



## Winners of the Global Maritime Forum's essay competition offer ideas on the maritime sector's potential to contribute to sustainable development agenda

*Essays on seafarer wellbeing, ship recycling, and shipping's decarbonization win three young professionals from the Philippines, United Kingdom, and South Africa a spot in the Global Maritime Forum's Virtual High-Level Meeting.*

The second annual [Future Maritime Leaders essay competition](#), organized by the Global Maritime Forum, asked youth how the maritime sector can continue to contribute to realizing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). By advancing environmental responsibility, promoting inclusive growth, improving the wellbeing of seafarers, and diversifying its workforce, answered 101 students and young professionals spanning the globe.

The Future Maritime Leaders essay competition aims to give the next generations of leaders a chance to raise their voice on the sustainable future of the maritime industry – and the industry a chance to listen. Between the months of April and June 2020, 101 essays from 37 countries were submitted to the competition.

Participants saw environmental sustainability as the main area where the maritime industry can contribute to realizing the SDGs.

*"It's encouraging to see young talents are aware of areas where the maritime industry can improve its environmental performance and contribute to global goals,"* said **Christine Loh, Chief Development Strategist at the Institute for the Environment, Hong Kong University of Science and Technology**, and Chair of the selection committee that was tasked with selecting the three winners of the essay competition. The essays addressing environmental sustainability covered a range of cross-cutting topics, from climate change, ocean health, ship recycling, circular economy, and more.

Many essays also addressed issues of inclusive growth, where they saw the maritime industry as able to play a key role. This especially focused on supporting the development aims of emerging economies in order to ensure that no one is left behind.

A prominent part of the essays this year focused on the plight of seafarers and how their working conditions might be improved. *"Seafarer wellbeing is an important topic. It is especially important this year with Covid-19 as there are many new challenges. It did not come as a surprise that many competition participants wrote about issues of particular concern to seafarers. What was striking was how poignant these essays were,"* noted **Christine Loh**.

Related to seafarer wellbeing were issues of inclusion and diversity, both at sea and on land. The essays that highlighted these concentrated on discrimination in terms of gender and nationality, as well as on how to attract the talent of the future.

A large number of submissions addressed multiple SDGs, drawing on synergies between them.

### Essay winners write about seafarer wellbeing, ship recycling, and shipping's decarbonization

Amid the COVID-19 pandemic, which stranded or left jobless thousands of seafarers, **Camille Simbulan**, a 30-year-old from the Philippines and one of the competition winners, argues that we must look beyond the numbers and not forget the lives and stories behind them to achieve gender equality on board of ships, decent work and economic growth, and wellbeing of seafarers. Camille is Special Projects and Communications Head at the Associated Marine Officers and Seamen's Union of the Philippines (AMOSUP).

**Jonathan Brown**, a 25-year-old Graduate Naval Architect from the UK, explores how current practices in ship recycling are damaging human health and the environment. His winning essay argues that safe recycling incentives should be offered to shipowners and shipyards in an effort to improve recycling practices. This would help the maritime industry contribute to decent work, good health and well-being, responsible consumption and production, life below water, and life on land.



Financing the maritime sector's decarbonization is a difficult but key challenge, and one that **Nikol Hearn**, an Analyst at Marine Capital, proposes to accelerate in her winning contribution. The 29-year-old South African suggests that green finance flows into the sector could be improved with the help of regulation and by looking beyond the most conventional investors for capital.

The three winners of the competition will attend the Global Maritime Forum's [Virtual High-Level Meeting](#) between 7-14 October, where they will represent the next generation of maritime talent. By bringing together top decision makers, thought leaders and experts from across the maritime value chain, the Virtual High-Level Meeting will be an opportunity to rethink global seaborne trade, and identify steps towards a cleaner, safer and more resilient maritime industry.

The winners of this year's Future Maritime Leaders essay competition will also be invited to the Global Maritime Forum's Annual Summit 2021 in London.

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**More information** on the competition and the three winning essays available below.

