



पत्तन, पोत परिवहन
एवं जलमार्ग मंत्रालय
MINISTRY OF
PORTS, SHIPPING
AND WATERWAYS



SAGARMANTHAN

— THE GREAT OCEANS DIALOGUE —

CONFERENCE REPORT

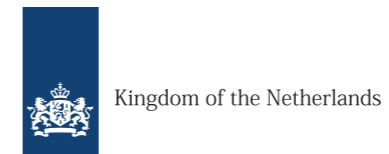
18-19 NOVEMBER, 2024
NEW DELHI





SAGARMANTHAN

— THE GREAT OCEANS DIALOGUE —





THE GREAT OCEANS DIALOGUE

The inaugural edition of **Sagarmanthan: The Great Oceans Dialogue** was organised by the Observer Research Foundation (ORF) in collaboration with the Ministry of Ports, Shipping, and Waterways, India. The Dialogue took place on November 18-19, 2024, in New Delhi, India.

Sagarmanthan witnessed participation from over 1,500 delegates representing 61 countries, from Americas, Africa, Asia and Europe. It served as a platform for critical conversations, including discussions and deliberations on the blue economy, maritime logistics, ports, shipping and waterways sectors, and the global maritime economy.

It was organised around four thematic pillars:

1. **New Frontiers:** Connectivity, Infrastructure, and Development in a Changing World
2. **Blue Growth:** Partnerships for Progress
3. **Green and Blue:** Sustainability, Technology and Innovation
4. **Coasts and Communities:** Maritime Governance and Social Impact.

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सत्यमेव जयते

प्रधान मंत्री
Prime Minister

MESSAGE

It is heartening to learn about the inaugural edition of *Sagarmanthan: The Great Oceans Dialogue*. The concept of *Sagarmanthan* is central to our cultural pride, as described in our ancient texts, exemplifies how collaboration and effort can yield the tools and direction we need to ensure prosperity.

Heartiest congratulations and greetings to everyone associated with the organisation of this Dialogue.

Efforts of organisations like the Observer Research Foundation (ORF) in fostering meaningful dialogues are commendable. Collaborations and discussions not only add value to the global discourse on maritime developments, but they also ensure that our path forward is rooted in inclusion and innovation.

Such platforms not only encourage an exchange of ideas, but also provide experts with an opportunity to present their insights, enabling the people to understand the broader vision for our nation's growth and its vision for the future.

India's maritime tradition goes back several millennia and is among the richest in the world. The thriving port cities of Lothal and Dholavira, the fleets of the Chola dynasty, the exploits of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj are great inspirations.

Oceans are a shared heritage for nations and societies, as well as the lifeline for international trade. Today, the security and prosperity of nations is intimately connected to oceans. Recognising the potential of oceans, several transformative steps have been taken to bolster India's maritime capabilities.

Over the last decade, guided by the vision of 'Ports for Prosperity', 'Ports for Progress' and 'Ports For Productivity', we have doubled the capacity of our ports. By enhancing port efficiency, reducing turnaround times and strengthening last-mile connectivity through expressways, railways, and riverine networks, we have transformed India's shoreline.

Our vision for a free, open, and secure maritime network – be it the Indian Ocean or the Indo-Pacific region – is finding resonance across the world. The "Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative" envisions marine resources as a key pillar for growth for nations.

May this Dialogue on Oceans further strengthen the rules-based world order and enhance peace, trust and friendship between nations.

As we strive to realize the vision of a Viksit Bharat by 2047, dialogues such as *Sagarmanthan* are invaluable to build consensus, partnerships and most importantly, a prosperous future.

With the collective efforts of all stakeholders, I am confident that these discussions will resonate far and wide, paving the way toward a brighter, more connected future.

Best wishes for making *Sagarmanthan: The Great Oceans Dialogue* a resounding success.

(Narendra Modi)

Camp Office, Nigeria
कार्तिक 26, शक संवत् 1946
17 November, 2024

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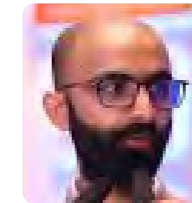


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SAGARMANTHAN

— THE GREAT OCEANS DIALOGUE —

SESSIONS

Inaugural Ministerial Session

Day 1: November 18, 2024

The inaugural session of Sagarmathan: The Great Oceans Dialogue highlighted the opportunities and challenges faced by countries in fostering sustainable blue economies and global maritime collaboration. The dialogue was anchored on the transformative agenda of maritime sustainability in the 21st century. **T K Ramachandran** highlighted India's maritime heritage and the significance of Sagarmathan in Indian mythology, symbolising the churning of oceans for wisdom and resources. Today, India's maritime agenda is committed to inclusive, democratic, and sustainable maritime growth, underpinned by the principles of 'Security and Growth for All in the Region' (SAGAR). **Shantanu Thakur** highlighted India's vision of

WELCOME REMARKS



T K Ramachandran
Secretary, Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways, India

HOST



Samir Saran
President, Observer Research Foundation, India

ADDRESSES



María Lorena Villaverde
National Representative for the Province of Rio Negro, Argentina



