



**SPEECH FOR THE AG. DIRECTOR GENERAL DURING THE DAY OF
THE SEAFARER DINNER AT MOMBASA BEACH HOTEL: 25TH JUNE
2016**

Mr. Mwalimu Digore Kitambi, the Chairman, Kenya Maritime Authority,

Members of the Seafarers Union of Kenya,

Representatives from Kenya Maritime Authority,

Esteemed Stakeholders and distinguished guests,

Ladies and gentlemen,

It is my great pleasure to join you today to celebrate the Day of the Seafarer. This day is recognized by the International Maritime Organization and celebrated every year on the 25th of June to appreciate the hard work of seafarers all over the world.

Seafarers are the backbone of the maritime industry, no doubt about that. Our achievements in the maritime industry are attributed to them. They work selflessly, within the deep seas and oceans for months on end to ensure maritime trade is safe, efficient and successful. This is why, today we celebrate you Seafarers, We appreciate you, we pay tribute to all the hard work you put to ensure that the maritime industry is ongoing and serving the entire globe.

This year's theme set by the International Maritime Organization is 'At sea for All'. It highlights and recognizes the priceless contribution the seafarers make to

the maritime industry the minute they board a ship into the deep Sea at a great personal cost to themselves and their families to keep the wheels of the world in motion.

Kenya Maritime Authority has always had the seafarers interests at heart. We do believe that working together with our seafarers is key in realizing the dreams of Kenya's maritime industry and propelling it to achieve much more and contribute to our nation's economic growth and development.

Through our various initiatives, the Authority has always been at the forefront in promoting the seafaring career. We do believe that our seafarers have a great potential to develop professionally and compete with the very best in the international maritime crew labour market. This is the reason why we will endeavor to continue to invest in our seafarers.

Ladies and gentlemen, the maritime industry is rapidly growing. With its growth, is also a need for more seafarers. In Kenya, we currently have about 2400 registered seafarers. Kenya maritime Authority has continued to create interest in seafaring by creating awareness through various 'Go to Sea' campaigns.

Ladies and gentlemen, Kenya Maritime Authority has been in the lead in promoting maritime training and education in Kenya. Kenya's recent entry into the International Maritime Organization's (IMO) White list status was an affirmation that Kenya's maritime education now meets international standards, enabling its seafarers to compete for jobs on international ships.

With the 2010 amendments to the international Convention on Standards of training, Certification and Watch keeping for Seafarers (STCW), Kenya Maritime Authority sponsored Kenyan seafarers in Lamu and Mombasa to obtain their STCW certificates. The Authority has so far trained 120 seafarers from Lamu and

Mombasa who were issued with their STCW certificates. These certificates will enable our seafarers to become competitive in the global maritime industry, increase their employability and enable them to benefit from arising opportunities in the evolving maritime industry.

The Authority is also engaging various training institutions to train our experienced seafarers at subsidized costs. This would enable them obtain accreditation and not get locked out from job opportunities due to lack of certification.

Ensuring the employment of our seafarers and their decent treatment is also our concern. We will continue to create an enabling environment for the employment of our seafarers by registering crews and placement agencies that meet the requirements to provide acceptable working conditions and remuneration for our seamen and women. Presently, the only companies licensed by KMA to source for jobs for the Kenyan seafarers are Osmanship Limited and Kenya Seafarers Agency. We keep urging more agencies to register with us to expand employment opportunities for our seafarers.

In some cases, the Authority has sought to negotiate with ship owners and ship management companies to consider employing Kenyan seafarers. For instance, in 2010, the Authority requested Pacific international Lines for Kenyan seafarers' job placement and we were offered training berths onboard its vessels for the seafarers. We are also amid talks with offshore oil and gas exploration companies on the employment of our seafarers as their offshore supply fleet.

We are also actively involved in ensuring that the rights and welfare of Kenyan seafarers are safeguarded. The Authority is keen to monitor Kenyan seafarers' experiences during their duties and is always ready to respond promptly whenever an issue arises at sea.

Ladies and gentlemen, the Authority is also pushing for open registry laws in part of its efforts to grow the number of sea based vessels under its control. Open registry allows for the registration of ships built in other countries to fly the Kenyan flag and operate under the jurisdiction of the Kenyan government laws. This initiative is expected to translate to more job opportunities aboard ships for our seafarers. Given our strong maritime administration, we have the will and ability to develop an open registry system and believe that this will become a reality.

To our seafarers, this is your day. We appreciate you and salute you who serve a wider course than just your careers in sustaining the nation's economic lifeline.

Thank you and God bless you.

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