**Photos** are available [here](#).



## Competition topic

The UN has dubbed the next 10 years its 'Decade of Action' for delivering the 17 Sustainable Development Goals. The Sustainable Development Goals are a set of shared ambitions, providing the road map towards a better global future. Fulfilling these ambitions will take a concerted and collaborative effort between a wide range of stakeholders in a variety of different fields.

Over the next decade, the global maritime industry finds itself in a unique position to contribute to realizing these goals. International shipping is responsible for the transport of 80% of global trade as well as having deep connections to a wide range of stakeholders from across the value chain. This gives it a vital role in tackling issues like trade and growth, climate change, global infrastructure and food and energy security.

**Essay question: Over the next decade, how can the maritime sector continue to contribute to realizing the Sustainable Development Goals?**

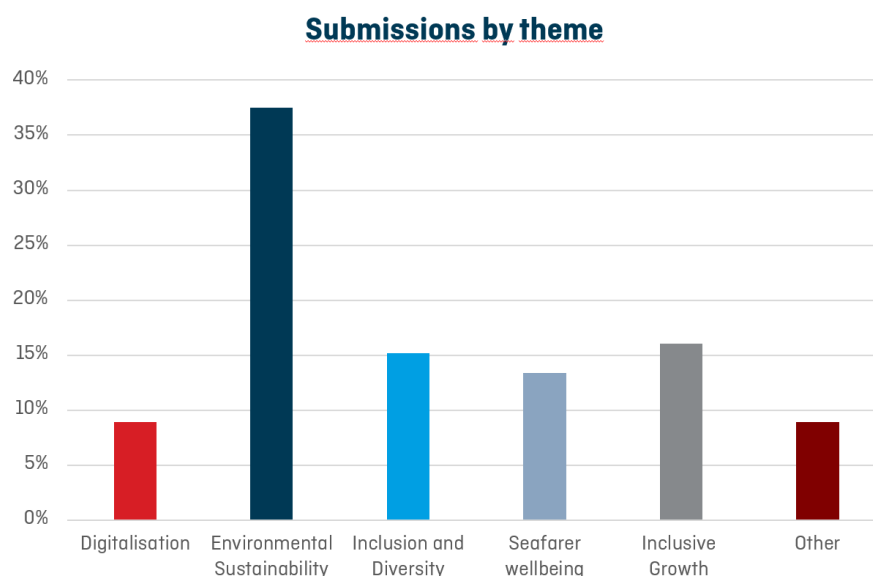
## Selection committee members

- **Christine Loh**, Chief Development Strategist, Institute for the Environment, Hong Kong University of Science and Technology, Hong Kong (Chair of committee)
- **Graham Westgarth**, Chief Executive Officer, V.Group, UK
- **Amy Jadesimi**, Managing Director, LADOL, Nigeria
- **Oivind Lorentzen III**, Director, SEACOR Holdings, USA
- **Stephen Cotton**, General Secretary, International Transport Workers' Federation, UK

## Submissions by theme

The range of ideas presented in the submissions was extensive, but 5 large themes emerged. (Note: many essays addressed more than one single topic.)

- **Digitalization**
- **Environmental sustainability**
- **Inclusion and diversity**
- **Seafarer wellbeing**
- **Inclusive growth**

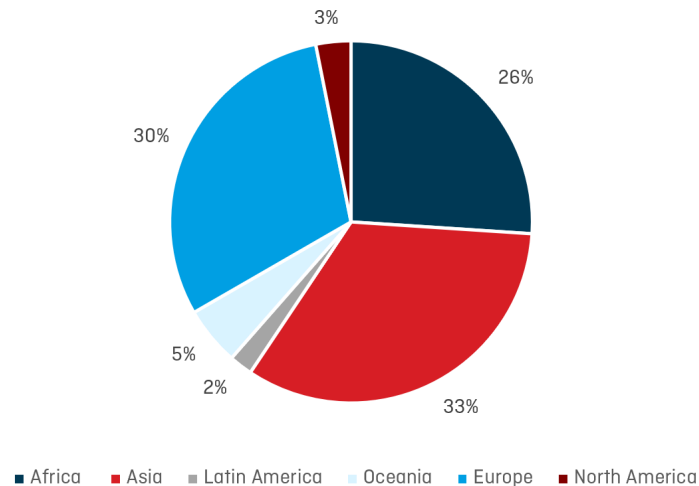




## Submissions by region

The 101 participants come from 37 different countries in Asia, Europe, Africa, North and Latin America, and Oceania. The three largest contributors by number are: **India** (12 submissions), **Nigeria** (12 submissions), **UK** (7 submissions).