Amzath Ahmed
Minister of State for Fisheries and Ocean Resources, Maldives



Shantanu Thakur
Minister of State for Ports, Shipping and Waterways, India



Christos Stylianides
Minister of Maritime Affairs and Insular Policy, Greece



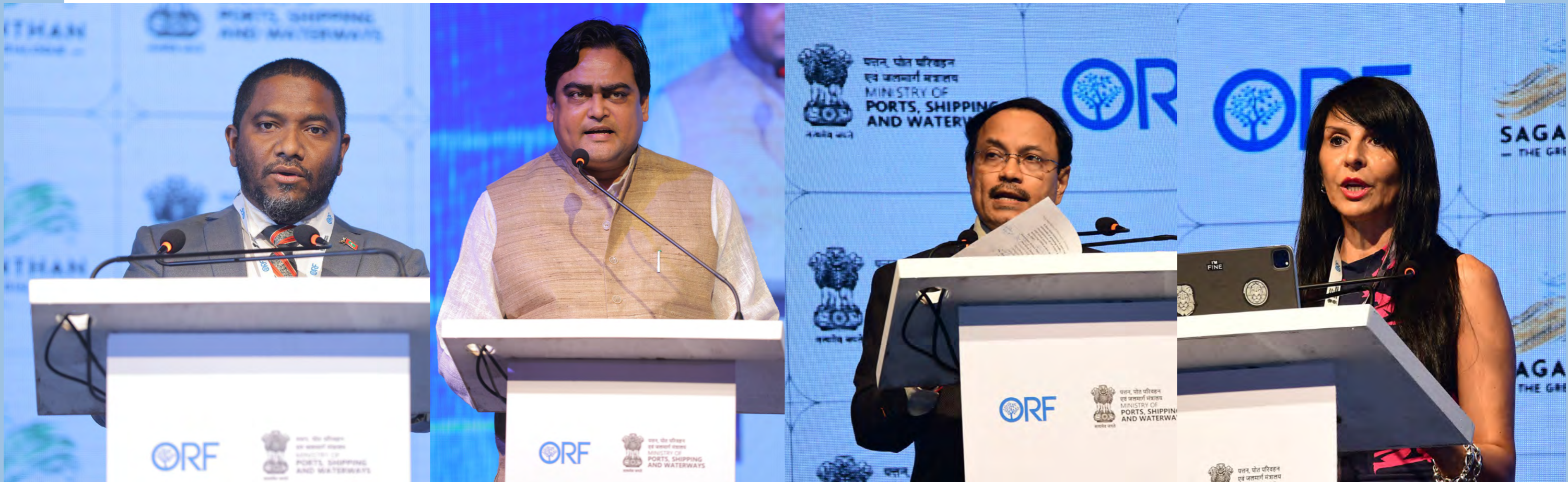
Sarbananda Sonowal
Minister for Ports, Shipping & Waterways, India



transforming into a global maritime hub by 2047, guided by the 'Maritime Amrit Kaal' Vision 2047 which encompasses efforts in green shipping, digital infrastructure, and inclusivity, while simultaneously incorporating initiatives like "Sagar Mein Samman" for empowering women in the maritime sector. Delivering the keynote address, **Sarbananda Sonowal** drew attention to India's legacy as a maritime nation and its aspirations for leadership in the global maritime sector are demonstrated by projects like Sagarmala and investments in green ports and hydrogen hubs. The session called for harmonising economic and ecological priorities, encapsulating India's vision for sustainable maritime development.

Besides India's expansive maritime vision, Argentina's achievements in blue economy initiatives, including projects in LNG plants, energy exports, and sustainable maritime practices in Patagonia were highlighted by **María Lorena Villaverde** as key lessons for the world to draw from. Argentina's intent to balance economic growth with environmental protection makes it a key player in maritime sustainability.

Similarly, outlining the Maldives' unique vulnerability as a small island state in the Indian Ocean, **Amzath Ahmed** called for global collaboration in sustainable fisheries, climate-resilient maritime infrastructure, and combating illegal fishing



practices. They also underscored the need for blue economy innovations along with environmental leadership, particularly in the context of small island developing nations.

Other facets of the discussion focused on the crucial role of shipping in global trade and sustainable development, including decarbonising maritime industries, upskilling seafarers, and ensuring proper maritime security as highlighted by **Christos Stylianides**. The need to expand and accelerate ongoing initiatives fostering collaboration for greener and more inclusive maritime policies was also emphasised.

The inaugural session set the stage for discussions over the next two days of the conference, addressing maritime sustainability, innovation, and global cooperation. It emphasised the shared responsibility of stakeholders in harnessing ocean resources while preserving ecosystems.

– Pratinashree Basu

[Watch the full session here](#)

Setting the Stage

Day 1: November 18, 2024

Engagement with the maritime sector requires robust economic ideas, approaches, and policies in the effort to shape our oceans' future. India's role in shaping this future is critical. However, India needs to recalibrate partnerships, strategies, and priorities to shape this maritime future.

Sanjeev Sanyal posited that, for long, India has viewed itself as a land-locked state. However, a historical view of India's external engagement with the world reveals the robust labyrinth of maritime networks India has shared. India must reset itself as a maritime nation and revive its robust maritime linkages. Sanyal further added that the Government of India (GOI) is working towards reviving India's maritime networks. Currently, the

HOST



Samir Saran
President, Observer Research Foundation, India

KEYNOTE ADDRESSES



Sanjeev Sanyal
Member, Economic Advisory Council to the Prime Minister, India



Signe Brudeset
Director General, Regional Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Norway



John Kayode Fayemi
President, Forum of Regions of Africa, Nigeria



Rizwan Soomar
CEO & Managing Director, Middle East, North Africa & India Subcontinent, DP World, United Arab Emirates



maritime sector is dominated by a few players, especially in the shipping sector. According to Sanyal, the three leading ship-manufacturing countries currently account for approximately 90 percent of global ship production. This poses significant geopolitical risks as well as leads to the incurring of economic costs. To mitigate this, the government aims to direct attention towards the shipping sector. In the coming decade, India is working towards emerging among the top shipbuilding countries, contributing to 10 percent of global shipbuilding, flagging, and ownership.

Norway's location positions itself as an important maritime nation. **Signe Brudeset** highlighted that India and Norway share robust synergy in working together in the maritime sector. Approximately 5,000 Indian citizens continue to work and contribute to





Norway-owned ships. India and Norway have also worked together on issues of common interest in the maritime sector. Brudeset further noted Norway's key priorities in the oceans, which include the promotion of a global order based on international law, maritime security, green shipping, and sustainable growth of the ocean industries. Given the onset of rapid transitions in the maritime sector, attention must be directed towards the green transition of fuel and automated systems in ships. Brudeset claimed that our key goals are fundamental to the maritime sector: all acts in seas must be carried out in consonance with the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, 1982 (UNCLOS); shipping needs to decarbonise to net zero; sustainable ocean management is key for our common future; the Indo-Pacific must be recognised as a vital zone of regional and global prosperity.

John Kayode Fayemi underlined that growth in the maritime sector must be people-centric. Formulating strategies and pathways for such growth must include the African dimension of challenges in the maritime sector, where Africa is a vital actor. The continent is endowed with critical marine and aquatic resources. Yet, it continues to face complex challenges at sea, including illegal fishing, toxic waste dumps, piracy, drug trafficking, etc. Fayemi emphasised that the Indian Ocean connects India and Africa and is, therefore, key to shaping their partnership in the maritime sector. Africa's proactive approach towards the oceans has propelled some critical pan-African strategies to protect the blue economy.

