

FINAL SPEECH OF THE NGO PLATFORM ON SHIPBREAKING BEFORE THE  
INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON THE SAFE AND ENVIRONMENTALLY  
SOUND RECYCLING OF SHIPS

Delivered by Ms. Rizwana Hasan

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Thank you Mr. Chairman. I am Rizwana Hasan from the Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers Association. Today I speak on behalf of Greenpeace International and Friends of the Earth International. But I also speak on behalf of the more than 100 civil society organizations from the fields of development, human rights and environment, that have signed the Statement of Concern delivered to this body at the outset of this week's deliberations.

Let us recall that we are the organizations that first brought this issue to the attention of the world and who first aimed a spotlight on the horrific practices taking place on the beaches of South Asia more than ten years ago -- practices that the shipping industry was all too content to ignore. We are the organizations that would not let this industry nor governments continue to ignore the crisis at hand as we took the issue to the United Nations venues of the Basel Convention and to the ILO. We took the issue to these venues as it was clear that the crisis at hand was not a crisis of ships as much as it was a crisis of waste management and of labor protection at the end-of-life of ships. And it was a crisis of ship owners that continued to allow such reprehensible practices to take place, all in the name of profits.

The global response to this awakening to date and especially this week, has been a profound disappointment for we have sadly missed an opportunity. Not only did the shipping industry powers work to prevent the Basel Convention and the ILO from taking the lead on setting the international rules for shipbreaking, but they worked to create a Convention that at its birth stands as an obsolete relic that ignores long standing environmental and social principles. When the world stood up and called for real change to prevent environmental injustice and exploitation of human rights and the environment, it was given instead -- an inventory, a plan and some guidelines. It was given a legitimization, a green rubber stamp on a disastrous status quo.

Since the beginning we as civil society have brought forth recommendations for fundamental reform consistent with principles long established elsewhere in the United Nations outside of the IMO. We have first proposed preventing the transboundary movements of hazardous ships through life-cycle pre-cleaning, consistent with the Basel Convention and its decisions. We have proposed means of internalizing costs upstream to those most responsible through the establishment of ship owner supplied funds, and thereby implement the polluter pays and producer responsibility principles, we have proposed doing more than just banning substances that have already been banned, but moving proactively with the substitution principle to proactively promote green shipbuilding. We have proposed third Party auditing schemes to ensure an accountable and level playing field for ship recycling standards. We have proposed making the ship recycling standards mandatory and not merely guidelines. We have proposed incentives for OECD countries to manage their own ships rather than dumping these extremely risky and harmful jobs on the poorest of

the poor. We have proposed equivalent levels of control to those already found in the Basel Convention. And in the last months we have made one last appeal to at a minimum, condemn the clearly unsustainable and insupportable practice of running toxic ships aground on ocean beaches and cutting them in the intertidal zone. Yesterday, that final appeal made by the vast body of civil society organizations worldwide was ignored as have all of our previous recommendations mentioned. The clarion calls for substantive change have been rebuffed in every instance. Instead of real change, real responsibility, real action, we have been given an inventory, a plan and some guidelines.

This IMO Convention in the eyes of civil society stakeholders now must be deemed a failure. It has failing marks in the five most vital areas needed for true reform.

- First, it has failed to provide an equivalent level of control to that of the Basel Convention.
- Second, it has failed the test of environmental justice as it does nothing to prevent the disproportionate burdening of developing countries from toxic waste from ships.
- Third, it has failed the test of cost internalization as it has avoided attaching financial responsibility to the beneficiaries of the useful life of a ship, nor to the generators of the risks and liabilities and has instead pushed all costs downstream.
- Fourth, it has failed to create an incentive or a mandate for toxic-free more safely recyclable ships and thus has failed the test of prevention through design.
- And finally this week it has failed the last test of environmentally sound management as it refuses to draw a line in the sand to bar the fatally flawed beaching method – the cause of death and pollution of the marine environment.

Instead of these things we have been produced an inventory, a plan and some guidelines. When the world cried for help, we threw paper rather than a life ring.

However, history has proved over and over again that a crisis unsolved in one arena means renewed opportunity in another. We will now be seeking alliances with the most responsible, forward looking industry and governments. Together with you, we as civil society will press on in new fora and with renewed partnerships and energy in our campaigns to establish a mandatory green recycling standard and fund and to prevent the movement of hazardous waste laden ships to developing countries. We will continue to expose and punish that which is wrong and expose and reward that which is right. This week we are launching a new global *Off-the-Beach* campaign to ensure an equitable and rapid transformation to the safer and saner dockside, slipside, or dry dock methods of recycling our old ships.

And very soon, we are certain that will see a very different landscape in the world of shipping. We will see a world where ships are toxic free, where ship bearing toxic wastes do not travel to the poorest of the poor, where those responsible for a problem becomes responsible for preventing it, where workers no longer die, and where toxic ships are no longer run aground on our ocean beaches. That, we are absolutely certain

is not a dream, but with the hard work, determination and political courage of all of us who care, will be the inevitable future.

THANK YOU