### Submissions by continent



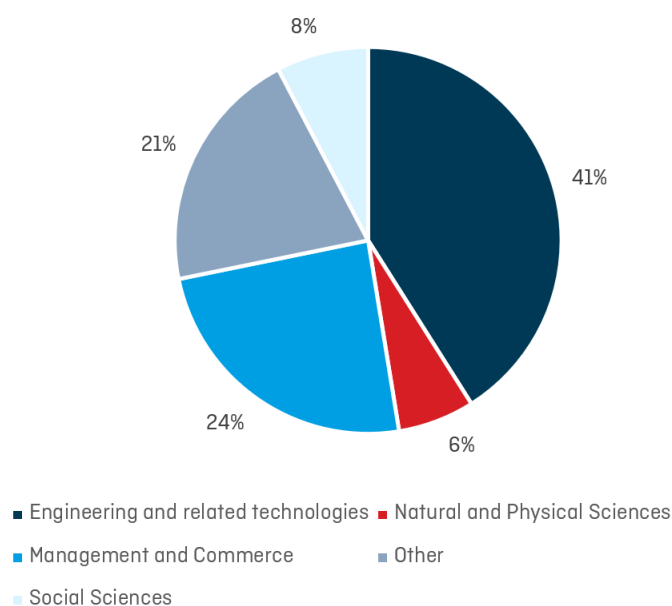
## Educational and professional background

In addition to geographical diversity, the participants came from a number of educational backgrounds and offered a range of different perspectives.

The majority of participants had a background in **engineering and related technologies**.

Of the participants that are currently employed, the biggest group belongs to the **maritime services** sector.

### Submissions by field of study





## **S.E.A.F.A.R.E.R.**

### **Winning essay by Camille Simbulan, 30, Special Projects and Communications Head at the Associated Marine Officers and Seamen's Union of the Philippines (AMOSUP)**

Numbers are intended to draw us the big picture.

Day by day, we are bombarded with statistics on the newspapers, television or online– “8.7 million people infected by Covid-19, almost half a million casualties, over 300 million job losses,” and the list goes on. Numbers give us the big picture. But are numbers all we need to see the picture clearly?

The world has seen the vital role of the maritime industry in keeping the economies of countries afloat. As the ICS put it: “Shipping is the life blood of the global economy,” as 90% of the world trade is moved by 50,000 merchant ships manned by 1.6 million seafarers.

More than a quarter of the world's seafarers come from the Philippines. In 2019, those 380,000 Filipino seafarers contributed \$6.14 Billion to the Philippine economy. But over the past three months since the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic and the Enhanced Community Quarantine imposed in the country, 50,000 Filipino seafarers have been repatriated. In that timeframe, the Philippine Overseas Employment Agency has only recorded 17,845 outbound or deployed seafarers: 15,595 male and 624 female seafarers in March, 591 male and 6 female sea-based workers in April and 1,020 male and 9 female seafarers in May, respectively.

If this trend continues, decent work and economic growth, as well as gender equality among maritime workers will be greatly affected. Even the good health and wellness of the seafarers on extended contracts and those struggling to go onboard are threatened in this grim situation.

In a survey I conducted among 54 stranded seafarers at AMOSUP Sailor's Home in Manila, 43 of them or about 80% said they are worried. The reasons they stated for feeling this way are job loss, financial problem, emotional impact of being away from their families and the threat of Covid-19 to them and their loved ones. Among them is 52-year-old “Chuck,” who said he feels like his “world is crumbling” because of the crisis. Like Chuck, many of them are frustrated and helpless.

“It's painful to see my family go hungry.” “I don't know now how we are going to pay for our bills and loans.” “I'm trying to figure out how I am going to send my children to school.”