Along with Africa, global growth will be shaped by emerging economies. This necessitates the preparedness of infrastructure and connectivity among them through multimodal trade corridors. **Rizwan Soomar** highlighted that global trade and trade routes are concentrated in just a few corridors, which poses a significant risk in the event of a disruption to these vital pathways. Therefore, there is an urgent need to diversify. This would also serve the growing domestic consumption-led demand in the emerging economies. According to Soomar, three key areas need urgent attention: creating new multimodal, integrated supply chains to ensure the smooth flow of goods and trade; sustainability and resilience of the economy for the new connectivity corridors; and digitisation and innovation in supply chains to increase the efficiency of these corridors.

India has made significant progress in aligning its strategies and outlook with like-minded countries such as Norway, and African countries. However, key priority areas need more attention and require robust synergies to effectively harness the potential of the oceans as a medium of global prosperity.

- Sayantan Haldar

[Watch the full session here](#)

Panel Discussion:

Sea Lanes and Fast Lanes: A New Vision for Connectivity

Day 1: November 18, 2024

The session on “Sea Lanes and Fast Lanes: A New Vision for Connectivity” focused on the transformative potential of infrastructure corridors, particularly in South and West Asia, and their role in reshaping global trade. A key highlight was the critical role of maritime trade in global economic integration, particularly Europe’s extensive reliance on interconnected supply chains. To emphasise the vulnerability of global trade networks to disruptions, such as the COVID-19 pandemic and geopolitical instability in critical chokepoints like the Suez Canal, **Anna Maria Corazza Bildt** highlighted Europe’s position as the largest investor in the South Pacific, with 90 percent of its trade relying on maritime routes through this

MODERATOR



Anna Maria Corazza Bildt
Former Member of the European Parliament, Sweden

PANELLISTS



Abla Abdel-Latif
Executive Director and Director of Research, Egyptian Center for Economic Studies, Egypt



Bart de Jong
Special Advisor, International Relations, Ministry of Infrastructure & Water Management, Government of the Netherlands



Marco Dreosto
Senator and the Secretary of the Permanent Committee for Foreign Affairs and Defence, Senate of the Republic, Italy



Rizwan Soomar
CEO & Managing Director, Middle East, North Africa & India Subcontinent, DP World, United Arab Emirates



Rohit Rathish
Joint Secretary, Development Partnership Administration III, Ministry of External Affairs, India



region. Discussions highlighted geopolitical tensions, including piracy and shifting trade routes, particularly around Africa, as key challenges that need addressing through enhanced international cooperation.

Abla Abdel-Latif highlighted environmental sustainability as a prominent theme. Experts emphasised integrating environmental considerations into trade and logistics policies, advocating for cleaner fuels and sustainable shipping practices. Additionally, technological innovations, particularly artificial intelligence (AI) and automation, were identified as vital tools for improving efficiency, reducing costs, and enhancing competitiveness across maritime logistics. These developments are necessary to future-proof global trade routes and ensure resilience in the face of environmental and geopolitical challenges.


Marco Dreosto underlined the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC) as a pivotal project driving connectivity between Europe, the Indo-Pacific, and the Indian Ocean. He also emphasised the potential of the Suez Canal Economic Zone as a model for leveraging existing infrastructure to stimulate regional and global trade. The IMEC, which strengthens ties between Europe, India, and the Middle East, will foster multi-regional economic integration. **Rizwan Soomar** exemplified specific corridors, like the India-United Arab Emirates Logistics Corridor, as examples of how

investments in ports, railways, and digitalisation can lower logistics costs and improve trade efficiency. Initiatives such as the Virtual Trade Corridor and the Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) were noted for streamlining customs processes and boosting bilateral trade.

India's evolving maritime diplomacy was underscored as essential to reclaiming its historical role in global trade. **Rohit Rathish** highlighted that with initiatives like Sagarmala, which modernises ports and enhances inland connectivity, India is positioning itself as a central player in international trade networks. The integration of South Asia through corridors such as the India-Myanmar-Thailand Trilateral Highway and Chabahar Port reflects India's "Neighbourhood First" policy and its commitment to enhancing connectivity within and beyond the region. These projects align with broader global efforts like the IMEC, offering significant potential for economic integration despite geopolitical risks.

The session concluded with a focus on the importance of standardising infrastructure and regulatory frameworks to ensure smooth global trade operations. With its strategic port at Rotterdam, **Bart de Jong** cited the Netherlands as an exemplary model for integrated port systems and collaboration. The role of international organisations, particularly the International Maritime Organization, in setting global standards was also highlighted as critical for facilitating efficient global trade. The discussion emphasised the need for sustained collaboration, particularly between India and the European Union (EU), to maximise the economic potential of these corridors. Overall, the session presented a compelling case for the transformative potential of infrastructure corridors in reshaping global trade and underscored the importance of continued dialogue and investment to address emerging challenges in this context.

- Debosmita Sarkar

[Watch the full session here](#) 

Panel Discussion:

Black Swans at Sea: Are We Prepared for the Future?

Day 1: November 18, 2024

The global 'oceanscape' is enormous and has several emergent challenges. Some of these challenges are the 'known-knowns' and 'known-unknowns', which the global maritime sector is actively trying to tackle. However, hiding within these are the 'unknown-unknowns' that are currently beyond the forecasts and preemptions of any government or private actor. These 'unknown-unknowns' can break abruptly and without giving enough time to prepare for its mitigation, causing a 'Black Swan Event'. This session delved into pre-empting Black Swan events that the global maritime sector should prepare against.

Matthias Catón began the session by expressing the need to explore the

MODERATOR



Matthias Catón

Managing Director, German Maritime Centre, Germany

PANELLISTS



Aaja Chemnitz

Chair, Standing Committee of Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region; Member, Danish Parliament, Denmark



Henk Smith

Director and Co-founder, Marine Masters, Netherlands



Hsiang-Wen Huang

Professor, National Taiwan Ocean University



Rajesh Kumar Sinha

Additional Secretary, Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways, India



Stella Mantzari

Chief Executive Officer, A.S. Marine Ltd., Greece



scope of the world's collective future amidst tremendous technological changes in the maritime sector, the growing hostilities, shifting alliances, complicated geopolitical churn, rising sea levels, and increasing protectionism at sea. In this context, **Hsiang-Wen Huang** highlighted the various efforts undertaken by Taiwanese public and private enterprises to improve the technology for early warning systems for typhoons by developing robust ocean monitoring systems. Taiwan also faces immense threats of cyberattacks on its maritime infrastructure and ensuring safe and free access to water around Taiwan is a major undertaking for the country.

