

Safer shipping, cleaner seas

A CELEBRATION OF 75 YEARS OF



INTERNATIONAL
MARITIME
ORGANIZATION

Published in 2023 by
International Maritime Organization
4 Albert Embankment
London SE1 7SR
United Kingdom

ISBN: 978-92-801-1695-3

Copyright © International Maritime Organization, 2023

Reproduction authorized for non-commercial purposes provided source is acknowledged.
Reproduction of figures and images are subject to permission from copyright holder.

Written and compiled by John Barnes, FIMarEST, MRINA

Design and cover by Luke Wijsveld

Photos and figures:

Cover: Pexels/Pixabay; p.vi: UN Photo/Mark Garten; p.2: Michael Rosskothén/AdobeStock; p.3: Nejron Photo/Adobe Stock;
p.6: Maritime Professional; p.7: Illustrated London News 1878 (top) and Paul Wilkinson (bottom); p.8: nyiragongo/AdobeStock;
p.10: UN Photo/Mark Garten; p.11: M. Wooton Grace; p.12: Library and Archives of Canada; p.22: James Watt/SeaPics;
p.29: Jacques Girard ; p.36: Vantage Drilling; p.37: Oceanseas and TE Subcom (inset); p.40: Auke Visser; p.42: Reeds Nautical Almanac;
p.51: Peter Dejong; p.52: Stan Shebs; p.53: NOAA's Ocean Service; p.54: momentscatcher/AdobeStock; p.63: bianca/AdobeStock;
p.81: SAM Electronics; p.82: European Space Agency; p.84: Dobermaraner/Shutterstock; p.86: Concordia Maritime;
p.91 bottom: Canadian Armed Forces; p.92: INMARSAT; p.95: US Navy; p.99: Yellow Boat/AdobeStock; p.100: Steven R. Doty/
US Air Force; p.101 bottom: The Earth Project; p.102: MAN; p.110: willyam/AdobeStock; p.113: Stephen Finn/AdobeStock;
p.169: Enercon; p.170: PBCF (Propeller Boss Cap Fins, top) and Wilh. Wilhelmsen (bottom); p.171: Planet Solar (top) and Kongsberg Marine
(bottom); p.173: Wärtsilä; p.175: Peter D. Tillman; p.176: Alena Rubtsova/Pexels; p.206: Grantly Lynch/Corporate Photography Ltd.

*This publication is not designed to be a source of authoritative history. While the publisher and the author have used their best efforts
in preparing this book, they make no representations or warranties with respect to the accuracy or completeness of the contents of this book.
Any views and opinions expressed in this publication are solely those of the author and do not necessarily represent those of the International Maritime Organization.*

Foreword from Kitack Lim, IMO Secretary-General	v
Message from António Guterres, United Nations Secretary-General	vi
Introduction from author, John Barnes	vii
Special recognition: Chandrika Prasad Srivastava	viii

PART 1 – THE IMO STORY	1
Chapter 1 – The search for safety	2
Chapter 2 – A long and winding road: the origins of IMO	12
Chapter 3 – A difficult birth: getting agreement on a Convention	14
Chapter 4 – The first steps into the 1960s: IMCO comes into existence	17
The changing pattern of shipping	28
Chapter 5 – Making a mark: the 1970s	40
Chapter 6 – Changes afoot during the 1980s	44
Chapter 7 – Disasters and threats: the 1990s	51
Chapter 8 – Into the 21st century: new challenges, old problems	57
Seafarers' memorial	60
Chapter 9 – Onwards and upwards: preparing for the future	62
PART 2 – THEMES, TOPICS AND DEVELOPMENTS	73
Chapter 10 – The IMO Convention	74
Chapter 11 – Safety, security and facilitation	78
Chapter 12 – Environmental issues	97
Chapter 13 – Liability and compensation	112
Chapter 14 – The human element, implementation and verification of compliance	118
Chapter 15 – Technical cooperation and associated bodies	130
Chapter 16 – Regional initiatives	135
The Secretaries-General	136

