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On centenary of Titanic sinking, UN official urges fresh commitment to maritime safety



Railing of the Titanic. Photo: National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)

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On the centenary of the sinking of the passenger liner Titanic on its maiden voyage from the United Kingdom to New York, the head of the United Nations agency responsible for maritime safety has urged Governments and the shipping industry to renew their commitment to the safety of seafaring.

“The Titanic disaster prompted the major shipping nations of the world, at that time, to take decisive action to address maritime safety,” said the Secretary-General of the London-based

International Maritime Organization (IMO), Koji Sekimizu, in a video [message](#) to mark the 100th anniversary of the disaster, will be observed tomorrow.

The Titanic struck an iceberg and sank on April 15, 1912, killing 1,500 of the 2,200 people on board.

“It led to the adoption of the first international convention on safety of life at sea, SOLAS, in 1914. [The] International Maritime Organization can trace its own roots back to the Titanic disaster,” Mr. Sekimizu said. “In its aftermath, the requirement for an international standard-setting body to oversee maritime safety became apparent; and safety at sea remains the core objective of IMO.”

The International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea is still the most important international treaty on maritime safety, according to the IMO. It forms part of a comprehensive regulatory framework covering almost every aspect of ship design, construction, operating and manning.

Mr. Sekimizu pointed out that new generations of vessels have come with fresh challenges, reinforcing the need for continued improvements.

“I urge IMO Member Governments, and the shipping industry as a whole, to refresh our determination to improve and enhance the safety of passenger ships, today and in the future,” he said.

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