For India, too, some vulnerabilities exist. **Rajesh Kumar Sinha** mentioned how India's 90 percent of trade happens on non-Indian flagged and non-Indian owned ships. The only way to reduce this overseas dependency is to build ships in India, which will not only have a multiplier effect on the Indian economy but also expand the multimodal routes that India is beginning to establish with its international partners.

Similarly, **Aaja Chemnitz** explained that for the Arctic, climate change has emerged as a critical vulnerability as it affects the region four times more than other regions. As new maritime routes emerge in the melted Arctic Ocean, ensuring that Arctic countries are part of the new routes is critical

while simultaneously ensuring climate-positive maritime activities. As such routes open and global geopolitics becomes unpredictable, cyber-resilience of Arctic ports and increased surveillance to protect critical infrastructure too will become more crucial than ever.

Stella Mantzari identified two key challenges for Greece's formidable shipping industry. These are the transition from traditional to new eco-friendly shipping fuels and the sharp rise in the transportation and logistics costs that will follow due to this enforced transition. **Henk Smith** mentioned that civil unrest, especially in the countries along the Arabian Sea, has emerged as a major concern for strategic shipping lanes and maritime trade routes. He presented a grim potential scenario of cyber-hijacked oil tankers entering a major port to carry out terror attacks.

Overall, the session identified extreme weather events, increased geopolitical tensions, unsafe and archaic port operations, and challenges emerging from new trade routes as potential sources of Black Swan events.

- Chaitanya Giri

[Watch the full session here](#)

Technical Session over Dinner:

'Resilient Communities'

Day 1: November 18, 2024

The session emphasised the importance of local engagement, capacity building, and multistakeholder partnerships to safeguard ocean ecosystems and coastal livelihoods. It highlighted the crucial roles of women, youth, indigenous knowledge, and community-driven solutions through examples from various countries that underscore their contribution to sustainable ocean management.

A key challenge highlighted was the lack of accessible, real-time data for coastal communities, particularly fishermen, who often struggle to interpret complex weather forecasts and oceanographic data critical for safe fishing. **Senthilkumaran Krishnan** used India as a case study,

MODERATOR



Julie Leuzinger
Co-Founder & Managing Director,
Ghost Partners, New Zealand

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Senior Blue Economy Adviser,
African Union Commission



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Simone Smith-Godfrey
Founder, Blue Heritage Chamber of
Commerce, South Africa



Weliswa Matekenya
Senior Lecturer, Nelson Mandela
University, South Africa



stating that many fishermen lack the technical tools or understanding to use weather information effectively. To address this, there is a push to simplify data into more accessible formats, such as localised GPS coordinates or visualised weather maps, and to train communities in modern technologies like mobile tools and local radio. Additionally, **Weliswa Matekenya** highlighted the importance of coastal ecosystems like mangroves and wetlands, which protect communities from environmental hazards like storm surges. The discussants agreed that educating communities about these ecosystems is crucial for promoting sustainable practices and long-term resilience.


Discussions recognised women and youth as central to advancing the blue economy. For instance, as **Malshini Senaratne** pointed out, in Seychelles, women play a leading role in a successful campaign to ban plastic imports and have been key contributors to mapping seagrass meadows as part of a blue carbon initiative to protect coastal ecosystems. Adding to this, **Linda Etta** gave the example of Tanzania, where women drive economic empowerment through seaweed farming, contributing to industries like pharmaceuticals and cosmetics. She also highlighted the importance of recognising Youth groups for their emerging leadership in marine conservation and climate change adaptation, with their involvement in sustainable practices being vital for the future of ocean management.

Led by **Simone Smith-Godfrey**, the integration of indigenous knowledge into marine management strategies was another critical theme. The African Union (AU) has been working to incorporate traditional knowledge into fisheries management. Local communities in these regions deeply understand marine ecosystems, which can be harnessed to create sustainable and contextually relevant solutions, according to Etta. Her example of Ghana explained how fishermen use simple mobile technology to receive alerts on optimal fishing conditions, blending modern technology with traditional practices. Reintroducing indigenous knowledge into educational curricula and research agendas is increasingly recognised as a valuable resource for sustainable ocean governance.

Continuous collaboration among various stakeholders—governments, research institutions, NGOs, indigenous groups, and local communities—was also stressed in addressing infrastructure gaps and funding limitations by Matekenya. Etta highlighted the AU's Centres of Excellence in fisheries and aquaculture aim to promote locally driven solutions to marine resource management challenges. The audience discussed the importance of multistakeholder partnerships for improving maritime security and addressing illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing issues. Local community involvement in monitoring and enforcement efforts can reduce such instances, enhancing conservation.

Coastal communities are often the first to experience the impacts of climate change, extreme weather, and environmental stress. Krishnan highlighted the role of local fishermen in disaster response, such as their assistance during the 2017 floods in Kerala, India, where they used their boats for rescue operations. Smith-Godfrey emphasised food security as a concern, particularly in countries where seafood exports limit local access to affordable fish. Developing local value chains and promoting marine biotechnology can help ensure that local communities benefit more directly from ocean resources.

- Tanya Aggarwal

[Watch the full session here](#) 

In Conversation

Day 2: November 19, 2024



Sarbananda Sonowal
Minister for Ports, Shipping and Waterways, India



Samir Saran
President, Observer Research Foundation, India

The maritime sector is at the heart of India's economic and geopolitical aspirations, and this conversation at Sagarmanthan provided a detailed perspective on its transformative journey. This session explored India's strategic priorities for advancing maritime trade, fostering technological innovation, and championing sustainability to position itself as a global maritime leader.

Samir Saran set the stage for this in-conversation by emphasising the importance of scale and vision in building a robust maritime economy. He framed the discussion by exploring how the sector could address India's larger economic goals, questioning

how modernisation efforts and partnerships could unlock its full potential.

Sarbananda Sonowal highlighted that India's ports, shipping, and waterways have witnessed unprecedented growth, driven by modernisation and mechanisation efforts that have revitalised the sector over the past decade. The government has prioritised scaling the maritime trade ecosystem to support the nation's ambition of becoming a US\$10-trillion economy by 2035. This transformation hinges on a multi-faceted approach: creating



robust infrastructure, streamlining operational efficiency, and aligning policies to attract domestic and international investments.

Saran also brought attention to the need for democratising maritime trade by addressing labour rights, sustainability, and strategic partnerships, drawing out a comprehensive roadmap for India's maritime ambitions. The Minister detailed how India is leveraging its established shipyards, such as Cochin Shipyard, which has demonstrated world-class capabilities by manufacturing advanced warships like the indigenous aircraft carrier INS Vikrant.