PART 3 – IMO TODAY	145
Chapter 17 – The structure	146
Chapter 18 – Promoting maritime and IMO	160

PART 4 – FUTURE CHALLENGES	165
Chapter 19 – Future challenges	166
Stern view – A postscript from the author	178
Steering Committee	179

APPENDICES	
IMO Member States	180
Key IMO Conventions	182
Elected officers of the main organs and committees	183
Award winners	186

PHOTO GALLERY	189
----------------------------	------------

ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS	212
---	------------



Foreword from **KITACK LIM** IMO SECRETARY-GENERAL

This year, IMO celebrates 75 years since the IMO Convention was adopted, setting IMO on its course to ensure maritime safety and security, and to protect the marine environment.

The COVID-19 pandemic and geopolitical challenges have served to increase the world's awareness of its reliance on shipping and seafarers' invaluable role in global trade. Shipping is a truly international industry – which must operate within a framework of global standards.

IMO has developed a comprehensive regulatory framework over seven decades, with more than 50 IMO treaties that have been universally adopted and implemented. These rules cover all aspects of international shipping – from ship design, construction, equipment, to operation and seafarer training as well as prevention of pollution from ships. As shipping evolves, IMO's 175 Member States, along with all stakeholders, work tirelessly to ensure this framework is constantly enhanced and strengthened.

It has long been my intention to publish a book on IMO's history, activities and challenges: past, present and future. So, it gives me great pleasure to write this foreword to IMO's story. Part 1 sets the scene, with the journey to the adoption of the Convention that established IMO (and thereafter). Part 2 describes IMO's work over the decades in maritime safety, security, environment, legal, human element and implementation issues, as well as IMO's efforts to enhance technical cooperation.

Part 3 explains today's IMO, including its organs and the Secretariat. Part 4 touches upon IMO's current and future challenges, including efforts to achieve the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), environmental issues, technical developments and people at sea.

This book highlights throughout that the human element is key to safe, secure and environmentally sound operation of ships. The transitions that are currently occurring in the maritime sector, in particular decarbonization, automation and digitalization, place an obligation on all stakeholders to

ensure that these are just and equitable transitions that leave no one behind – with a huge emphasis on technical cooperation and capacity-building activities. There must be a future workforce of maritime professionals who will be able to operate tomorrow's green and smart ships safely and securely.

I would like to thank the renowned maritime journalist Mr. John Barnes, who was commissioned to prepare this book. The content has been overseen and finalized by a Steering Committee, formed in the IMO Secretariat. IMO exists because of its people: I would also like to express my sincere gratitude to all delegates who participate in, and contribute to IMO – past, present and future.

This is the first-ever “IMO Book”. I hope you will find it interesting and informative. This voyage to establish IMO and through the past 75 years has been made possible thanks to those who have steered and operated the ship. It truly is a voyage together – a journey that will continue towards future safe and clean shipping across all the seas.





Message from
ANTÓNIO GUTERRES
UNITED NATIONS SECRETARY-GENERAL



Seventy-five years ago, the International Maritime Organization was born. Its creation reflected the vital role that shipping plays in the global economy, connecting goods, products, fuel and vital commodities and raw materials to markets around the world, while upholding the highest standards for safety, efficiency and prevention of marine pollution.

With more than 80% of global trade being transported by sea, shipping remains a cornerstone of international economic activity today.

But shipping's fundamental importance is matched by the continued need to adhere to internationally agreed rules, regulations and standards governing this activity.

That's where the IMO comes in. Global rules and standards provide a level playing field across all legal jurisdictions, no matter where ships operate or are owned or built. Through the effective implementation of IMO's instruments, countries receiving ships can be confident in a universal and uniform application of navigation, maritime safety, environmental and training standards.

From the very start, the IMO has represented multilateralism in action – countries coming together for the common benefit of all.

