



International Oil Pollution
Compensation Funds

Fonds internationaux
d'indemnisation pour les
dommages dus à la pollution
par les hydrocarbures

Fondos internacionales
de indemnización de daños
debidos a contaminación por
hidrocarburos

**Opening remarks by Mr José Maura, Director,
on the occasion of the celebration of the 40th Anniversary of the IOPC Funds**

Welcome back to all delegations. Welcome to all the guests who have joined us for this special session. I would like to start mentioning a few names: Our three former Directors, Dr Ganten, Mr Jacobsson and Mr Oosterveen - welcome to this special session. Welcome Secretary-General. I know you've been travelling and have just arrived from another country. Welcome to the Secretary Generals Emeriti, Mr O'Neill and Mr Mitropoulos. It is an important occasion for us because we are celebrating, as you know, our 40th anniversary, but this year is an important year because it is when IMO are also celebrating 70 years; ITOPF have just celebrated their 50th anniversary; the *Amoco Cadiz*, which is maybe not a celebration but it is a big incident, was 40 years ago this year, and of course, the IOPC Funds were established 40 years ago. It is a great pleasure to welcome you today to celebrate these 40 years since the entering into force of this Convention. It actually didn't happen today it happened on the 16th October 1978 so we are already 40 years old and this is when the first International Oil Pollution Compensation Fund was established.

Mr Secretary General, the IOPC Funds is one of the successes of the IMO, our mother organisation, and we are very pleased to have been a success and to be a daughter organisation of the IMO. We are a success for a number of reasons, one of them is because we have 115 Member States. I think we started with 14 Member States, I heard today, and that is now 115 Member States. We have had 150 incidents worldwide. We have paid £680 million in compensation, which is a substantial amount of money. We have something which I think is unique in the UN family: we have 99.9% of contributions paid every year and that is a very important achievement of this organisation - the support we obtain from contributors from the oil industry worldwide. I should mention here a number of countries which are very important: India, Japan, Republic of Korea, the Netherlands, Italy and Singapore. All these countries, six countries, all import each of them more than 100 million tons each year. They are the big contributors to the IOPC Funds and their contributions, their support, is essential to the organisation. We also have this success because we have good partnerships with the P&I Clubs, with insurers and with shipowners and that is essential for the compensation regime.

It is a system that works but it has challenges. Challenges because the environment is very important, and we are working on environmental issues. We can see that from the MEPC meeting last week with the discussions on climate change. So, anything to do with the environment is important, and we are part of that, because we are helping to protect the damage caused to the environment. For the IOPC Funds we need to ensure that we have a robust and up to date system to pay victims and to protect the environment.

From a personal basis I have been in the IOPC Funds for more than 22 years. This is a long time for me. It is the longest serving time in my experience and I have experienced some of the difficult cases that the

Fund has to deal with and I have been privileged to see how the organisation has successfully responded to those spills and also how it has grown and adapted over time. Also, I have had the great pleasure of working with two of the former Directors, Mr Jacobsson and Mr Oosterveen from whom I have learned a lot. I had the benefit of inheriting from all of them an organisation, and they have played a great role in creating that and in managing it. I am grateful to all of them for their contributions which have meant a lot and which helped me to actually manage the organisation now. I am delighted that we have this opportunity to thank them for all that they have done and to formally recognise the work they have done over the years. In doing so, we have invited all members of the Secretariat who have worked for the Fund over the years and we have in the first rows here lots of colleagues. It is a pleasure to see them and I will be inviting, later on, the Directors to say a few words but, starting with colleagues, I think we should actually recognise one of our colleagues who has worked for us for the last 34 years. His name is Modesto Zotti, he is our Office Manager and he has worked for the three Directors. I think he joined us in 1984, so you know him well. He is in all of the meetings and he is going to say a few words.