



REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
MARITIME INDUSTRY AUTHORITY

KEYNOTE ADDRESS
ADMINISTRATOR SONIA MALALUAN

Seatrade Maritime Crew Connect Global
12 November 2024

Preliminaries

- Mr. Tommy Olofsen, Chief Commercial Officer of OSM Thome and Chairman of this year's Crew Connect Global Conference,
- The dedicated team at Informa behind this successful conference,
- Honorable representatives of the diplomatic corps,
- Fellow colleagues in government,
- Esteemed members of the global maritime community,

It is an honor to be here today at Seatrade Maritime Crew Connect Global, representing the Philippine Maritime Industry Authority. For more than two decades, this gathering has stood as a pillar of unity and collaboration, bringing together the brightest minds in the global maritime industry. The progress we've achieved as a community is a testament to the leadership and vision of everyone in this room, who continue to shape the future of maritime trade.

I would like to begin by expressing our deepest gratitude to the European Commission for the recent launch of the EU-ASEAN Sustainable Connectivity Package on Seafarers Technical Assistance. This initiative, aimed at elevating technical standards, reflects a broader vision of collaboration, shared growth, and mutual benefit within the maritime sector. We are especially grateful to the Directorate-General for Mobility and Transport and the technical experts who have dedicated their time and expertise to make this project a reality. Your support pushes us closer to advancing seafaring standards, and we are excited to build on this momentum in the coming years.

A key component of this technical assistance is the effective implementation of the STCW Convention, which is crucial for maintaining the Philippines' position as a

Golden Voyage Towards Green and Digital Maritime Future

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leading provider of highly qualified and globally competitive seafarers. By strengthening our systems, we are reinforcing the country's capacity to produce maritime professionals who meet the evolving needs of the global shipping industry.

Currently, the technical assistance project is in its Inception Phase wherein the Department of Transportation and the MARINA are closely coordinating with the Project Team to assess the workplan, adjust as necessary and ultimately, come up and agree with a list of detailed tasks. The Project Team, headed by Professor Malek Pourzanjani, will likewise conduct a "stakeholder's analysis" to establish contacts, gather up-to-date information concerning the situation on the ground and identify stakeholder needs.

At MARINA, we are committed to closely collaborating with the European Commission and DG MOVE over the next three years to facilitate smooth and successful implementation of the technical assistance which comes at an opportune time as it complements the recently passed Republic Act 12021 or the Magna Carta of Filipino Seafarers, a landmark piece of legislation that reinforces our commitment to protecting the welfare of Filipino seafarers and highlights their essential role in the global maritime workforce.

The Magna Carta of Filipino is a significant achievement for our maritime industry. This new law ensures the employment, welfare and continued competency of Filipino seafarers who make up 25% of the world's maritime workforce. These figures represent the global trust and confidence placed in our maritime professionals. Our goal is to maintain that trust and continue positioning Filipino seafarers as the "Seafarer of Choice," known for their competence, reliability, and dedication to global trade.

Perhaps one of the most significant features of the new law is the assumption of MARINA of all mandates relating to maritime education, training, and certification. This reinforces MARINA's designation as the Single Maritime Administration and will

help ensure a concerted approach in the management of all concerns relating to our compliance with the STCW Convention.

Currently, the Department of Migrant Workers and the MARINA, as Chair and Vice-Chair of the Technical Working Group, are conducting consultative meetings with concerned government agencies for the drafting of the Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR) of the Magna Carta for Seafarers. The draft IRR will be disseminated to all private maritime stakeholders by the middle of this month for their comments and inputs. We expect to issue the signed IRR by 16 December 2024 and will take full effect 15 days after its publication.

The MARINA is currently working with the Commission on Higher Education, the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority and the Department of Education for the development of Ladderized Maritime Education and Training. This component will allow students to progress between technical-vocational and higher education programs, or vice-versa for employability in the maritime industry. The MARINA has likewise issued the revised Management Level for Deck and Engine last October 2024 which cuts the training duration to almost half without compromising the attainment of the required competences.

Beyond education and training, MARINA is advancing several key initiatives to keep the Philippines competitive in the maritime industry. One of the most transformative is our focus on digitalization. Through the introduction of online platforms, seafarers can now process their certifications and licenses remotely, minimizing the need for physical visits and enabling quicker return to duty. The Philippines is one of the pioneers in the issuance of digital STCW Certificates which started back in February 2022. We have also decentralized services to regional offices, making it easier for seafarers and stakeholders to access them nationwide.

Last July, we have launched the MARINA Blockchain-Enabled Automated Certification System or MARINA-BEST which incorporates blockchain technology to

enhance the security of certifications, future-proofing our systems and warranting greater reliability. Currently, we are coordinating with the Norwegian Maritime Authority and the International Chamber of Shipping for the possible linking of our systems to facilitate the verification and recognition of certificates.

While digitalization is transforming service delivery for seafarers and industry stakeholders, our work doesn't stop there. MARINA remains dedicated to strengthening the Philippines' shipbuilding, ship repair, and ship registry sectors. The growth of these sectors is key to positioning the Philippines as a premier maritime services hub in Asia. Our ship registry continues to be updated in line with international standards, allowing vessels under the Philippine flag to benefit from regulatory efficiency. Additionally, we are working on attracting investments in shipbuilding and repair facilities, further boosting our global competitiveness. These initiatives, outlined in the Philippine Maritime Industry Development Plan, aim to create a business-friendly environment that encourages more investments in the country. By laying the groundwork for a competitive maritime industry, we are positioning ourselves as a leader in the region.

With this in mind, I warmly invite shipowners and maritime industry leaders to consider registering your vessels under the Philippine flag. By partnering with the Philippines, you gain access to skilled maritime professionals and modernized infrastructure aligned with global standards for efficient operations. I also encourage international partners to explore the investment opportunities in our growing maritime sector. With a talented workforce and a government focused on innovation and streamlined processes, the Philippines is well-positioned for long-term success in global trade.

As I conclude, I want to sincerely thank the industry leaders gathered here today. Crew Connect has been instrumental in helping the maritime industry adapt to rapid global changes, ensuring that economies remain connected and opportunities continue to grow. The challenges ahead may be complex, but through collaboration

and shared commitment, we will navigate them together. It is through our collective efforts that we will strengthen the maritime industry and unlock new opportunities for growth and innovation.

I look forward to working with all of you as we shape the future of global trade and drive the maritime industry toward a more sustainable and prosperous tomorrow.