



REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES  
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION  
MARITIME INDUSTRY AUTHORITY

## KEYNOTE ADDRESS

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**Conference on Decarbonization in the Maritime Industry**  
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## CHARTING THE COURSE: EMPOWERING SEAFARERS FOR A DECARBONIZED SHIPPING FUTURE

Dear seafarers, distinguished guests, industry leaders and partners, maritime professionals, fellow workers in MARINA, ladies and gentlemen,

Good morning to you all!

I am extremely delighted to stand before you today at this very important gathering; one that does not merely discuss the future but actively shapes it. This Conference on Decarbonization in the Maritime Industry is a declaration of our shared commitment to sustainability, innovation, and the empowerment of the very people who keep global trade moving, our seafarers.

Today, we address one of the defining challenges of our time: the decarbonization of the maritime sector. This is not just about meeting international regulatory requirements; it is about safeguarding our planet, our industry, and the livelihoods of millions of seafarers. The shipping industry is responsible for nearly three percent (3%) of global greenhouse gas emissions. The urgency for action is clear. The International Maritime Organization (IMO) has set ambitious but necessary targets, aiming for net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by or around 2050.

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

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This is not just an aspiration; it is a necessity. The world is changing, and the maritime sector must take action and adapt swiftly.

But let us ask ourselves, ***are we prepared to equip our seafarers with the knowledge and skills they need to navigate this transformation?***

***Are we taking proactive steps to ensure that Filipino seafarers remain competitive in this evolving industry?***

The answer must be a resounding **YES**, but getting there requires deliberate and concerted action.

Decarbonization is not simply switching from fossil fuels to alternative energy sources. It is about transforming the entire maritime ecosystem. This includes investing in new technologies, green solutions, and alternative fuels such as hydrogen, ammonia, methanol and biofuels; redesigning vessels to improve energy efficiency; enhancing digitalization and automation in ship operations; and, most importantly, upskilling and reskilling our seafarers.

This brings me to my next point. ***How do we ensure that no seafarer is left behind in this transition?***

***How do we bridge the knowledge gap between current maritime practices and future demands?***

As a nation that supplies nearly one-fourth of the world's seafarers, the Philippines holds a unique and critical position in global shipping. We are not merely participants in the maritime sector,

**we are its backbone.** This means that any industry-wide transformation must prioritize our seafarers, ensuring that they are fully equipped with competencies necessary to thrive in a green and decarbonized shipping.

This is why MARINA is taking a proactive, approach in aligning our policies, training programs, and industry partnerships with the green transition. Through our Memorandum of Agreement with Green Marine Copenhagen, we have strengthened our commitment to ensuring that Filipino seafarers are at the forefront of sustainable shipping.

However, we recognize that collaboration must extend beyond this agreement. We must involve industry stakeholders, maritime higher education institutions, shipowners, and training centers to build a holistic ecosystem for the green transition and beyond.

MARINA's roadmap for decarbonization, which will be discussed in greater detail in this conference, is a comprehensive approach designed to support this transition. It includes policy development, curriculum modernization, integration of decarbonization standards into MARINA-accredited training and certification and industry collaborations; all aimed at making sustainability a cornerstone of the Philippine maritime sector and that Filipino seafarers remain at the forefront of global maritime transformation.

But let me pose this question to all of us here today. ***What role will each of us play in preparing the next generation of seafarers for the decarbonized shipping industry?***

***Are we taking the necessary steps to provide training, resources, and opportunities to make this transition seamless?***

In all our discussions on decarbonization, we must never lose sight of the human element. While regulations and technology are critical, we must not forget that **the success of these efforts depends on people**. No matter how advanced a ship may be, it still requires skilled professionals to operate it safely and efficiently. That is why we must not only focus on skills training but also on the overall well-being of our seafarers.

As the industry evolves, seafarers will need continuous learning opportunities to keep pace with rapid technological advancements. At the same time, we must also address their mental health and welfare, ensuring that they have the necessary support as they navigate the changing maritime landscape. Decarbonization pathway should not just prepare seafarers for new technical competencies but most of all, ensure that they are **protected respected, supported, and empowered** in this transition.

This is where every one of us in this room plays a role. If you are a shipowner, are you investing in training programs that will equip your crew for the future? If you are an educator, are you integrating decarbonization topics into your curriculum? As policymakers, do we have the regulatory framework to ensure sustainability, employment stability and career growth?

Seafarers must be provided with continuous learning opportunities that introduce them to the realities of alternative fuels and emissions-reduction technologies. Training programs must be

practical and accessible, ensuring that all seafarers, whether seasoned or new, are well-equipped for this transition. Collaboration between governments, training institutions, and the private sector is essential in developing programs that align with global sustainability goals.

Throughout this conference, we will explore key aspects of decarbonization that impact both industry operations and seafarer training. We will learn about advancements in bunkering operations and equipment, which are evolving to support the safe and efficient handling of alternative fuels such as LNG, methanol, ammonia, and hydrogen. These changes will require seafarers to gain new competencies in fuel handling and storage safety protocols. We will also delve into crew management strategies in the face of decarbonization.

The shift to sustainable shipping will demand new skill sets, making it essential to rethink recruitment, training, and career development to ensure a competent and adaptable workforce. Another critical discussion will focus on maritime safety and fire and gas detection systems. As alternative fuels present unique hazards, it is imperative to enhance safety measures onboard ships and update emergency response protocols.

Additionally, we will examine future fuels and engine technologies, exploring multiple pathways toward achieving decarbonization. We will discuss how these technologies are being integrated into ship design and operation, ensuring energy efficiency while reducing environmental impact.

Finally, we will address the role of digital technology in empowering seafarers. Digital learning, simulation-based training, and automation are becoming essential in preparing our workforce for the future of shipping. By embracing these innovations, we can ensure that our seafarers are well-equipped to navigate a rapidly evolving maritime landscape.

Before I conclude, I would like to take this opportunity to express my deepest gratitude to the esteemed speakers who have joined us today. Your expertise, insights, and willingness to share your knowledge play an invaluable role in ensuring that we are well-informed and prepared for the challenges and opportunities of a decarbonized maritime future.

I would also like to extend my heartfelt appreciation to Green Marine Copenhagen. Your commitment to sustainability and your instrumental role in bringing together some of the world's leading experts as our resource speakers have made this conference possible. Your support strengthens our mission to empower seafarers and promote sustainable maritime practices, and for that, we are deeply grateful.

Ladies and gentlemen, today, we are not just talking about decarbonization; **we are shaping its future.** This conference is a call to action for all of us industry leaders, policymakers, educators, and maritime professionals to step up and take decisive steps toward sustainable shipping. Let us make this forum a beacon of hope, a platform for innovation, and a testament to our collective commitment in shaping a sustainable maritime sector and empowering seafarers to ensure that the shipping industry

becomes a leader in the global effort to address the problem of climate change.

Let me leave you with a challenge. ***Will we leave here today with just words, or will we take the necessary steps to make sustainability a reality in maritime shipping?***

***How will you, in your respective capacities, contribute to this vital transition?***

MARINA stands firm in its commitment to ensuring that Filipino seafarers lead the way in this global shift. However, MARINA cannot do this alone. Ship-owners, training centers, technology providers, and policymakers must work together to ensure that we build a maritime sector that is not only environmentally responsible but also resilient, forward-looking, and people-centered.

The seas are changing, and so must we. Let us move forward together, with determination, collaboration, and a shared vision of a greener, more sustainable maritime industry.

Maraming salamat po, and may we all have a productive and impactful conference!

**MABUHAY ANG MARITIMA!**