These stranded seafarers are part of the 300 million jobless workers reported by the International Labor Organization. These are their stories. They are the faces behind the numbers.

Amidst the global crisis, we have seen the importance of different institutions working together. The SYNERGY among the government and stakeholders, public or private, is crucial in saving the workers who drive the lifeblood of the global economy. We've seen gaps and challenges in the system in place, but all the more we should consider this an opportunity to strengthen our partnerships to take action more effectively.

Information is one of the most powerful tools today. With the right amount of synergy, the government, companies and other stakeholders can come up with a centralized information system on maritime workers. Seafarers are one of the most difficult labor sectors to monitor because the rotation of workers and the industry in general is rather fast-paced. In the existing system, various government agencies, companies, unions and other organizations have different data on seafarers. But with a centralized information system, updating, communicating with, and assisting seafarers especially in times of crisis, will be more efficient.

EDUCATING the public about the maritime industry is another area that we, as a community, can explore. Since time immemorial, the image of the maritime industry as a man's world has been dragged on from generation to generation. The world must know that the maritime industry is moving forward towards diversity and inclusivity – and this must not just be tackled inside the four walls of maritime institutions, it must be echoed by the companies and governments in all corners of the globe.



It is equally important to ensure that workers are ADAPTABLE to change. Maritime workers must be taught that they are never just one thing. They are not robots programmed to work monotonously – they can upgrade their skills, open up themselves to grow and learn new abilities through trainings and personal development workshops. Their mental health should also constantly be kept in check through regular debriefing or counseling after they disembark.

The maritime community must also intensify its campaign for FAIRNESS and ACCOUNTABILITY especially among high-ranking officers onboard. I have encountered several women seafarers either bullied or harassed by their superiors onboard. But in many instances, they are intimidated and caught in the hierarchy in the ship. This results in their painful decision not to pursue their complaint despite our assistance and encouragement. But many employers do care about their crew and take action in such cases. These companies can take the lead and start by sharing their best practices and embolden other companies and stakeholders to follow suit.

REINFORCING and EMPOWERING the maritime workforce through more accessible training and development is another step towards actualizing gender equality, decent work and economic growth, and good health and wellness. A workforce reinforced with competent and hardworking individuals is a strong workforce driven to maintain decent work and contribute to economic growth. Likewise, an EMPOWERED workforce is confident, fearless and mentally ready to face challenges, such as inequality, head on.

Putting all of these efforts together will create a more RESILIENT maritime community.

Now, what do these have to do with the realization of the Sustainable Development Goals? Unless we tackle the problems at hand at the core, we will not be able to effectively and progressively move forward as a community to achieve the SDGs. Let's **Synergize**, **Educate** the world, make our workers **Adaptable** to change, push for **Fairness** and **Accountability**, **Reinforce** and **Empower** our workers and together, let's build **Resilience**.

Of course we need the statistics. But it's equally important to keep in mind the lives, the faces, and the stories behind the numbers. Let us look beyond the numbers – the **SEAFARER** is the answer.

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## **Making Ship Recycling Work For All**

### **Winning essay by Jonathan Brown, 25, Graduate Naval Architect at BAE Systems Naval Ships**

We are living in unprecedented times with the coronavirus pandemic changing the way everyone will live for the short term, if not forever. This has brought into sharper focus the need for change in daily life, and if we look at some of the most pressing humanitarian issues in the marine industry one stands above the rest – ship recycling.

Ship recycling is a major societal and environmental issue, but if improvements are made the industry could greatly contribute to a number of UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), including those for decent work, good health and well-being, responsible consumption and production, life below water, and life on land. There continues to be a clear lack of responsibility within the industry for these issues and I believe widespread cultural and regulatory improvements could support these SDGs.

### **What damage is ship recycling already causing?**

Ship recycling is notorious for being both dangerous and dirty. It continues to be one of the deadliest industries in the world with 398 deaths and 251 injuries since 2009 [2] and an estimated 1,200 deaths since 1980 [1].

