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Anonymous

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The World Maritime University is inaugurated in Malmö, Sweden at special ceremony

On 4 July one of the most important developments in international shipping was officially inaugurated – the World Maritime University (WMU) at Malmö in Sweden. It will offer the developing countries their best opportunity so far to close the technological gap between themselves and the traditional maritime countries.

The inauguration ceremony was attended by His Excellency the Foreign Minister of Sweden, Mr. Lennart Bodström; the Secretary-General of IMO, Mr. C.P. Srivastava and Mr William T. Mashler, representing the Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Mr. Bradford Morse, who was indisposed.

The aim of the World Maritime University is to provide top-level training for senior administration and other officials from developing countries which is not available in their own countries. Initially, the University will have about 75 students, but ultimately this will increase to a maximum of 150. Most of the students will be on two-year courses leading to the award of a Master of Science degree.

For many developing countries, the creation of a national fleet is a priority, particularly those with a growing overseas trade.

Many of them have turned for help to IMO which is responsible for promoting safety and preventing pollution from ships.

With the financial support, mainly of the United Nations Development Programme, IMO has built up an extensive technical assistance programme which now provides aid to many of the Organization's 125 Member States and is particularly concerned with training. Experience has shown that most accidents at sea are caused by human error, which can often be attributed to poor training.

IMO has helped to create maritime training academies in many countries and has evolved a successful fellowship programme which enables young people from developing countries to obtain training abroad which is not available in their own countries. This assistance programme is closely linked to IMO's primary task, which is the development of international standards in the form of conventions, codes and recommendations.

Despite the success of this programme, a major problem remains – the shortage of trained, experienced staff at the highest levels of administration and in

other key areas. Most developing countries have severe shortages of administrators, surveyors, lecturers for training academies, technical managers in shipping companies and others on whom the successful implementation of international standards most depends.

This difficulty was discussed at a seminar on training standards held in Malmö, Sweden, in November 1980. The seminar, which was organized by IMO in co-operation with the Swedish International Development Authority, concluded that there was a great need for a high-level maritime training institution, preferably located in one of the world's advanced maritime countries. A resolution supporting the idea was adopted unanimously.

Action then moved to IMO it-

self. The Malmö resolution was given warm backing and in November 1981 the IMO Assembly also adopted a resolution backing the idea.

It called on the Secretary-General of IMO, Mr. C.P. Srivastava, to take the action necessary to secure the establishment of what by then had come to be called the World Maritime University and appealed to the United Nations Development Programme to give the project financial support.

In the meantime, the idea of the University had attracted great support in Sweden, whose government agreed to make a generous financial contribution towards the University amounting to \$1 million a year. The authorities in Malmö have provided facilities for the University – a former merchant marine academy – as well as a hostel which will be used to accommodate students.

Further support has been provided by the UNDP which has agreed to provide the WMU with \$800,000 a year. Several IMO Member States and other bodies – such as the Commonwealth – have also offered financial support.

This support shows the interest



World Maritime University

which the University project has aroused in the entire maritime community. The advantages for the developing countries who will provide the students are obvious enough but the established maritime countries see it as a way of helping to maintain and indeed improve safety standards in world shipping in the years to come.

The University will offer two-year courses on maritime administration, maritime safety administration, maritime education, and technical management of shipping companies.

In addition, it will provide one-year courses for technical officials engaged in maritime safety administration and technical staff of shipping companies. There will also be shorter courses on specialized subjects.

All the students will have the benefit of first class tuition: in addition to the permanent staff 85 experts from around the world have offered to visit to the University to give lectures and short courses in their own specialities. In addition, the students will be able to visit shipyards, ports and other centres in Sweden and other European countries.

Within a few years, the first graduates of the University will be back in their own countries putting their newly acquired knowledge into practice. It is confidently expected that this will not only make shipping more efficient – but safer as well.



The World Maritime University



The library of the University