

Pre-DIPCON

18-19 April 2017
Paris

0.1 (E) – Welcome speeches

Welcome by the IALA President and Chairman of the IALA Council Mr Juan Francisco REBOLLO

Honourable Ministers, Excellencies, Secretary-Generals, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen,

Thank you very much Ambassador Ségura and thank you for chairing this important Conference.

*First of all, I wish to welcome you all to Paris, where IALA has been headquartered since it was formally established as an international association with a permanent secretariat 60 years ago, on 1 July 1957, following an international conference of national lighthouse authorities. Today, IALA has 83 National Members representing authorities responsible for the provision of aids to navigation around the world. It is very encouraging to see that so many have accepted the invitation of the Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Development of France, Mr **Jean-Marc Ayrault**, to participate in this first pre-diplomatic conference on IALA's change of status to an intergovernmental organization.*

I am also very pleased that the Secretary-General of the International Maritime Organization, Mr Kitack Lim, and the Secretary-General of the International Hydrographic Organization, Mr Robert Ward, have kindly agreed to address the conference. I am sure that their unique perspective on the importance of close international cooperation between the IMO, the IHO and IALA as equal partners will help focus our minds and add value to our deliberations.

To chair that session, I am grateful that Colonel Mariko with short notice has been able to replace the Secretary General of MOWCA, with whom we have a close relationship.

Also thank you very much to our sponsors. Gold sponsor Mobilis and Silver sponsor Sabik. Both companies are very well known in IALA and in the maritime world. You can read more about those companies in the folder that has been provided.

As regards the draft text of the new IALA Convention and the related documents providing arrangements for the smooth transition to intergovernmental status, these have been under development for three years and are the culmination of careful debate within the IALA Council and its advisory bodies. Detailed consideration has been given to aspects of a legal and financial nature and to matters concerning the future governance of IALA as an IGO.

The specific focus of this pre-diplomatic conference, then, is to have a thorough and open-minded exchange of views on the draft texts before us so that, by tomorrow midday, we should be in a good position to consider and endorse a road map towards a successful formal Diplomatic Conference.

Input will also be provided by IALA's Industrial Members' Committee. IALA today has 133 Industrial Members from around the world, whose expertise and global reach as equipment manufacturers and experts are at the heart of IALA and vital to its success as a key player in world maritime safety.



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I am confident that the conference will enhance our common understanding of what the envisaged IGO status aims to achieve, that is: to support IALA as the peak technical organization for improvement in the worldwide provision of marine aids to navigation and related services – through international cooperation and in accordance with harmonized, international standards.

Further in this respect, it is significant that the expressions of interest in IALA from non-member countries have been aided by the growing activities of the World-Wide Academy in awareness raising and the facilitation of training and capacity building in lesser developed countries. It is very good to see that IALA, through the Academy, is increasingly engaged with the expanding maritime development in emerging countries as they seek to build their national economies.

Distinguished delegates,

The change of status will mark a major milestone in the life of IALA as a fit-for-purpose international organization in an ever-more complex world. It will strengthen IALA's existing cooperation with its partner international organizations and enhance significantly the international endorsement of IALA's activities and the standards it seeks to achieve to improve and harmonize aids to navigation worldwide.

However, IGO status will not, in any way, change IALA's core as a technical, consultative and recommendatory organization, whose principal aim will remain the same: to foster the safe, economic and efficient movement of vessels and thereby reduce accidents and better protect the marine environment.

I know I can rely on the active participation of each one of you to ensure that this first pre-diplomatic conference is productive in bringing sound and widely accepted results that support the excellent preparatory work achieved in recent years.

With this, I thank you all, once again, for your participation in this important conference to IALA's future and wish you every success, as well as a pleasant stay in Paris.

Thank you.