He also underlined that a key focus was India's aspiration to become a global hub for shipbuilding. With established shipyards demonstrating world-class capabilities, such as manufacturing advanced warships, the sector is poised to expand its competitive edge through partnerships and the development of a Maritime Development Fund. This initiative aims to incentivise shipbuilders, foster technology transfer, and establish specialised clusters for shipbuilding and repairs. The emphasis on partnerships underscores the strategy of leveraging global best practices while building indigenous capabilities.

Responding to Saran's questions on balancing economic growth with ecological responsibility, Minister Sonowal outlined the government's commitment to eco-friendly practices. He also emphasised sustainability as a central theme. From promoting hydrogen and ammonia-based fuels to embracing green shipping and port practices, the vision is clear: economic growth must harmonise with ecological preservation. India's commitment to eco-friendly maritime operations aligns with its broader climate action goals, ensuring seamless and sustainable cargo and vessel movement across its waterways and oceans.

Samir Saran's inquiry into connecting India's hinterlands to global trade routes led to an engaging discussion on inland waterways. The Minister elaborated upon India's extensive 20,000-kilometre river network and how it represents a vital resource for boosting trade and connectivity. The implementation of legislative reforms, like the Inland Vessel Act, has streamlined cargo movement and opened new avenues for riverine tourism. Flagship projects such as the world's longest river cruise, spanning 3,200 kilometres, have showcased the untapped potential of these waterways while enhancing regional cooperation.

Saran went on to raise questions regarding democratising maritime trade by addressing labour rights, wages, and workforce protection. The Minister acknowledged these priorities, emphasising the steps India is taking to create a skilled workforce capable of operating sophisticated vessels and meeting global standards. The discussion concluded with a clear vision for India's maritime future: connecting its vast hinterland to global trade routes, fostering innovation and sustainability, and creating a skilled workforce capable of leading the sector.

Saran concluded the session by summarising the key takeaways and leaving the audience with a forward-looking perspective: India's maritime vision is rooted in connecting its vast hinterland to global trade routes, fostering innovation and sustainability, and creating a skilled workforce that will lead the sector.

-Sharon Sarah Thawaney

[Watch the full session here](#)

Speed Talk:

The Climate Crisis: Using Images to Bridge the Gap Between Science, Industry, and Policy

Day 2: November 19, 2024



Christian Clauwers

Ocean & Polar Explorer,
Environmental Reporter,
Documentary Photographer,
Belgium

The session, led by the acclaimed documentary photographer and climate advocate **Christian Clauwers**, delved into the pressing intersection of climate change, ocean conservation, and biodiversity loss. With a compelling visual narrative, Clauwers illuminated the state of our planet, expanding on the profound impact of climate change on ecosystems and communities worldwide. His presentation underscored the ocean's critical role as Earth's primary life-support system and emphasised the interconnectedness of biodiversity, indigenous knowledge, and climate resilience.

Through vivid imagery and powerful on-the-ground accounts, Clauwers

bridged the gap between science, policy, and public awareness. He presented both the stark consequences of inaction and the promising solutions that can emerge through collective global efforts. His insights provided a wake-up call to the immediate and long-term challenges posed by rising global temperatures, melting ice caps, and ecosystem degradation.

Clauwers highlighted the vital role of the ocean, which covers 71 percent of Earth's surface and serves as the planet's oxygen generator and carbon sink. However, its ability to absorb carbon is rapidly diminishing due to the combined effects of warming waters, pollution, and biodiversity loss. This concerning trend has cascading

effects on global weather patterns and ecosystems, underscoring the urgency for sustainable ocean stewardship.

A significant portion of the presentation focused on the profound impact of climate change on polar regions. The Arctic is warming four to six times faster than the global average, causing permafrost to thaw. The retreat of glaciers and rising sea levels, Clauwers highlighted, poses an existential threat to multiple species, such as polar bears, narwhals, and emperor penguins.

The presentation also highlighted the critical role of indigenous knowledge in addressing the climate crisis. Clauwers pointed to the Sámi community in the Arctic, whose deep-rooted connection with nature emphasises balance and sustainable resource use. Integrating such holistic perspectives into modern climate adaptation strategies was proposed as a transformative approach to building resilience in the face of escalating challenges.

Biodiversity conservation emerged as another central theme, with the Global Seed Vault in Svalbard, Norway, serving as a powerful example. This facility is a global repository for preserving agricultural biodiversity and safeguarding vital crop seeds from threats such as conflict and climate change. However,



challenges like water infiltration caused by thawing permafrost underscore the urgency of addressing the accelerating impacts of global warming.

Plastic pollution and microplastics were another critical focus. Clauwers revealed startling evidence of plastic waste even in remote polar regions and deep-sea ecosystems, highlighting its pervasive threat to marine and terrestrial life. These pollutants, which infiltrate food chains, disrupt ecosystems and jeopardise biodiversity on an unprecedented scale.

The plight of Pacific Island nations like Tuvalu and the Marshall Islands underscored the human toll of climate change. These low-lying countries face existential threats from rising seas, forcing communities to adopt temporary measures such as seawalls and mangrove plantations. Clauwers commended Palau's innovative marine conservation strategies and sustainable tourism model, exemplified by initiatives like the Palau Pledge, as a potential blueprint for other vulnerable nations.

Lastly, the presentation shed light on the importance of preserving cultural and historical heritage amid mounting climate risks. The Arctic World Archive, a facility designed to safeguard human knowledge and cultural treasures, symbolises the urgent need to act proactively against climate change's far-reaching consequences.

The session concluded with an impassioned call to action. Clauwers emphasised that the fight against climate change is not just about preserving what we have but about redefining humanity's relationship with nature. By fostering awareness, leveraging indigenous knowledge, and driving innovative solutions, humanity can secure a sustainable future that protects the planet for generations to come.

- Gopalika Arora

[Watch the full session here](#)

Panel Discussion:

The Euro-Afro-Asian Century: Connecting the Heartlands of Future Growth

Day 2: November 19, 2024

India and Africa are projected to reach significant milestones, with economies expected to hit US\$5 trillion in the coming decades. However, achieving sustained growth and success in these regions depends heavily on key factors, notably finance. In light of this, the panel was convened to discuss the importance of innovative solutions, infrastructure development, and strategic partnerships for fostering long-term economic growth.

