

Kenya Marks Day of the Seafarer

The Kenya Maritime Authority (KMA) led Kenyans in celebrating the International Day of the Seafarer on June 25th, 2018 at the Mission to Seafarers in Mombasa. This year`s theme was “Seafarers Wellbeing” and was aimed at addressing seafarers’ welfare and mental health. The day was attended by over 400 guests from the Kenyan maritime industry constituting of seafarers, maritime students from the Technical University of Mombasa and the Bandari College as well as other stakeholders from the shipping industry. Also, in attendance was Mrs. Nancy Karigithu, the Principal Secretary, State Department for Shipping and Maritime, in the Ministry of Transport, Infrastructure, Housing and Urban Development, Hon. Abdulswamad Shariff Nassir, the MP, Mvita Constituency, Mr. Seth Odongo the CEO, Devolution & Public Service, Mombasa County among other dignitaries.



Mrs. Nancy Karigithu, the Principal Secretary, State Department for Shipping and Maritime, Mr. George Macgoye, KMA’s Ag. Dg and Mr. Seth Odongo, the CEO, Devolution & Public Service, Mombasa County during the Day of the Seafarer 2018

Giving her key note address, Mrs. Karigithu, the Principal Secretary, State Department for Shipping and Maritime thanked seafarers for their priceless contribution to the world and assured them of the Ministry's continued support.

Kenya continues to implement the Maritime Labour Convention (MLC) 2006 to ensure decent working conditions for seafarers onboard ship. This includes the amendments to the MLC 2006 in 2014 and 2016 which cover financial security for repatriation, ship owners' liability, health and safety protection, accident prevention and Flag State responsibilities on issuance of maritime labor certificate, she said, "These amendments have been communicated to the relevant Ministries for domestication."

"There are many different factors that can affect the quality of life at the sea for a seafarer such as shore leaves, the threat of abandonment, prompt payment of wages, the prospect of criminalization, repatriation, mental health and even simple things like internet access and provision of an exercise facility onboard a ship all which fall under seafarers wellbeing explained Captain Ali.Mohammed, a marine surveyor and experienced sailor, who shared his sea experiences during the event.



Mr. George Macgoye, KMA's Ag. Dg speaks to stakeholders during the Day of the Seafarer 2018

“We have over 2000 registered seafarers in Kenya,” noted Daudi Hajj, the Seafarers Union of Kenya chairman, “we request KMA to help them re-validate their STCW certificates locally.”

Also addressing the gathering, Dr. Ben Ochieng from the Coast Hospice advised seafarers to avoid lifestyle diseases like cancer, diabetes and hypertension by adhering to proper nutrition, watching their physical, emotional and mental health. He urged them to avoid heavy drinking, smoking and stress which are some of the causes of these diseases.

In 2010, the International Maritime Organization (IMO) designated June 25th as the International Day of the Seafarer to recognize the unique contribution made by seafarers from all over the world to international seaborne trade, the world economy and civil society as a whole. The day not only acknowledges the invaluable work of the seafarers, but also aims to bring global attention to the issues affecting their work and lives.