

Closing Address, 2025 Polar Maritime Seminar, 24 January 2025

**On behalf of International Maritime Organization
By, Michael Kingston Master of Ceremonies,**

On behalf of the International Maritime Organization it has been an honour for IMO to host this Seminar, with the great Co-sponsorship of Norway as Chair of the Arctic Council, with the support of the Arctic Council's Protection of the Arctic Marine Environment Working Group.

I think we can all agree that this has been a very interesting and insightful Seminar regarding the Polar Regions, highlighting such a range of issues of great importance for safety of life at sea and the protection of the environment in the Polar Regions, and in respect of the Arctic, the environment of its people. Of great importance too, it has highlighted the great and courageous work of our rescue services in the Polar Regions, reminding us to always adhere to regulations and best practice in order to avoid having to call upon those precious citizens of our nations in such remote and dangerous conditions.

I will not do a re-cap here of all the various Sessions that we have highlighted, but they are clear from the Agenda and from the impactful talks by all the Speakers, which will be posted on the IMO and PAME event sites soon. Additionally, we will compile a report of the Seminar and circulate it to Participants in due course. With that in mind I would like to sincerely thank our Rapporteur, Ms Michaela Coote from the Network of Arctic Researchers Ireland.

Nothing happens without input, enthusiasm, and indeed dedication to help highlight such important issues. And it is incumbent on me, on behalf of the International Maritime Organization, to thank each and every Speaker, Moderator, and panelist for your fine work. But also you the Participants. You have travelled from all over the world to lend your support and expert input and IMO deeply appreciate and thank you for making this Seminar such a success.

This Seminar is not a fire side chat about what might or might not be a good idea to then do nothing. It is about identifying defined achievables, setting objectives, and going out and finishing that work, and you have heard where you can help, how to be involved, and so our work together at this 2025 Polar Maritime Seminar will continue as those defined achievables are realized, in order that we continue to strive to achieve the 17 Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations.

I would like to sincerely thank Siv Christin Gaalaas and Norway for their support, the Protection of the Arctic Marine Environment Working Group, especially Soffía Guðmundsdóttir and Hjalti Hreinsson. Hjalti's work has been enormous and we don't call him the Wizard of Iceland for nothing!

Turning to the other two key members of the Organizing Committee outside IMO, a huge thank you goes to Drummond Frazer of Transport Canada and Peter Oppenheimer of the United States.

Within IMO, what a pleasure it has been to work with colleagues: Heike Deggim and Hiro Yamada's wonderful leadership and direction, and the utterly indefatigable Head of Pollution, Loukas Kontogiannis, with the support of Patricia Santos and Leila Murseljevic in the Marine Environment Division.

Speaking as a Consultant I am able to objectively say that there are so many good people that work in the IMO Secretariat, so many inputs of kind enthusiasm that make something work properly. This involves Media and External Communications, Conference assistance, Printing, Security, Catering, IT, Translations, technical Divisions such as the Marine Environment Division, the Maritime Safety Division, the Technical Co-operation and Implementation Division, and others. No obstacles, just dedicated enthusiastic positive assistance, for which I, Loukas, Heike and others involved are deeply grateful.

Before I finish, yesterday Heike Deggim kindly provided a bowl of IMO pins, depicting the 17 Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations, but we ran out, so I have brought some more for those who did not get one, which you can pick up on your way out, and wear on your lapel with pride.

Finally, Ladies and Gentlemen, this concludes the 2025 Polar Maritime Seminar and I wish you a very safe journey home and I look forward to working together to achieve the defined achievables that, through our hard work together, we have identified, which we will now go out and achieve.

Thank you

Michael Kingston

Master of Ceremonies, IMO

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