Conditions and pay are horrendous, with employees typically working 12 – 16 hour days, seven days a week for pay as low as 35p an hour [3]. A recent survey of workers in India found that 43% of workers did not have access to suitable drinking water and only 30% of workers were satisfied with the safety equipment provided. Additionally, 52% of workers were injured within the last year at the workplace [4]. There are also long term health impacts, stemming from hazardous materials left onboard such as asbestos, oil residues and other toxic materials. These can cause life-threatening conditions, impacting workers many years after being exposed [3].



If the health impacts were not severe enough to drive change, the industry also causes significant environmental damage. Due to vessels being beached and dismantled on the shore, pollution cannot be contained. Studies have shown that there are significantly higher concentrations of heavy metals than normal in the coastline surrounding recycling yards [5].

There are also atmospheric emissions and damage to land-based ecosystems. Research has shown that breaking methods cause significant CO2 emissions and the release of other harmful gases [5]. Near the coast of Chattogram, approximately 60,000 mangrove trees have been cut down to allow for more space to beach vessels. This damages local ecosystems and also removes a barrier which reduces the damage from flooding and typhoons [6]. Clearly, these adverse effects are rippling far further than the ship recycling sector itself, and significant change is required.

### Do current measures go far enough?

There are measures which are trying to prevent this damage. The International Maritime Organisation's (IMO) Hong Kong Convention aims to prevent this practice, but is yet to enter into force. The EU's Ship Recycling regulation requires EU flagged ships to be recycled at a yard on the European List of Ship Recycling Facilities, with the aim to ensure safe practices. However, the industry still continues in Asia with 471 of the 674 ships being broken down on beaches in India, Pakistan and Bangladesh in 2019 [6]