Anusha Kesarkar Gavankar pointed out the central role of coastal and port cities in maritime trade and economic growth. These cities, especially in the Global South, can emerge as key hubs for global connectivity, driving new trade corridors and opening

MODERATOR



Ayoade Alakija

Chair, Board of Directors, FIND;
Co-Chair, G7 Impact Investment
Initiative in Global Health

PANELLISTS



Anusha Kesarkar Gavankar

Senior Fellow, Observer Research
Foundation, India



Geoffrey E Kaituko

Principal Secretary, State
Department for Shipping & Maritime
Affairs, Ministry of Mining, Blue
Economy & Maritime Affairs, Kenya



Lord Karan Bilimoria

House of Lords, United Kingdom



Ruben Eiras

Secretary General, Fórum Oceano,
Portugal



Unmesh Wagh

Chairman, Jawaharlal Nehru Port
Authority, India



up growth opportunities. Kesarkar-Gavankar highlighted the importance of a people-centred approach in developing these cities to ensure sustainable growth, job creation, and social equity. She also emphasised that port cities should be designed with a focus on long-term social impact, with social impact assessments conducted early in the planning stages to ensure that local populations benefit directly from development initiatives.

Ruben Eiras underscored the importance of adopting new technologies to drive energy efficiency in the maritime sector. He pointed out that Africa, with its vast natural resources, could greatly benefit from cleaner shipping routes, stimulating local economies and creating job opportunities. He proposed the establishment of a green shipping corridor connecting Europe, Asia, and Africa can leverage green hydrogen as a clean energy source. Such a corridor could transform trade dynamics while promoting sustainability.

Geoffrey E Kaituko emphasised Africa's strategic location, surrounded by water and as a gateway to numerous maritime routes. Kaituko called for increased investment in infrastructure, mainly through public-private partnerships to enable Africa to participate more actively in global trade. Africa could learn from India's success with inland waterway projects, particularly the use of multimodal transport corridors to improve its trade infrastructure.

Lord Karan Bilimoria echoed that Africa's role in global trade is vital. Rising security concerns in the West Indian Ocean could disrupt global trade routes. Therefore, there is a need for international cooperation to ensure the safety of maritime trade. Additionally, India's leadership in digital security and trade facilitation can serve as a model for the world.

Unmesh Wagh emphasised that India is committed to partnering with Africa, particularly in advancing infrastructure development. He pointed out the success of India's projects like Sagarmala, Bharatmala, and PM Gati Shakti, which have improved connectivity within India and can potentially be replicated across Africa. The session concluded with a consensus among all panellists on the importance of improving connectivity between India and Africa. Both regions could unlock immense economic benefits by enhancing trade relations and infrastructure, potentially quadrupling trade and fostering mutual growth. Therefore, the collaboration between India and Africa, built on shared historical and socioeconomic foundations, will be crucial in shaping the future of global trade.

- Samir Bhattacharya

[Watch the full session here](#)

Panel Discussion:

Energy and Shipping: Charting a Course to Sustainable Trade

Day 2: November 19, 2024

The shipping industry is a significant contributor to global emissions, accounting for approximately 3 percent of the total—comparable to the emissions of some of the world's largest countries. As the maritime sector faces increasing pressure to meet sustainability goals by 2030, this panel explored the challenges involved, underscoring key themes, concerns and strategies. **Sunjoy Joshi**, opened with a central question: Can the International Maritime Organization (IMO) meet its maritime ambitions in these challenging times, and at what cost?

On the subject of energy and new fuels, **Luc Arnouts** had several invaluable insights. For instance,

MODERATOR



Sunjoy Joshi
Chairman, Observer Research
Foundation, India

PANELLISTS



Ahmed Mohamed Hussein Selim
Senior Economic Research Specialist,
Suez Canal Authority, Egypt



Arun Sharma
Advisor to the Chairman, Group
Head for Sustainability and Climate
Change, Adani Group, India



Dawoon Jung
Lecturer, Australian National Centre
for Ocean Resources and Security,
University of Wollongong, Australia



Johannah Christensen
Chief Executive Officer, Global
Maritime Forum, Denmark



Luc Arnouts
Vice President, Port of Antwerp-
Bruges, Belgium



the Port of Antwerp in Belgium has declared ambitious goals to become a completely circular economy system by 2050 and a hub for green hydrogen, with plans to experiment with local production of green hydrogen and green methanol. The port is already working on becoming a multi-fuel port by focusing on the supply side of green molecules and green hydrogen. He added that the maritime sector needs to adapt its infrastructure to accommodate new green molecules, including pipelines and storage facilities. **Ahmed Mohamed Hussein Selim** then added that the IMO has implemented indicators such as the Energy Efficiency Design Index and the Carbon Intensity Index to reduce emissions by encouraging the adoption of new technologies and reducing fossil fuel dependency.

Dawoon Jung opined that in achieving these goals, creating a trusted foundation for emissions calculation and measurement is crucial. Different countries should develop their own frameworks based on actual measurements, not country averages. Compliance with regulations is key to decarbonisation, and states should play a key role in complying with existing regulations, using the IMO as a forum for discussion and knowledge exchange. **Arun Sharma** added his thoughts on the green transition in the maritime sector and outlined how India has a significant role to play in the transition, with its low

solar tariffs making green ammonia production cost-effective, and its skilled workforce in handling ammonia.

Johannah Christensen remarked that the maritime sector needs to achieve its goals as the window of opportunity is closing rapidly. The shipping industry needs to pick up the pace with this transition to alternative fuels to reduce emissions to meet the 2030 targets with concerted efforts. This needs availability, affordability, and acceptability.

The session concluded with a consensus on several key observations. Securing financing for new projects and transferring technology from developed to developing countries is crucial for adopting alternative fuels and reducing greenhouse gas emissions. An industrial deal is necessary to provide financial support for producing and utilising green molecules. While mechanisms exist, governments must be urged to continue their use and provide ongoing financial support. Cooperation across countries is essential for achieving sustainability goals by 2030.

- Krishna Vohra

[Watch the full session here](#)

Technical Lunch Session:

Riding the Currents: Creating a Circular Blue Economy

Day 2: November 19, 2024

Moderated by **Rolf Rødven** the discussion addressed challenges and solutions for balancing economic growth with ocean conservation. Rødven opened with an emphasis on the urgency of addressing unsustainable practices in light of climate change, pollution, and over-extraction, emphasising the rapid warming of the Arctic and the global implications of ocean acidification. Despite these challenges, panellists highlighted the oceans' resilience capacity and vital role in fostering economic and environmental stability.

