

Remarks by H.E. Mr. HAYASHI Hajime,
Ambassador of Japan to the UK and
Permanent Representative of Japan to the IMO
at the Reception on the occasion of the candidature of Japan
to the IMO Council under category “A” for the term 2024-2025
on 29th November 2023

Excellencies,
Distinguished Guests,

It is certainly a great pleasure to invite you all at the Embassy of Japan and to hold this event to express Japan’s commitment to the IMO activities as a Council member as well as a genuinely maritime nation.

In this regard, I am particularly glad to welcome you to this ballroom, which used to be the main hall of the IMO. As you can see from the photographs displayed behind you, the IMO did a great deal to make shipping safer, cleaner and more sustainable on the discussions taken place literally in this room. It was not just a coincidence that, after the IMO moved to its current location in Lambeth in 1982, the Embassy of Japan established itself here. This intertwined history reflects Japan’s longstanding connection with the IMO and the global maritime affairs.

Japan has been a part of the IMO since its establishment in 1958, having served on the Council throughout that time. As an island country, we are intimately connected with the ocean in myriad ways. Japanese shipbuilders now produce 17% of the global fleet with their advanced knowhow and green technology. Moreover, the Japanese shipping industry owns 11% of the global fleet, not only providing services to and from Japan but also serving international routes all around the world. Thus, it is not surprising that Japan has played a prominent part in various respects at the IMO.

This leading role is shown in the number of Japan's submissions to the IMO. We have submitted 341 documents over the past five years. Furthermore, Japan has been serving as the Chair and Coordinator of several Working Groups, Drafting Groups and Correspondence Groups. All these efforts, backed by Japan's willingness and capability, underpin a range of safety and environmental measures developed by the IMO.

To name a few, the IMO's mandatory CO₂ reduction measures are based on Japan's proposals and coordination with various member States. The 2023 IMO Greenhouse Gas Strategy aiming at Net-Zero emissions from international shipping reflects in no small part the emission reduction pathway and technical analyses provided by Japan. Furthermore, Japan has been actively working on the development of new safety standards for the innovative ships of the future, for example maritime autonomous surface ships and vessels using new zero-carbon fuels such as ammonia and hydrogen.

Japan also supports human resource developments in the maritime sector. The Nippon Foundation has been offering scholarships to the World Maritime University for 36 years since 1987. Today, more than 700 students from 80 countries have graduated under those scholarships and are working for the future of the maritime sector all around the world.

I would like to emphasise that Japan reaffirms its strong commitment to the IMO and to the future of the oceanic and maritime affairs. This is why Japan is putting itself up as a Council member of the IMO under category "A" for the term 2024-2025. In this capacity Japan will build on all those efforts it has been making and will further enhance its contribution to the IMO.

Let me conclude by saying that this occasion, where key maritime policymakers and stakeholders from all around the world are getting together, is a precious opportunity for us to enhance our friendship. Let us all enjoy this reception, fortifying ourselves with some Japanese food and drinks, so that we can be well prepared for this week's Assembly and for our ongoing work at the IMO.

Thank you very much indeed.