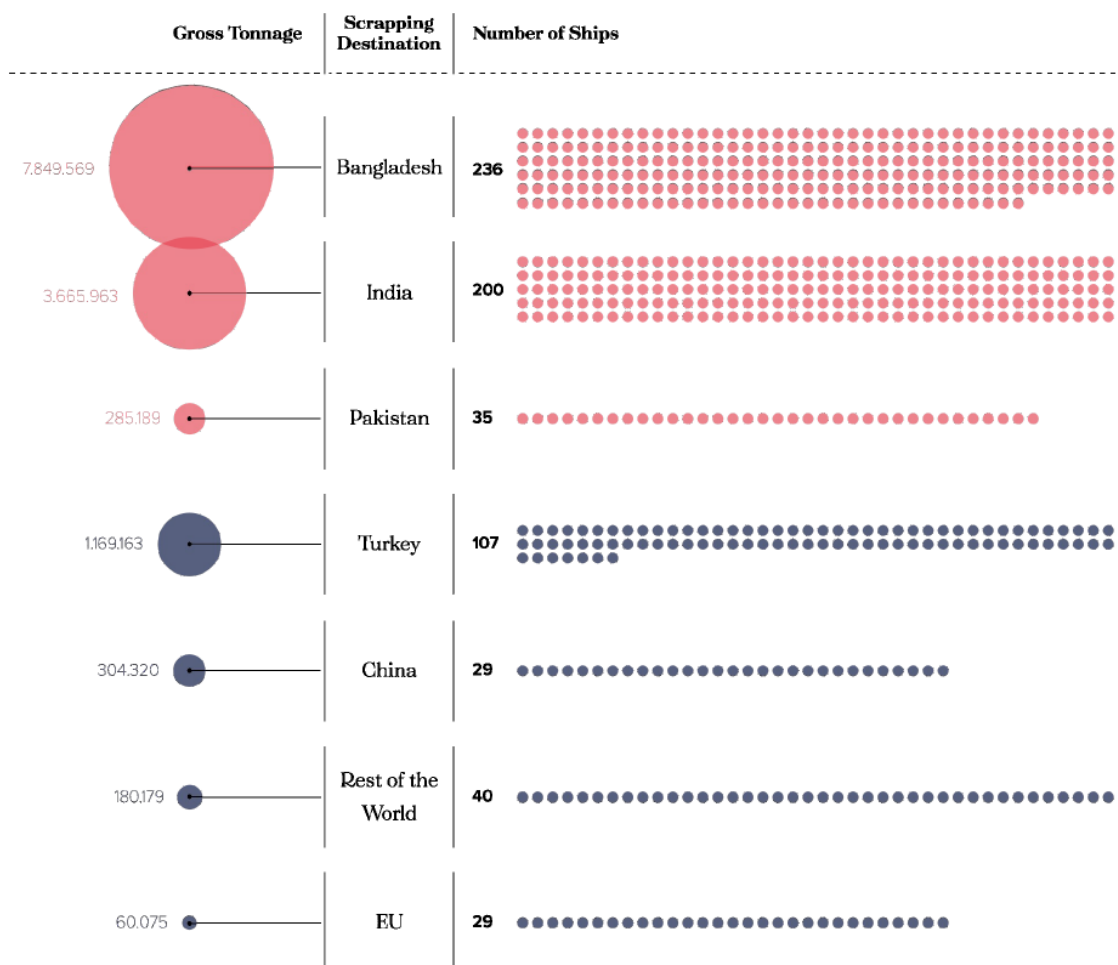


Figure 1: 2019 Ship Recycling Locations [6]



A common problem with these regulations is the use of flags of convenience and the use of end of life flags. Many shipowners sell vessels to cash buyers who subsequently change the vessel's flag to a common end of life flag with no recycling restrictions. There are a number of common end of life flags including Palau, Comoros and St Kitts & Nevis, with over 30% of the vessels being recycled in 2019 having one of these flags.

