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WMU in the News

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A milestone in maritime education

Anonymous

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A milestone in maritime education

A MILESTONE in maritime education — that's how one expert has described the setting up of the World Maritime University (WMU) at Malmö.

The words of praise came from the Egyptian delegate to the IMO Technical Co-operation Committee in December last year.

IMO secretary general Mr C. P. Srivastava, whose personal efforts were largely responsible for getting the project off the ground, would agree with that observation and so would many others. The WMU will train key senior-level personnel from the developing countries and should do much to close the technical and administrative gap between established and emerging shipping countries.

The WMU was opened with a short ceremony on July 4. Six weeks before the opening Mr Srivastava briefed IMO members on progress to date. He gave an optimistic address, which detailed many offers of financial and other aid from around the world.

Agreement between the IMO and the Swedish government on the university's legal status came into effect on May 1. The buildings of

the former Malmö Merchant Marine Academy were provided free by the city authorities, while an apartment block was set aside as a students' residence.

This degree of support from the Swedish government and the city of Malmö made the establishment of the WMU possible. The financial and political backing of the UNDP was also of fundamental importance — especially that of UNDP administrator Mr Bradford Morse, who saw the university as an essential need for maritime progress in the developing countries.

As a result, the UNDP pledged \$0.8 million (£0.53m) a year during the current cycle which expires in 1986. With \$1m promised by Sweden, a total of \$1.8m was readily available for the university.

It was recognised early on that someone needed to be appointed to handle the WMU purse-strings. Mr Bradford Morse recommended Mr B. Zagorin, a senior diplomat and former UNDP Resident Representative. He is now senior financial consultant to the WMU.

Mr Zagorin has calculated the annual recurring expenditure of the WMU at \$3.6m, so he and Mr

Srivastava have to find an additional \$1.8m to add to the Swedish and UNDP funds.

Mr Srivastava was able to report some heartening financial developments at the May committed session. A number of countries and organisations had stepped forward with funds and other offers of help.

Norway, for example, had originally promised \$100,000, then generously decided to double the amount. A leading nation regarding provision of finance for technical assistance, Norway has proposed that \$50,000 of the total be deployed for five fellowships.

In addition, Greece has pledged \$50,000 for the first year. Mr Srivastava said he was hopeful that a similar amount would be forthcoming in the university's second and subsequent years.

France has offered two fellowships for this year and other countries were considering financial help. They include Italy, which is to provide initial support in the form of \$50,000 for five fellowships from developing countries. The developing countries themselves had started to come forward with financial support for their WMU nominees, said Mr Srivastava.

Meanwhile, IMO specialists and other experts were busy in the run-up to the July opening, finalising the academic preparations and detailed course syllabuses.

While the WMU's full-time professors have been appointed, it was recognised that visiting professors would have a vital role to play in bringing a wealth of expertise from many nations to the students. The secretary general told the committee that nearly 90 eminent personalities had agreed to serve as visiting professors.

Equally gratifying were the many promises of help from maritime administrations and specialised maritime institutions which have offered to make their facilities available free of charge.

Regarding the nomination of students, Mr Srivastava said there had been an encouraging response from the developing countries. The first session at the WMU began with 70 students; a similar number will begin next year. As most courses run for two years there will be some 140 students at full capacity.

While some countries had the candidates but lacked the finance, Mr Srivastava said he was con-

fidant that such difficulties would be overcome.

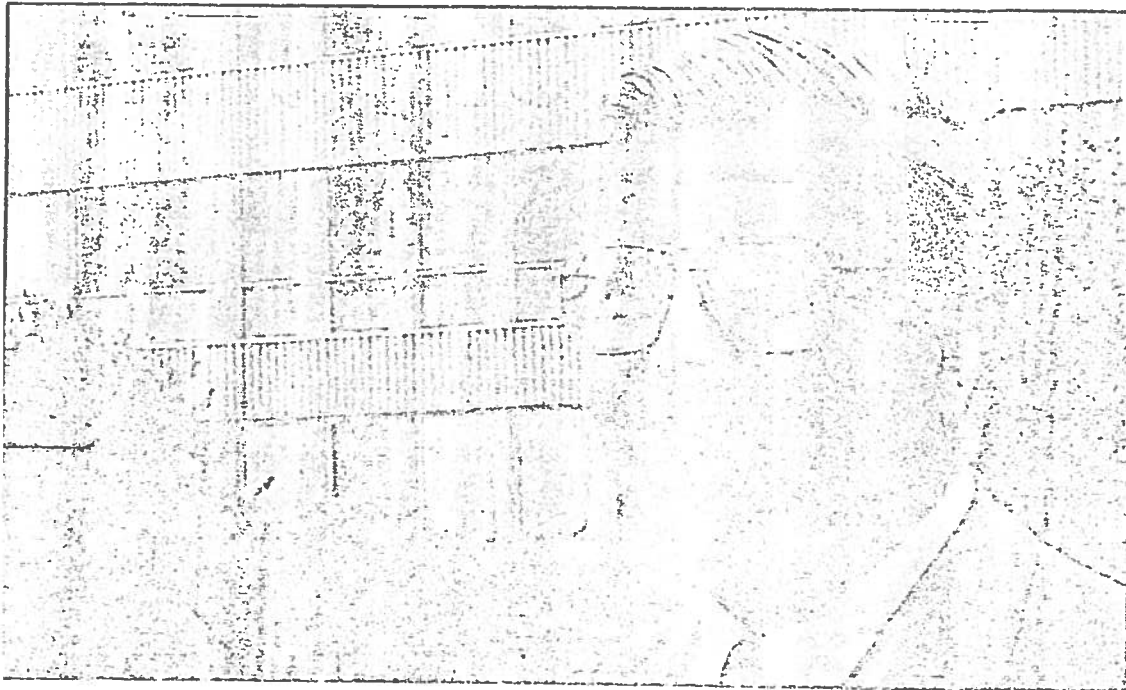
The secretary general heads the board of governors of the WMU. Membership of the board has been composed in a way broadly representative of the IMO Council and all elements of the maritime industry.

Mr Srivastava told the Technical Co-operation Committee he was confident that, once the university was under way and highly trained senior maritime officials began to return to their countries, the WMU graduates would replace expatriate experts. Then the full value of the new institution would become apparent.

The WMU technical courses are intended for very senior people including surveyors, lecturers and high-level technical advisers. On completion of WMU studies, their professional competence "should be equal to the best in the world". The same high standards have been set in the case of the maritime administration courses.

Many delegates from the developing nations paid special tribute to Mr Srivastava's personal involvement in the launch of the WMU. The delegate of Chile, for

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Professor Solve Arvedson, Rector of the World Maritime University in Malmö.

example, recalled that it had taken only 18 months to transfer the plan from a piece of paper (Resolution A.501) to the reality of Malmö.

The Jamaica delegate also praised the secretary general. He then expressed satisfaction that Mr P. Vanchiswar had been appointed WMU professor. Mr Vanchiswar had been helping Caribbean countries in the field of maritime safety.

In his reply, Mr Srivastava welcomed an announcement from the West German delegate at the May technical co-operation session. West German help for the WMU is to include a number of visiting professors.

In addition, the West German authorities have agreed to a request from the university for opportunities for field training to be made

available.

Furthermore, the West German government has invited applications for WMU scholarships and has said that potential candidates may apply by approaching the West German embassy in their country. It has said that all requests for WMU fellowships "will be given a high priority and favourable treatment."