Keynote Address
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Topic: National Best Practices and Challenges in Maritime Administrations, Maritime Security, and Marine Environmental Protection

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Professor Maximo Mejia Jr, President of the World Maritime University, VADM Eduardo Ma R Santos, President of the Maritime Academy of Asia and the Pacific and Chairman of the Maritime League, Mr. Eisuke Kudo, Senior Advisor, Ocean Policy Research Institute, WMU-Philippine Alumni Association President, Atty. Jabeth Sena Jepath Dacanay, to our esteemed Moderators and Panelists, alumni of the World Maritime University, distinguished delegates, participants and guests, ladies and gentlemen, good afternoon.

It is indeed an honor for me to be invited as one of the Keynote Speakers in the first Regional Maritime Conference organized by the WMU-Philippine Alumni Association, Inc. I also appreciate the attendance of our dear delegates from various countries in the Asian region. This only displays our eagerness to be involved in discussing and addressing issues affecting the maritime industry. Our collective commitment to these areas is paramount, as they not only shape the future of our maritime industries but also have far-reaching implications for global security and environmental sustainability.

For this event, I am tasked to talk about the topic: *National Best Practices and Challenges in Maritime Administrations, Maritime Security, and Marine Environmental Protection.* Allow me to begin by delving into the intricate realm of maritime administrations, in particular the uniqueness of the Philippine structure, where several agencies are in-charge the various functions of maritime administration, shared primarily by the MARINA, the Philippine Coast Guard, the Philippine Ports Authority and other port authorities. These governmental bodies serve as the custodians of

maritime governance, responsible for regulating, managing, and overseeing the vast array of activities that occur within our maritime domains. From vessel registration to port operations, maritime administrations play a central role in ensuring the safety, security, and efficiency of maritime operations.

However, the landscape of maritime administration is not without its challenges. Similar with the maritime administration of other States, the Philippines is challenged by the need to adapt to rapid technological advancements in the maritime industry. The advent of digitalization, automation, and artificial intelligence is revolutionizing traditional maritime practices and processes, presenting both opportunities and challenges. The country's commitment to implement the 2023 IMO Strategy on the Reduction of Greenhouse Gas Emissions from Ships is another challenge that the maritime administration is facing.

To navigate this evolving landscape, maritime administrations, like us in the Maritime Industry Authority, must embrace innovation, invest in technological infrastructure, and enhance regulatory frameworks to accommodate new technologies while upholding safety and security standards. The Maritime Industry Development Plan of 2028, as adopted through the issuance of Executive Order No. 55, issued in February 2024, includes as one of the Overriding Programs, the *Implementation of a Sustainable Maritime Innovation, Transformation, Digitalization and Knowledge Center.*

This program aims to ensure competitiveness of the Philippine Maritime Industry through seamless services, increased efficiency, improved performance and productivity. To achieve these objectives, MARINA has completed the design and development of the Blockchain Enabled Automated Certification System covering all processes in MARINA using a web-based online application, processing and issuance of all certificates, permits and documents needed by seafarers and for ship operations. This will also serve as an effective enforcement tool to ensure compliance with existing maritime rules and regulations. To address the challenge of semi-structured data or lack of updated data, other two systems where developed; namely, Maritime Route Rationalization and Information System or MARRIS and the MEDIANS.

MARRIS is a modular program with software for route capacity measurement to determine the supply and demand for shipping services in different routes while MEDIANS collect data on fuel consumption and compute energy efficiency as well as measure GHG emissions from ships. The two systems also aim to reduce GHG emission through energy efficient operations and route optimization. These systems and databases will enable maritime administrations to undertake data analytics as a tool in the formulation of timely and effective measures toward digitalization and decarbonization.

Maritime administrations must also address issues related to maritime security. The maritime domain is vulnerable to a myriad of security threats, including piracy, maritime terrorism, and illegal trafficking. These threats pose significant risks to maritime trade, economic stability, and regional security. Collaboration between and among national agencies, such as law enforcement, defense, and intelligence agencies, as well as international organizations, such as the International Maritime Organization (IMO), in developing and implementing effective maritime security measures is crucial. Enhancing information sharing, intelligence coordination, and joint operational activities are essential or detecting and deterring maritime security threats and safeguarding maritime interests. The Philippines has been collaborating with the European Union on information sharing platform under the EU-CRIMARIO (Critical Maritime Routes Indo Pacific) Project –Indo Pacific Regional Information Sharing (IORIS).

Now, let us turn our attention to marine environmental protection, another urgent and pressing challenge these days is the implementation of measures to reduce GHG emissions from ships to achieve the global target of Net-zero emission by 2050. Challenges in this area include the need for research and development projects for green fuels, production and supply of alternative fuels, cost of needed infrastructure, financing and incentives for re-fleeting of merchant ships, green digital technologies, training needs of seafarers to ensure safe operations of ships using alternative fuels and most importantly the disproportionate negative impact of measures to reduce GHG on States. The Philippines, through the MARINA has drafted its National

Strategy and Action Plan to Reduce GHG Emission from ships to implement the Revised IMO Strategy adopted at MEPC 80 in July last year.

MARINA has explored collaboration with different global, regional and local organizations on areas of research and development, capacity building, impact assessment, technology transfer and data sharing. Notable of which are the Agreements forged by MARINA with the Global Green Growth Institute based in Korea, Green Marine Copenhagen, Department of Science and Technology, the National Maritime Polytechnic, and University of Cebu, among others.

In February this year, MARINA and DOST held the first Science and Technology Forum and launched prototype of the Safe, Efficient, and Sustainable Solar-Assisted Plug-in Electric Boat or what we call SESSY Boat. Numerous capacity building, information sharing activities were attended by MARINA technical staff on alternative sources of energy such off-shore wind power, hydrogen, methanol, ammonia, and LNG fuel. The Philippines is also a beneficiary of the IMO-Republic of Korea Programme for Sustainable Maritime Transport Cooperation or SMART-C, on women, safe navigation and Reduction of GHG emission.

Maritime administrations play a central role in formulating and implementing policies and regulations to address marine environmental challenges. The Philippines continue to implement measures to prevent pollution from ships, regulate fishing activities, protect marine habitats, and mitigate the impacts of climate change on coastal communities and ecosystems. Moreover, MARINA also led the development of the National Strategy and Action Plan to address Marin Plastic Litter and now currently drafting the National Strategy and Action Plan to implement Biofouling Management. Maritime administrations' collaboration with other stakeholders, including the private sector, civil society, and scientific institutions, is effective to develop innovative solutions and promote sustainable practices.

Furthermore, addressing marine environmental challenges requires a holistic and integrated approach that takes into account the interconnectedness of marine ecosystems and human activities. Promoting ecosystem-based management,

implementing marine spatial planning, and fostering stakeholder engagement are essential for balancing conservation objectives with sustainable development goals and ensuring the long-term health and resilience of marine ecosystems.

In conclusion, national best practices and challenges in maritime administrations, maritime security, and marine environmental protection are complex and interrelated issues that require collaborative action, innovation, and commitment from all stakeholders. By embracing innovation, strengthening regulatory frameworks, enhancing maritime security measures, and promoting sustainable practices, we can build a safer, more secure, and more sustainable maritime future for all.

Thank you and good day to all!