said that experts from the International Maritime Organization (IMO) are set to deliver a 3-day National Workshop on Anti-Fouling Systems (AFS) beginning 13 April 2011 at the Casa Marinero, Intramuros, Manila.

Around 60 technical officers from various government agencies and representatives from the paint, shipyard and shipping industry as well as country managers of various classification societies are expected to attend this workshop which will focus primarily on issues relating to the harmful effects of anti-fouling paints to our marine resources and to the human health.

International experts, Mr. Huang Tianbing, IMO Technical Officer on Marine Environment and Dr. Julian Edward Hunther from England, will serve as resource persons for this workshop. Atty. Brenda V. Pimentel, Coordinator, IMO Regional Presence for the East Asian Region, based in Manila will likewise present the IMO Statement and discuss the international regulation covering anti-fouling systems.

Emerson M. Lorenzo, MARINA Administrator, underscored the importance for the Philippines to receive this IMO capacity building program. According to him, there are around 4,769 domestic ships of different sizes plying the domestic trade, plus a good number of foreign ships calling on Philippine ports yearly. Their continued use of anti-fouling paints poses enormous risks to our marine resources and to our human health as a nation.

"It's very important that we need to prepare and implement a national action plan to address this concern. Majority of Filipinos depend heavily from sea resources for livelihood. Moreover, 60% of our total population or approximately 92 million reside in coastal areas", Lorenzo added.

He further emphasized that the country's marine eco-region cradles the so-called "coral triangle" which nurtures the highest number of marine species. According to the World Wildlife Fund, the country's mangroves and seagrass beds are the spawning and feeding grounds of many important fish and aquatic species, including straddling and highly

migratory fish stocks and endangered sea turtles and other marine mammals.

Anti-fouling paints are those that are used to coat the bottoms of ships to prevent sealife such as algae and molluscs attaching themselves to the hull. If they are so numerous, they are enough to slow down the ship and definitely increase fuel consumption.

In the history of shipping, lime and later arsenic were used to coat ships' hulls, until the modern chemicals industry developed anti-fouling paints using metallic compounds.

These compounds slowly "leach" into the seawater, killing barnacles and other marine life that have attached to the ship. However, studies have shown that these compounds persist on the water, killing sealife, harming the marine environment and possibly entering the food chain.

In 1960, an effective anti-fouling paints were developed which contained the *organotin tributyltin* (TBT) which has proven to cause deformations in oysters and sex changes in whelks.

In 1989, the International Maritime Organization recognized the harmful effects of organotin compounds. The following year, it adopted a resolution to recommend IMO Member States to adopt measures to eliminate the use of anti-fouling paint containing TBT on non-aluminum hulled vessels of less than 25 metres in length and eliminate the use of anti-fouling paints with a leaching rate of more than 4 microgrammes of TBT per day.

In 1999, the IMO adopted an Assembly Resolution that called on the development of an instrument, legally binding throughout the world, to address the harmful effects of anti-fouling systems used in ships. The resolution called for global prohibition on the application of organotin compounds which acts as biocides in anti-fouling systems on ships by 01 January 2003, and complete prohibition by 01 January 2008. This instrument was later on adopted to become the International Convention on the Control of Harmful Anti-Fouling Systems on Ships.

The Philippines has not yet acceded to this Convention.