The discussion stressed aligning national policies with global goals, such as SDG 14, and promoting local engagement through initiatives like small-

MODERATOR



Rolf Rødven

Executive Secretary, Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Program, Arctic Council, Norway

PANELLISTS



Nadeem Nazurally

Associate Professor, University of Mauritius, Mauritius



Nancy Karigithu

Special Envoy and Advisor, Blue Economy, Executive Office of the President, Kenya



Nwabisa Matoti

Research Director, South African International Maritime Institute, South Africa



Oda Korneliussen

Program Manager, Avfall Norge, Norway



Peter Aukamp

Senior Advisor, goodcarbon, Germany



scale fisheries and community awareness. **Nwabisa Matoti** detailed the regulatory frameworks underpinning South Africa's Blue Economy initiatives, such as the Integrated Coastal Management Act, the National Environmental Management Act (NEMA) and the Marine Living Resources Act (MLRA). Professor **Nadeem Nazurally** mentioned that innovative approaches are also needed, such as integrating artificial intelligence into marine ecosystem monitoring and repurposing seaweed for biofuel and compost. Regional collaborations also play an important role in mitigating shared challenges like beach erosion and rising sea levels.

Adding to this, **Peter Aukamp** underscored the critical role of finance in advancing a circular blue economy. Creating market incentives and assigning property rights to attract private sector investment in sustainable projects is imperative.

Oda Korneliusen emphasised that waste management plays an important role in combating marine plastic pollution. She called for policies mandating recycling targets, incentivising the use of recycled materials, and enforcing strict anti-dumping regulations to ensure comprehensive waste processing and collection. These waste management solutions need to be financially

sustainable where companies and individuals contribute through fair fees, supported by international cooperation.

Nancy Karigithu highlighted circular practices like converting seaweed into fertiliser and mangrove reforestation to enhance biodiversity and coastal resilience are also critical. Community-driven innovations like Kenya's Flipflop project, which repurposes ocean waste into sustainable tourism assets, can be replicated by other countries. Additionally, engaging port communities by fostering synergies between local populations and port operations will go a long way. Strategies such as renewable energy investments, port equipment sharing and leveraging IoT technologies to improve efficiency were also identified as critical for enhancing port ecosystem sustainability.

Overall, the panel emphasised that the circular blue economy is not just a vision but a necessity, requiring a balanced approach to innovation, regulatory frameworks, and community engagement. Solutions like sustainable aquaculture, waste management reforms, and technological advancements were discussed alongside the integration of traditional practices and cultural initiatives. Aligning global frameworks like COP with local actions was highlighted as crucial for addressing climate change and pollution. The session concluded with a resounding message: achieving ecological, economic, and cultural sustainability for our oceans demands collective action and a commitment to circularity.

- Manini

[Watch the full session here](#)

Panel Discussion:

A Decade of Development: Ship-building Hub for the 21st Century

Day 2: November 19, 2024

This session, “A Decade of Development: Ship-building Hub for the 21st Century” brought together global leaders and industry experts to discuss strategies for building a resilient and diversified shipbuilding ecosystem. It highlighted the critical role of shipbuilding in enhancing global maritime security and economic growth. The discussions focused on addressing the challenges of over-concentration in global shipbuilding and emphasised decentralisation as a pathway to mitigate vulnerabilities and ensure balanced economic development.

The event opened with remarks by **R Lakshmanan**, who outlined India's vision to establish itself as

SCENE-SETTING REMARKS



R. Lakshmanan

Joint Secretary, Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways, India

MODERATOR



Erin Watson

Managing Director, Baker & York, Australia

PANELLISTS



Arjun Chowgule

Executive Director, Chowgule and Company, India



Harrie de Leijer

Partner, Nestra, Netherlands



José Digerónimo

President, Maritime Chamber of Panama, Panama



Line Ollestad

Advisor, Norwegian Shipowners' Association, Norway



Sherine El Naggar

Chief Executive Officer, Naggar Maritime Ltd., Egypt



a leading global shipbuilding hub. India's aspiration to rank among the top five shipbuilding nations within a decade was presented as an ambitious yet achievable goal supported by significant investments in shipbuilding, repair, and recycling. He emphasised the strategic importance of a sustainable maritime economy, linking it to India's broader geopolitical and economic objectives. His remarks set the stage for a rich and insightful panel discussion.

The panel brought together diverse perspectives, featuring industry leaders and experts from countries with strong maritime legacies. **Arjun Chowgule** highlighted the importance of public-private partnerships to drive innovation and build capacity. **Harrie de Leijer** shared insights on integrating sustainability into shipbuilding practices, stressing that green technology and regulatory alignment are vital for long-term growth. **José Digerónimo** highlighted the strategic role of the Panama Canal in decentralising global maritime logistics and fostering connectivity.

Line Ollestad provided a Nordic perspective, emphasising technological innovation and renewable energy as transformative forces in the maritime industry. Adding to the global context, **Sherine El Naggar** highlighted Africa's emerging role in the shipbuilding sector, supported by expanding trade networks and regional cooperation. **Erin Watson** moderated the discussion, ensuring the dialogue remained cohesive and forward-looking.



Discussions also revolved around the need for innovation, infrastructure development, and skill-building to enhance competitiveness in the global shipbuilding industry. Panellists agreed that decentralisation is critical to reducing reliance on a few dominant nations and building a more resilient global supply chain. They also stressed the importance of leveraging emerging technologies and fostering international collaboration to share best practices and overcome structural challenges.

India's strategic investments in shipbuilding were highlighted as a model for other nations seeking to establish robust maritime industries. The

dialogue concluded with a strong call to balance economic competitiveness with sustainability, positioning the shipbuilding industry as a cornerstone of global trade and security. By promoting decentralisation, innovation, and international partnerships, the session underscored the collective responsibility of maritime stakeholders to build an inclusive and resilient future for the global shipbuilding sector. This session reaffirmed the importance of collaborative action in advancing maritime development and strengthening economic security.

- Arya Roy Bardhan

[Watch the full session here](#)

Panel Discussion:

Rethinking Labour at Sea: Overcoming Enduring Inequalities

Day 2: November 19, 2024

The maritime sector is the backbone of global trade, with millions of seafarers operating the vessels that enable the movement of goods worldwide. However, the global maritime sector faces challenges arising from geopolitical conflicts, technological advancements such as autonomous ships, and stringent regulatory pressures. Seafarers are severely impacted by these overarching developments and are often overlooked.