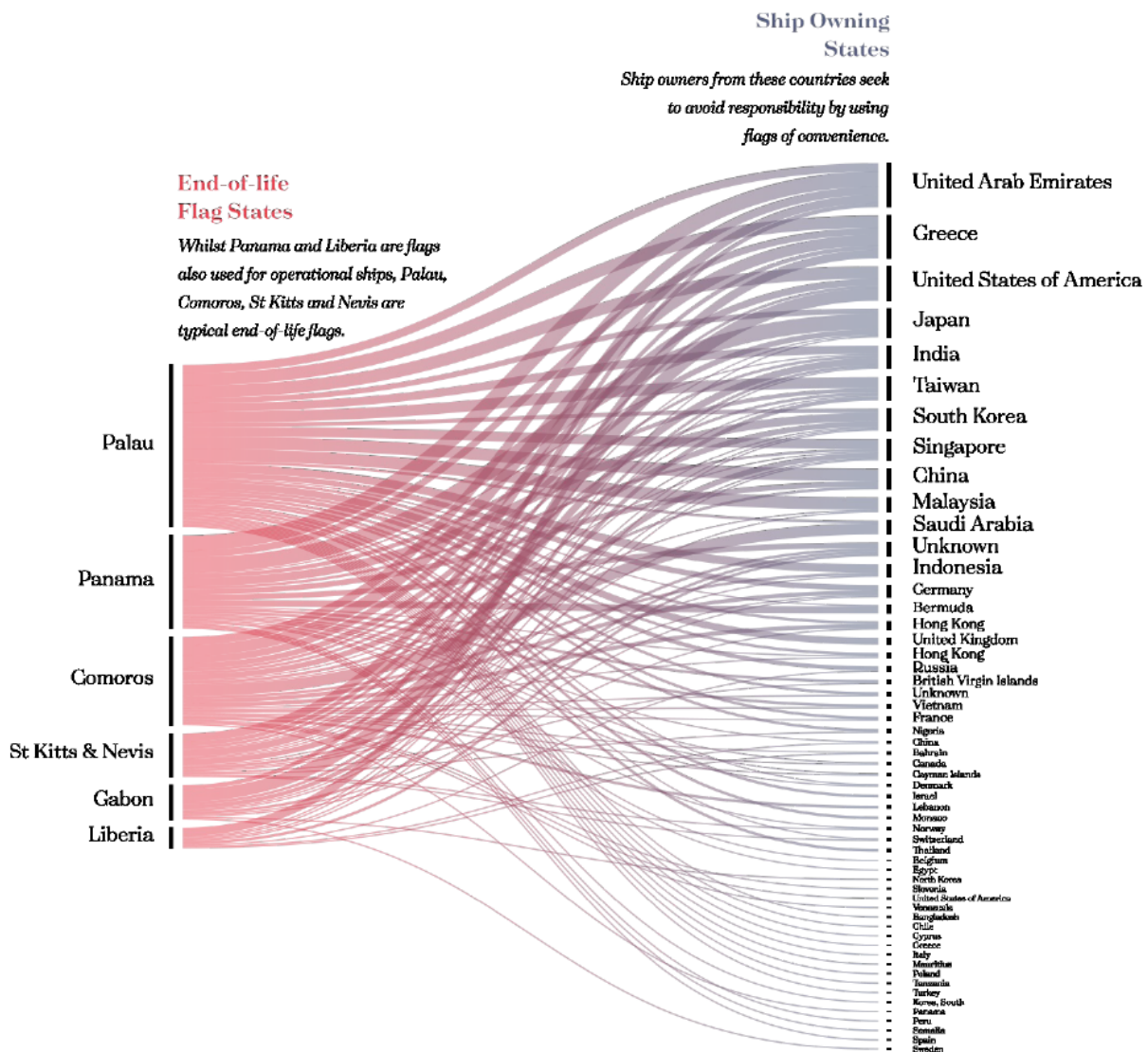


Figure 2: Ship Owner Nationality and Flag States [6]

The Hong Kong convention has been criticised for not going far enough to ensure that vessels are dismantled in a safe and environmentally sound manner. There have also been concerns about the yards which have been issued Statements of Compliance (SoC) with findings suggesting that the SoCs are not a guarantee that the requirements are being met [7].

### So how can the maritime industry prevent this practice?

If significant improvements could be made it could greatly contribute to the SDGs previously mentioned above. The direction of the EU regulation has made progress, however more widespread change needs to be made to this industry's culture to ensure that people are put before profit.





Regulations need to go even further. Clearly, in their current state, they do not enforce sustainable and safe recycling and thus must be amended to prevent workarounds such as end of life flags and inaccurate SoCs. However, due to the requirements for entry into force, an international regulation may still be years away.

Initially, an incentive for safe recycling could be offered to encourage owners to use safe facilities. Alternatively, an international maritime fund could be created, offering financial incentives to yards to

improve recycling practices. In the long term, continued compliance must be ensured, potentially independent of SoCs. This could be enforced through an IMO Approved Ship Recyclers list utilising independent auditors and a reporting mechanism open to all parties, such as workers and local communities, to raise concerns on practices. This could incorporate a system similar to the International Maritime Bureau's Piracy Reporting Centre allowing round the clock reporting of incidents or breaches.

The industry needs to force accountability onto shipowners. This is an area which is not currently successful, with negative publicity and regulations not changing the behaviour of shipowners. The Global Maritime Forum could be a platform in which to drive a cultural change with shipowners, starting through its publications, forums and through the support of the forum's industry partners.

Ultimately, accountability and reflection only go so far. To truly move the maritime industry forward, we must make change now. As the 2019 Global Maritime Forum concluded, we need "collaboration and bold leadership to meet new societal demands". Nothing should be more valuable than the safety and well-being of our industry's workers. We must work together to ensure that everyone has the right to fair pay, fair conditions and a healthy planet for the future.

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## Accelerating the decarbonisation of the shipping sector

Winning essay by Nikol Hearn, 29, Analyst at Marine Capital

According to the International Maritime Organisation (IMO), the shipping industry's governing body, the sector is responsible for 2.2% of global emissions. Without any intervention and if the current trajectory continues, shipping emissions are expected to grow by 50-250% by 2050. Carbon Dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) is the largest source of greenhouse gas emissions in shipping, but as a means of transportation shipping is the most CO<sub>2</sub> efficient, as it releases the least CO<sub>2</sub> per ton travelled in comparison to air, road and rail<sup>1</sup>. Because of this, it remains the preferred method of transportation, carrying more than 80% of the world's goods. As a large emitter in aggregate, there is therefore a key role for shipping to play in reducing the global carbon footprint and thereby achieving the sustainable development goal of climate action.

