



REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES  
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION  
MARITIME INDUSTRY AUTHORITY

## **MARITIME SAFETY AS A NATIONAL IMPERATIVE FOR THE PHILIPPINE MARITIME SECTOR<sup>1</sup>**

Ballroom 2, Makati Diamond Hotel  
23 January 2025 | 12:40 – 12:50 PM

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## **Opening Spiel and Introduction**

Excellencies,  
Colleagues in the Public Service  
Stakeholders in the Maritime Industry

Good afternoon.

We convey our sincere appreciation to the French Embassy in the Philippines and its partner, the Stratbase Institutue, for organizing this conversation and for including the Maritime Industry Authority (MARINA) as part of this panel.

I am pleased to share the stage with our distinguished partners in the maritime sector of the Republic of the Philippines explore the topic on maritime safety. We are likewise honored to have in our audience the presence in-person and virtually of our strategic partners listen to our insights for better appreciation of our unique national circumstance as a maritime nation and within the framework of accepted principles of maritime safety. Given the scope of our maritime activities, ensuring maritime safety

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<sup>1</sup> Topic for Panel 3: Achieving Maritime Safety Through the Amelioration of Transportation and the Modernization of Infrastructure for the Conference on “Exploring Maritime Cooperation: The Role of International Partnerships on Maritime Security on 23 January 2025, 9:00 -2:00, Legazpi 2 Ballroom, Makati Diamond Hotel

### ***Golden Voyage Towards Green and Digital Maritime Future***

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in the over-all governance is not only a necessity but also a national imperative.

As an Agency mandated to ensure safety of life and property, including the protection of our marine environment, the MARINA considers maritime safety imperative in the promotion of our nation interests. This is primarily because of these considerations:

- a. Our national economy is intertwined with our inter-island trade, since ships have been responsible in connecting our people and our various islands. In fact, 98 percent of the total volume of our domestic trade is moved by our ships through our bodies of water.
- b. Internationally, Filipino seafarers who account to more than 25% of the total global workforce play significant role in ensuring the sustainability of the global seaborne trade. The need to ensure their continued competence is of utmost priority for us.

### **Development and Promotion of the Maritime Industry as a National Priority**

To contextualize, safety of navigation or maritime safety is a function that transcends directly at the heart of our Agency. It involves ensuring that our seafarers, whether engaged in domestic or overseas shipping trade, must possess the necessary competence and proficiency in the performance of their respective duties while at sea and for our Philippine registered ships to maintain their seaworthiness at all times. The level of our maritime safety compliance directly impacts on our economic survival.

In fact, among other aspects of our work in the MARINA, the issue of maritime safety is a core in my 10-point Agenda.

If I may bring back your attention two (2) years ago, particularly on the occasion of the Philippine Maritime Industry Summit attended by major

maritime industry stakeholders in February 2023, His Excellency President Ferdinand R Marcos Jr vowed his support for the crafting of an updated Maritime Industry Development Plan 2028 that would address the sea transport requirements of the country. On 08 February 2024, the President issued Executive Order No. 55 which adopted and approved the Ten Year Maritime Industry Development Plan 2028. One of the key component programs is the Enhancement of Maritime Transport Safety and Security for Philippine registered Merchant ships and Fishing Vessels.

To ensure the effective implementation of the MIDP2028, the President has urged the adoption of a whole of government approach, noting that a number of government agencies perform functions relating to the promotion and development of the maritime industry as a whole. As a matter of national policy, our President vowed to make the Philippine maritime industry a Top Priority.

### **The Role of the MARINA in the Implementation and Enforcement of Maritime Safety**

The Maritime Industry Authority (MARINA) is an attached Agency under the Department of Transportation with primary responsibility for the promotion, development, regulation and supervision of the maritime industry.

Due the geographic configuration of the country, the MARINA is mandated to accelerate the integrated development of the maritime industry with focus on the following sectors: Domestic Shipping, Overseas Shipping, Shipbuilding and Ship Repair. As a support for these sectors, the MARINA performs certain aspects of its work to ensure maritime safety that can be categorized into two (2): The Human Element and Seaworthiness of Ships.