This milestone anniversary is an opportunity to mark this Organization's extraordinary history. But it is also a moment to celebrate its continued role in making sure this vital industry benefits people and planet alike, and that our seas remain secure, safe and protected in the decades to come.

A handwritten signature of António Guterres is shown at the bottom of the page.

Introduction from author **JOHN BARNES**



If, when you are in London (United Kingdom), you take a stroll upstream along the south bank of the Thames from Westminster, passing by St. Thomas' Hospital and Lambeth Palace, you will come to a building frequently decked out in a mass of national flags and with what appears to be a ship's bow protruding from its facade, the Seafarers' Memorial. This is the headquarters of the International Maritime Organization (IMO), the United Nations specialized agency charged with overseeing all matters maritime.

For the last 65 years, following its conception 10 years previously, it has led the way to improve safety at sea, make the world's seas cleaner, and create a more just maritime society. Its path has not always been easy, and it has had to deal with a multitude of problems along the way, but

one thing is clear, without IMO, shipping, the marine environment and the world, would be a less safe and "healthy" place.

This is a celebration of IMO as it turns 75 – it is the story of how it came into being, what it has achieved during its existence, how it functions today and what it sees as the future for the global shipping world. The basis for the functioning of IMO is adoption of mandatory instruments or, in many cases, by consensus. This has been both a strength and a weakness – a strength in that whatever registry a ship has, whatever ocean or sea it operates in, and whatever country or port it visits, it will be subject to the same set of rules and regulations.

However, adoption and consensus require that IMO's conventions are agreed to by a substantial majority of its members before

coming into force and then implemented into national regulations by every member government. This can, and often does, cause some delays in implementation.

Over the years, the Organization has expanded its remit beyond anything the founding countries could have imagined all those years ago. This is highlighted by its history and the range of topics it now covers. Even so, due to reasons of space, there are many aspects that can only be touched upon or not covered at all, for this is a global organization with a global reach.

Finally, the writing of this book could not have been done without the assistance and input of numerous people in the Organization. It is impossible to name everyone but to all I say thank you, while any errors or omissions are solely my responsibility.

Special recognition

CHANDRIKA PRASAD SRIVASTAVA



Dr. CP Srivastava (India) was the longest-serving Secretary-General in the history of the International Maritime Organization (IMO), serving from 1974 to 1989, and accomplished many significant achievements to maritime safety and marine environment protection, including:

- Entry into force of the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS), 1974, which is still the main instrument at IMO, in 1980, introducing tacit acceptance amendment procedure and enabling IMO to quickly respond to technology development; and the adoption of 1988 SOLAS Protocol to incorporate the Harmonized System of Survey and Certification.
- Entry into force of the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships, 1973 (MARPOL Convention) in 1983, by means of adoption of the 1978 Protocol as “MARPOL 73/78”, which is another pillar of instruments at IMO.
- Support for Developing Countries in building their maritime capabilities and capacity, providing technical assistance.
- Establishment of the World Maritime University (WMU) in Malmö, Sweden in 1983, aiming to provide advanced education and research mainly for developing countries.
- Establishment of the International Maritime Law Institute (IMLI) in Malta in 1988, dedicated to promoting the under-

standing and development of international maritime law.

- Initiative to develop an International Safety Management (ISM) Code, taking into account the need for international standards for the safe management and operation of ships and for pollution prevention, placing a strong emphasis on the importance of the human element on board ships.

Dr. CP Srivastava’s dedication to maritime safety and environmental protection had a lasting impact on the shipping industry. His efforts and initiatives contributed to safer shipping practices, reduced marine pollution, and improved emergency response capabilities, fostering a more sustainable and secure maritime environment.

“The achievements of the past and the prospects of the future provide grounds for cautious optimism, but they do not justify complacency.”

Dr. CP Srivastava

1920-2013

PART THE IMO STORY

1

“The ultimate destination must be reached through uncharted waters; nevertheless, progress is being made”

Mr. William O’Neil

IMO Secretary-General 1990-2003