To limit climate change and decarbonise shipping, there are both challenges and opportunities for the sector. There is currently much uncertainty on the way that shipping will become a net zero emitter, in terms of both fuel usage and future technology design. This uncertainty in the way forward is limiting current investment and is creating a setback to achieving the greening of vessels and fuel. Added to this, capital flows into shipping assets have already been on a declining trend. As a result, there is a growing need for financing fleet renewal and fleet growth by \$3.1 trillion and \$2.1 trillion respectively within the next five years, excluding the financing which will be required for the decarbonisation technology<sup>2</sup>. There is the further complication in that the benefit of the decarbonisation technology is currently enjoyed by the charterer, not the investor, i.e. the owner of the vessel who pays for the decarbonisation technology is not financially rewarded for the investment.

Most ship owners will indicate that the uncertainty of future regulation and technology is hindering their fleet development, strategic decisions and decarbonisation efforts. Funds are not flowing to where they are needed as investors do not commit capital where the payoff of future benefits is not clear, compounding the lack of a decarbonisation agenda. Therefore, the industry regulators have a big part to play in directing the future of shipping by addressing these hinderances. The regulators must create an environment of certainty where future green technology is not determined by the "survival of the fittest" but creates incentives for capital inflows where cost and benefit can be borne simultaneously.

Directing capital inflows is of paramount importance and one solution would be to create incentives for investment by the pension funds. Through tax breaks on these corporates or by reducing capital gains tax directly when funds are channelled to impact investing and green finance, capital can be redirected to the decarbonisation projects. Additionally, by improving education and awareness about shipping investments to the asset management and pension fund community, as capital providers, resources can be unlocked, as many traditional funds have never been exposed to marine investment vehicles. Furthermore, a solution would be to create platforms in which capital can easily access green projects and decarbonisation funds in the same way that multi-management platforms create ease of access and transparency in their reporting standards. These few changes would unlock and redirect the capital that is very much needed for fleet growth and renewal, and the additional expense of decarbonisation technology.

The more complicated issue in shipping decarbonisation is in determining the future fuel source and the decarbonisation technology. There is a need for the regulators to propel the adoption of this, rather than allowing market mechanisms to come up with the solution. Assuming adoption of the technology by all ship owners is not necessarily feasible, given as aforementioned the conflict of the owner bearing the cost versus the charterer and society at large reaping the rewards. Despite these challenges, there are a variety of fuels and technologies that show promise in being both practical on vessels and in fact green.

Odfjell recently reported on some alternative fuels<sup>3</sup>. Despite some promise for the more widely known fuels such as LPG and LNG, their reduction of emissions is marginal and therefore they are more likely to be used as interim "greener" fuels rather than the final solution, even with the use of scrubbing technology. Hydrogen and Ammonia have been flagged as superior as they are zero emission fuels and remain practical to use at sea. However, Hydrogen has the drawback of extensive volume density requirements. Ammonia fares as the strongest potential



future fuel, but it remains very much in its infancy. There is certainly room, though, for regulators to spur on the investigation into the use of Ammonia and to partner up with corporates and supranational bodies to fund these developments.

By ensuring that shipping is increasingly regulated by one global body, rather than by various national regulators, uniform legal requirements can be a simple yet effective means by which to direct the outcome. One such example could be to legalise an additional cost to the chartering party for the use of the decarbonisation technology, thereby ensuring a more equitable distribution of financial reward.

In conclusion, it is clear that the shipping sector can be made climate friendly. The need to address the decarbonisation issues that the industry faces can be achieved by redirecting incentives. Through the above-mentioned, the capital to fund the growing financing and decarbonisation needs of the shipping industry can be attained. With the aid of regulation, Ammonia could be a future fuel source if the coordination of industry bodies were to further its development and implementation. Notably, by creating increased uniformity for the shipping industry, equitable solutions can be ensured so that the party providing the funds also receives the benefits. This all means that there are certainly positive ways that the shipping industry can assist in reducing the impact of climate change on the planet.

**Sources:**

<sup>1</sup> IMO, DEFRA Emission Factors

<sup>2</sup> Based on 2% fleet growth and renewal of ships over 25 years – Marine Capital, Clarkson Research Services, Getting to Zero Coalition

<sup>3</sup> Odfjell SE - Investor presentation June 2020