

**OCEAN CENTRES PHILIPPINES LAUNCH  
KEYNOTE MESSAGE**

10:00 AM - 12:00 NN | 10 July 2025  
Aboitiz Tech Space AIM Makati

**MS. SONIA B MALALUAN**  
*Administrator*  
Maritime Industry Authority

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DISTINGUISHED SPEAKERS AND GUESTS, REPRESENTATIVES FROM THE SHIPPING SECTOR, PORTS, FISHING AND AQUACULTURE, FINANCE AND INVESTMENT, AND OFFSHORE RENEWABLES—AND TO ALL OUR PARTNERS, COLLEAGUES, AND FELLOW ADVOCATES OF MARITIME SAFETY AND SUSTAINABILITY—LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, A PLEASANT MORNING TO ALL OF YOU.

FIRST, I WOULD LIKE TO THANK THE OCEAN CENTRES PHILIPPINES FOR THE OPPORTUNITY TO BE PART OF THIS IMPORTANT OCCASION. TRULY HONORED AND DELIGHTED TO REPRESENT MARINA AND TO STAND WITH YOU IN REAFFIRMING OUR SHARED COMMITMENT TO BUILDING A SAFER, MORE RESILIENT, AND SUSTAINABLE OCEAN ECONOMY.

THE PHILIPPINES, WITH OUR VAST MARITIME DOMAIN ENCOMPASSING 2.2 MILLION SQUARE KILOMETERS OF TERRITORIAL WATERS AND EXCLUSIVE ECONOMIC ZONES, THE WORLD'S FIFTH-LONGEST COASTLINE AT 37,008 KILOMETERS (PEMSEA, 2021), AND WITH TWO-THIRDS OF OUR POPULATION LIVING IN COASTAL MUNICIPALITIES—AT LEAST 2 MILLION PEOPLE DIRECTLY DEPENDENT ON COASTAL RESOURCES, AND 90 % OF DOMESTIC TRADE CARRIED BY SEA, MARITIME SAFETY AND SUSTAINABILITY

**CANNOT BE OVERSTATED. AGAIN, AS AN ARCHIPELAGIC COUNTRY, THE OCEAN IS NOT JUST PART OF OUR GEOGRAPHY—IT IS CENTRAL TO OUR ECONOMY, OUR LIVELIHOODS, AND OUR IDENTITY. FROM FISHING AND SHIPPING TO TOURISM AND SHIPBUILDING, OUR VAST MARITIME INDUSTRY IS A DRIVER OF GROWTH. BUT WE ALSO FACE GROWING RISKS—FROM CLIMATE CHANGE AND AGING INFRASTRUCTURE, TO GAPS IN TRAINING AND TECHNOLOGY.**

**THIS IS WHY WE WELCOME THE LAUNCH OF THE OCEAN CENTRES INITIATIVE IN THE PHILIPPINES. IT REINFORCES WHAT WE AT MARINA HAVE LONG BELIEVED: THAT MARITIME DEVELOPMENT MUST GO HAND IN HAND WITH SAFETY AND SUSTAINABILITY. THAT PROTECTING PEOPLE AND PROTECTING THE OCEAN ARE NOT SEPARATE GOALS—BUT TWO SIDES OF THE SAME COMMITMENT.**

**OUR VISION IS CLEAR: FOR THE PHILIPPINES TO BECOME A GLOBAL MODEL OF MARITIME SAFETY AND SUSTAINABILITY—A NATION WHERE EVERY SHIPYARD, EVERY VESSEL, AND EVERY SEAFARER IS EMPOWERED TO OPERATE RESPONSIBLY, EFFICIENTLY, SAFELY AND ENVIRONMENT FRIENDLY.**

**AS WE COLLECTIVELY PURSUE THIS VISION, WE MUST CONFRONT THE PRESSING CHALLENGES THAT THREATEN THE HEALTH OF OUR MARINE ECOSYSTEMS AND THE SAFETY OF THOSE WHO WORK UPON THEM.**

**I BELIEVE WE ARE ALL AWARE OF THE CHALLENGES THAT OUR OCEANS FACE TODAY. AND IT IS A SADDENING TRUTH THAT MANY OF THESE STEM FROM HUMAN ACTIVITIES.**

**THERE ARE OVERFISHING PRACTICES AND OVEREXPLOITATION. POLLUTION—CAUSED BY PLASTICS, CHEMICALS, HEAVY METALS,**

**AND AGRICULTURAL RUNOFF. THERE'S HABITAT DESTRUCTION AND MARINE BIODIVERSITY LOSS BROUGHT ABOUT BY COASTAL DEVELOPMENT AND OTHER ACTIVITIES.**

**THE LIST CONTINUES—ALL ARE CONFRONTING THE PHILIPPINES IN IMPLEMENTING A SUSTAINABLE, INCLUSIVE OCEAN ECONOMY.**

**THE MARITIME INDUSTRY IS ONE OF THE ECONOMIC DRIVERS OF THE PHILIPPINES' SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND WE TAKE PRIDE IN HAVING THE LARGEST SUPPLY OF COMPETENT SEAFARERS, AS WELL AS A MAJOR SHIPBUILDING NATION IN THE WORLD.**

