

## Turkey, a major ship recycling nation, signs UN convention



27 August 2010 – Turkey, one of the five major ship recycling nations in the world, has signed the United Nations-backed treaty promoting the environmentally friendly recycling of ships.

The Hong Kong International Convention for the Safe and Environmentally Sound Recycling of Ships, adopted in May last year, is aimed at ensuring that ships, when being recycled at the end of their operational lives, do not pose an unnecessary risk to human health and safety or the environment.

It was signed yesterday in London by Ünal Çeviköz, Turkey's Permanent Representative to the **International Maritime Organization** – the UN agency that developed the convention – at IMO's headquarters in London.

The convention deals with all major issues surrounding ship recycling, including the fact that ships sold for scrapping may contain environmentally hazardous substances such as asbestos, heavy metals, hydrocarbons, ozone-depleting substances and others. It also tackles concerns about the working and environmental conditions at many ship recycling locations.

In addition, the convention regulates the design, construction, operation and preparation of ships so as to facilitate safe and environmentally sound recycling – without compromising the ships' safety and operational efficiency. It focuses on the operation of ship recycling facilities in a safe and environmentally sound manner, as well as on establishment of an appropriate enforcement mechanism for ship recycling – including certification and reporting requirements.

The text of the convention was developed over a three-year period, with input from IMO Member States and relevant non-governmental organizations (NGOs), in cooperation with the International Labour Organization (**ILO**) and the Parties to the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal.

The Convention has been open for signature by any State since 1 September 2009 and will remain so until next Tuesday. Thereafter, it will be open for accession by any State.

It will enter into force 24 months after the date on which 15 States, representing 40 per cent of world merchant shipping by gross tonnage, have either signed it without reservation as to ratification, acceptance or approval, or have deposited instruments of ratification, acceptance, approval or accession with the IMO Secretary-General. The combined maximum annual ship recycling volume of those States during the preceding 10 years must constitute not less than 3 per cent of their combined merchant shipping tonnage.

To date, the Convention has been signed, subject to ratification or acceptance, by France, Italy, the Netherlands, Saint Kitts and Nevis and Turkey.

At the signing, IMO Secretary-General Efthimios E. Mitropoulos and Mr. Çeviköz expressed the wish that other major ship recycling nations would join the convention as soon as possible.

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