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Major ship recycling country signs the Ship Recycling Convention

Turkey, one of the five major ship recycling nations in the world, has signed, subject to ratification, the Hong Kong International Convention for the Safe and Environmentally Sound Recycling of Ships, 2009.

His Excellency Mr. Ünal Çeviköz, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary to the United Kingdom and Permanent Representative of the Republic of Turkey to the International Maritime Organization (IMO), signed the Convention, on behalf of his country, at IMO Headquarters in London on Thursday, 26 August 2010.

IMO Secretary-General Efthimios E. Mitropoulos and Mr. Çeviköz expressed the wish that other major ship recycling nations join the Convention as soon as possible.

The Hong Kong Convention, adopted at a diplomatic conference in May 2009, is aimed at ensuring that ships, when being recycled after reaching the end of their operational lives, do not pose any unnecessary risk to human health and safety or to the environment.

The Convention has been open for signature by any State from 1 September 2009 and will remain so until 31 August 2010. Thereafter, it shall be open for accession by any State. It will enter into force 24 months after the date on which 15 States, representing 40 per cent of world merchant shipping by gross tonnage, have either signed it without reservation as to ratification, acceptance or approval or have deposited instruments of ratification, acceptance, approval or accession with the IMO Secretary-General. The combined maximum annual ship recycling volume of those States must, during the preceding 10 years, constitute not less than 3 per cent of their combined merchant shipping tonnage.

The Convention addresses all major issues surrounding ship recycling, including the fact that ships sold for scrapping may contain environmentally hazardous substances such as asbestos, heavy metals, hydrocarbons, ozone-depleting substances and others. It also addresses concerns raised about the working and environmental conditions at many of the world's ship recycling locations.

Regulations in the Convention cover the design, construction, operation and preparation of ships so as to facilitate safe and environmentally sound recycling, without compromising the safety and operational efficiency of ships; the operation of ship recycling facilities in a safe and environmentally sound manner; and the establishment of an appropriate enforcement mechanism for ship recycling, incorporating certification and reporting requirements.

The text of the ship recycling Convention was developed over a three year period, with input from IMO Member States and relevant non-governmental organizations, and in co-operation with the International Labour Organization and the Parties to the Basel Convention.

To date, the Convention has been signed, subject to ratification or acceptance, by France, Italy, the Netherlands, Saint Kitts and Nevis and Turkey.

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IMO – the International Maritime Organization – is the United Nations specialized agency with responsibility for the safety and security of shipping and the prevention of marine pollution by ships.

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