**OUR DOMESTIC WATERS ARE BUSTLING WITH OVER 22,640 REGISTRED CARGO SHIPS, FISHING VESSELS, PASSENGER FERRIES, RECREATIONAL BOATS, AND MOTORBOATS, SUPPORTING TRADE, TOURISM, AND THE MOVEMENT OF ESSENTIAL GOODS AND PROVIDING EMPLOYMENT AND LIVELIHOODS TO MANY FILIPINOS.**

**THUS, SAFETY AT SEA AND SUSTAINABILITY OF OUR OCEAN IS PARAMOUNT.**

**MARITIME SAFETY IS NOT MERELY A REGULATORY REQUIREMENT—IT IS A MORAL IMPERATIVE. EVERY SEAFARER, FISHERMAN, AND PASSENGER DESERVES TO RETURN HOME SAFELY.**

**LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,**

**THE SECTOR IS CHALLENGED BY EMERGING TECHNOLOGIES AND DEVELOPMENTS SUCH AS THE DIGITALIZATION OF SAFETY SYSTEMS, GREEN TECHNOLOGIES, CLEAN FUELS, AUTOMATION AND OTHERS. GIVEN THE CONFIGURATION OF THE PHILIPPINE-REGISTERED FLEET,**

**THESE WOULD MEAN SIGNIFICANT INVESTMENTS IN RETROFITTING OR REFLEETING.**

**ON THE OTHER HAND, IN OUR CONTEXT OF MARITIME SAFETY, WE MANAGE OUR EXPECTATIONS. WHILE WE HAVE HIGH HOPES FOR ZERO ACCIDENTS OR INCIDENTS, WE KNOW THAT THE ABSOLUTE ZERO IS NEARLY IMPOSSIBLE. WHAT WE CAN ENSURE IS 100% PREPAREDNESS.**

**AS THE FLAG ADMINISTRATION, WE STRIVE TO ADDRESS THE GAPS BETWEEN POLICY AND IMPLEMENTATION, AND WE ARE PUTTING MECHANISMS IN PLACE TO NARROW THESE GAPS.**

**SAFETY AT SEA IS A NATIONAL IMPERATIVE. AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION IS NOT AN AFTERTHOUGHT**

**IN 2024, AS PART OF OUR ENHANCED COMPLIANCE MONITORING AND ENFORCEMENT (CME) STRATEGY, THE MARINA HAS ADOPTED A MORE STRATEGIC AND DATA-DRIVEN APPROACH. WE HAVE SET CLEAR PARAMETERS TO GUIDE OUR MONITORING PRIORITIES.**

**WE IMPLEMENTED FOCUSED COMPLIANCE MONITORING AND ENFORCEMENT, INTENSIFIED COMPLIANCE MONITORING DURING**

**PEAK PERIODS AND , ROPAX FLEET SAFETY ENHANCEMENT CAMPAIGN.**

**FOCUS IS ON PASSENGER VESSELS PREVIOUSLY INVOLVED IN MARITIME INCIDENTS, AS SAFETY LAPSES ARE PATTERNS TO BREAK AND RISKS TO BE REDUCED OR ELIMINATED.**

**LASTLY, WE ARE STRENGTHENING CME OPERATIONS IN STRATEGIC PORTS WITH HIGH VOLUMES OF INTERISLAND TRADE.**

**IN APRIL THIS YEAR, MARINA LED AN INTENSIFIED COMPLIANCE MONITORING, A CRITICAL PERIOD IN THE PHILIPPINES WHEN SEA TRAVEL PEAKS. WE INSPECTED PASSENGER VESSELS PLYING ROUTES WITH HEAVY PASSENGER TRAFFIC ALONG THE PHILIPPINE NAUTICAL HIGHWAY.**

**THIS DATA-INFORMED APPROACH HAS BECOME THE FOUNDATION OF OUR INTENSIFIED COMPLIANCE MONITORING (ICM) MODEL—BRINGING DATA AND TIMELY INTERVENTION. THIS PROACTIVE INITIATIVE AIMS TO ENSURE THAT ALL VESSELS OPERATING ALONG THE NAUTICAL HIGHWAY ARE SAFE, SEAWORTHY, AND COMPLIANT WITH MARITIME REGULATIONS.**

**UNDER THE DIRECTIVE OF THE SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION, THE MARINA, THE PHILIPPINE COAST GUARD (PCG), AND THE PHILIPPINE PORTS AUTHORITY (PPA)—SIGNED A JOINT MEMORANDUM CIRCULAR ON ANTI-OVERLOADING SENDING A CLEAR MESSAGE: *NO LIFE SHOULD BE LOST DUE TO NEGLIGENCE.***