#### **a. The Human Element Dimension of Shipping**

As the single largest provider of certificated seafarers, the Philippines has aligned its maritime education, training and certification with the

International Convention on the Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping (STCW) for seafarers 1978, as amended. It has likewise put in place continued professional development as an essential component for adapting to technological advancement.

Currently, the MARINA has seriously taken steps into pursuing deeper understanding into the impact of digitalization, automation, artificial intelligence, autonomous ships, ship operations involving dual fuel, among others.

Our seafarers are our strength in the global maritime industry. The Philippines is committed to ensuring that we sustain this position in the world.

### **b. The Seaworthiness of Philippine Registered Ships**

Ensuring the seaworthiness of our Philippine Registered ships is a matter of a responsibility of our maritime administration and of our personnel tasked to perform flag state implementation activities.

The MARINA, in the exercise of its function, as the Flag State Administration of the Philippines, implement measures relating to ship construction, manning and training of crew, use of signals, maintenance of communication, reduction and control of marine pollution; casualty investigation as well as audit and oversight of delegated functions to recognized organizations.

### **Maritime Safety Challenges and Opportunities for Cooperation**

In spite of the significant support and attention given to us to ensure maritime safety within our territorial waters, we continue to face challenges to pursue aggressively bold and long-term measures against equally pressing priorities of the current Administration focused in the area of inclusive economic growth and development for our people

In taking into consideration developments that continue to shape the future of the global maritime industry landscape, the MARINA is firm in its effort to leverage support from strategic partners whose maritime industry interests hinges upon us.

Among these opportunities include the following:

- a. Capacity building to prepare our key industry players to address requirements of complexity of maritime operations. In the next decade, we foresee the entry of more sophisticated technologies, including autonomous ships, and the introduction of green ships using alternative fuel. These pose new risks and that functioning safety protocols need to be put in place. One option is the adoption of the digital twin technology where ship operators can create virtual replicas of vessels for monitoring and predicting performance, enabling proactive maintenance and reducing the risks of accidents. Furthermore, we need support for low-cost automatic identification for our domestic ships that are not covered by any IMO regulation or convention. This would allow us to secure real-time data on vessel movements as well as promoting operational efficiency.
- b. Development and implementation of a comprehensive maritime safety protocol to ensure readiness of the Philippines to undertake immediate response to incidents relating to smuggling, kidnapping and armed robbery against ships that endanger the safety of the ship and seafarers on-board;
- c. Modernization of domestic shipping which requires investments for local shipbuilding as well as retrofitting of existing ships to meet the challenges of reducing greenhouse gas emission from ships. We have to ensure that we have the capacity to construct new and technologically advanced ships for deployment for domestic shipping operations, including our requirements for coastal patrol and naval

security. Boosting our domestic capability allows us to effectively protect our maritime zones which are often subject to security threats such as piracy, smuggling, and terrorism. This could be a potential area by which we ensure that national borders and resources are protected from these threats;

- d. Support for the upskilling and reskilling of seafarers as well as personnel responsible in performing the country's commitment to give full and complete effect to IMO mandatory instruments with which the Philippines is a State Party. We cannot pursue an aggressive capacity building enhancement for our seafarers and leave our maritime industry personnel from where they are now.
- e. Investments to modernize our maritime infrastructure will reduce maritime accidents. These infrastructure cover ports, vessels and other maritime facilities. To pursue this is costly but are necessary business for enhancing maritime safety.

## **Concluding Remarks**

Ladies and gentlemen:

Promotion of maritime safety is a matter of global responsibility and the Philippines takes serious participation in this regard. This is not just a matter of our economic survival but also a demonstration of our share commitment to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UNSDGs), particularly SDG 14 on Life Below Water as well as SGD 9 on Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure through the promotion of sustainable use of marine resources and enhancing global trade infrastructure.

We therefore look forward to pursue strengthened partnership in the area of maritime safety. Our current conditions point this to us. Our table is open for cooperation and partnership.

Thank you.