**AS PART OF OUR COMMITMENT TO ADVANCING MARITIME SAFETY THROUGH INNOVATION, WE HAVE FORGED A VITAL PARTNERSHIP WITH THE PHILIPPINES' DEPARTMENT OF SCIENCE AND**

**TECHNOLOGY FOR THE AUTOMATIC IDENTIFICATION SYSTEM (AIS) PROJECT FOR SMALL WATERCRAFTS.**

**WE ARE ALSO EMPOWERING THE PUBLIC TO TAKE PART IN SAFEGUARDING OUR SEAS. THROUGH OUR QR CODE FEEDBACK SYSTEM, FERRY PASSENGERS CAN NOW REPORT REAL-TIME, UNSAFE PRACTICES DIRECTLY FROM THEIR MOBILE PHONES ALLOWING REGULATORS TO ACT SWIFTLY, MAKING ACCOUNTABILITY A SHARED RESPONSIBILITY.**

**BEYOND THESE TECHNOLOGIES, WE ARE CULTIVATING A NATIONAL CULTURE OF SAFETY.**

**LAST YEAR, WE LAUNCHED A NATIONWIDE SAFETY AWARENESS CAMPAIGN—“LIGTAS BYAHENG DAGAT” TO MAINSTREAM SAFETY AND ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS, EMPOWERING COASTAL COMMUNITIES TO CHAMPION SAFER SEAS AND CLEANER OCEANS**

**“TRULY, WE CANNOT LEGISLATE CULTURE, BUT WE CAN CULTIVATE IT”**

**QUARTERLY MARINA-COAST GUARD FORUM HAS BEEN INSTITUTIONALIZED, HARMONIZING ENFORCEMENT TOOLS, PROCEDURES, AND POLICIES FOR *CONSISTENT AND UNIFORM IMPLEMENTATION OF MARITIME RULES ACROSS THE ARCHIPELAGO.***

**LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, THESE PROGRAMS MAY NOT GRAB GLOBAL HEADLINES—BUT IN ISLAND PROVINCES, THEY ARE TRANSFORMING LIVES.**

**AS WE LOOK TO THE HORIZON, IT BECOMES CLEAR: IN ORDER TO ENSURE MARITIME SAFETY AND SUSTAINABILITY, THE FUTURE OF THE MARITIME INDUSTRY AND OUR OCEAN ECONOMY WILL BE BUILT**

**NOT BY ONE SECTOR ALONE, BUT BY MANY HANDS WORKING TOGETHER.**

**IT BEGINS WITH POLICY, RULES AND FRAMEWORKS . POLICIES BASED ON DATA – RELIABLE, DISAGGREGATED AND REAL.**

**CHANGING THE FACE OF MARITIME AND OCEAN ECONOMY STARTS WITH CHANGING THE NARRATIVE. THROUGH PUBLIC AWARENESS CAMPAIGNS, WE CAN CHALLENGE OUTDATED BELIEFS AND CHANGE THE CULTURE... A CULTURE OF SAFETY.... A CULTURE OF RESPONSIBLE SHIPOWNERSHIP AND A CULTURE OF GENUINE CONCERN FOR THE ENVIRONMENT.**

## **CONCLUSION**

**IN CONCLUSION, THE PHILIPPINES STANDS AT THE HELM OF A POWERFUL OPPORTUNITY - WITH OUR VAST MARINE RESOURCES, MARITIME HERITAGE, AND GROWING COMMITMENT TO SAFETY AND SUSTAINABILITY, WE HAVE THE TOOLS AND TALENT TO BECOME A MODEL FOR THE WORLD. BUT REALIZING THIS VISION WILL TAKE MORE THAN AMBITION. IT WILL REQUIRE INNOVATION, COLLABORATION, AND STRONG POLITICAL WILL.**

**WE KNOW THAT MEANINGFUL TRANSFORMATION DOES NOT HAPPEN IN ISOLATION. THAT IS WHY MARINA WILL CONTINUE TO WORK HAND-IN-HAND WITH PRIVATE STAKEHOLDERS, TRAINING INSTITUTIONS, AND COASTAL COMMUNITIES—including THROUGH DIALOGUES, INDUSTRY FORA, AND KNOWLEDGE-SHARING PLATFORMS ENABLED BY PARTNERS LIKE THE OCEAN CENTRES.**

**TODAY'S LAUNCH OF THE OCEAN CENTRES PHILIPPINES IS MORE THAN A CEREMONY. IT IS A DECLARATION—THAT WE ARE READY**

**TO DO THINGS DIFFERENTLY. TO MOVE BEYOND MINIMUM COMPLIANCE AND INTO SHARED ACCOUNTABILITY. TO REPLACE ISOLATED EFFORTS WITH INTEGRATED, STRATEGIC ACTION.**

**WE AT MARINA LOOK FORWARD TO WALKING THIS PATH TOGETHER —AS ONE MARITIME COMMUNITY—TO SHAPE A SAFER, GREENER, AND MORE RESILIENT MARITIME INDUSTRY AND OCEAN ECONOMY.**

**THANK YOU SO MUCH AND MABUHAY. ###**