Shyam Jagannathan opened the session by addressing the challenges faced by the maritime sector. India, as the third-largest seafaring nation, contributing 12 percent to the global seafaring workforce, has set a target to increase this share to 20 percent by

SCENE-SETTING REMARKS



Shyam Jagannathan

Director General of Shipping,
Directorate General of Shipping,
India

MODERATOR



Sophie Deyon

Team Lead Policy & Government
Engagement, Global Maritime
Forum, Denmark

PANELLISTS



Angelos F Vlachos

Chief Executive Officer, Kavala Port
Authority S.A., Greece



Anil Devli

Chief Executive Officer, Indian
National Shipowners' Association,
India



Helene Tofte

Executive Director, Norwegian
Shipowners' Association, Norway



Luisito delos Santos

Director, Planning and Policy,
Maritime Industry Authority,
Philippines



Shyam Jagannathan

Director General of Shipping,
Directorate General of Shipping,
India



2030. Compliance with international conventions, including the Maritime Labour Convention 2006, remains instrumental. However, enforcement challenges persist, particularly in addressing the criminalisation and abandonment of seafarers. Women's participation in the sector is notably low, constituting less than 1 percent in India, necessitating targeted initiatives to ensure equality and enhance the quality of life for all seafarers.

Sophie Deyon elaborated on global challenges such as declining working conditions and reduced attractiveness of the industry due to cost-cutting measures. **Luisito delos Santos** called for treating seafarers as individuals entitled to protections under international human rights law. The fragmented nature of ship registration continues to hinder accountability and enforcement of global standards.

Helene Tofte highlighted Norway's efforts to address inequalities, including initiatives targeting 40 percent female representation in panels and seminars and the establishment of industry-wide equality standards.

Angelos Vlachos observed coastal populations in the Global South remain vulnerable due to insufficiently enforceable international agreements, such as the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, 1982 (UNCLOS). There is a need for cultural reforms, investments in ship design, and amendments to the



Maritime Labour Convention to improve seafarers' well-being and career opportunities.

Addressing structural issues in ship design is critical for accommodating hygiene and privacy requirements, especially for women. Concerns about the criminalisation of seafarers, particularly punitive measures targeting shipmasters during incidents were brought to the forefront by **Anil Devli**. He emphasised the need for a coordinated global approach to standardise regulations and ensure equitable treatment and working conditions for seafarers, irrespective of nationality.

Deyon cumulatively identified the barriers to improving maritime labour standards as cultural biases, financial constraints, and the fragmented legislative environment. The challenges to seafarers are compounded by structural barriers, including the underrepresentation of women and marginalised communities, as well as systemic issues of overexploitation and abuse. Achieving gender parity and enhancing workforce conditions requires stronger industry-government collaboration, sustained advocacy, and targeted policy interventions.

Addressing these requires rethinking global norms to create just, enforceable, and sustainable regulations, alongside fostering inclusivity and shared accountability in maritime governance. Achieving this requires collective advocacy, cooperation between industry and governments, and the promotion of equitable treatment for all seafarers, irrespective of their origins.

- Dharmil Doshi

[Watch the full session here](#)

Panel Discussion:

Gateways and Debt-traps: Financing the Future of Development

Day 2: November 19, 2024

The maritime industry forms the bedrock of contemporary international economic architecture. In fact, developing ports and the associated infrastructure is vital to accommodate the needs of the evolving shipping market, ship sizes, and expanding cargo profiles. A great demand for maritime infrastructure is intrinsically linked with the larger narrative of globalisation resulting in challenges of supply chains. In this context, this session attempted to contextualise the issue of financing development and the escalating debt distress faced by several of the developing economies.

The speakers, representing the different geographical spaces from Sweden in Europe to Maldives in

MODERATOR



Harsh V Pant

Vice President, Observer Research Foundation, India

PANELLISTS



Carl Bildt

Former Prime Minister of Sweden and Co-Chair, European Council on Foreign Relations, Sweden



Mehdi Jomaa

Former Prime Minister, Tunisia



Mohamed Nasheed

Former President, Maldives



T K Ramachandran

Secretary, Ministry of Ports, shipping and waterways, India



the Indian Ocean, painted the canvas of the maritime industry from their country's perspectives. **Carl Bildt** highlighted how the dynamics of maritime infrastructure have evolved dramatically over the past few decades. For instance, in the early years, the Scandinavian countries dominated the maritime scene in terms of building port infrastructure, shipbuilding, and widening the maritime network. However, at present, the emergence of Japan, South Korea, India, and particularly China in the industry has diversified the financing ecosystem of this industry.

In this sense, **Mehdi Jomaa** noted that the global challenges equally impact both developed and developing economies. For instance, despite Tunisia's strategic maritime position, it is struggling with heavy debt and low investment in the maritime sector. Indeed, the current global financial architecture is inept in dealing with the emerging geopolitical challenges faced by low-income economies. Thus, reforming this architecture is crucial to meet the urgent demands of developing economies, like Tunisia. Others highlighted the pivotal role that India can potentially play in driving the shipping industry forward towards opening avenues of development for the Global South.

Mohamed Nasheed underlined the sustainability aspect of the shipping industry, noting that the shipping industry is responsible for a major chunk of global greenhouse gas emissions. In this context, the negative impact of

climate change is majorly felt by coastal communities like Maldives. Therefore, the countries must ensure that economic growth is not thriving at the expense of ecological degradation.

Bringing an Indian perspective to the discussion, **T K Ramachandran** mentioned that India has put in place robust capacity-building programmes and firm institutional structures to ensure resilience in the maritime sector. Although India depends on global funding mechanisms, it has created its own blended financing schemes, such as the National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development, government-to-government, and public-private partnerships. India's Vision 2047 focuses on port development, expanding the shipping industry, and envisioning financing pathways for the maritime ecosystem.

Speakers concluded that although breaking the cycle of recurrent debt distress and newer pathways for financing development is a difficult task, it will greatly depend upon how countries manoeuvre their foreign policy with economic statecraft in the long run.

- Swati Prabhu

[Watch the full session here](#)

Minister's Interaction with Youth Delegates

Day 2: November 19, 2024

The Honourable Minister, Sarbananda Sonowal, inaugurated the session by celebrating the achievements of two national icons, Captain Radhika Menon and Reshma Nilofer Visalakshi. The panel featured speeches by the Honourable Minister, Captain Menon, Master Pilot Reshma and interactive sessions where global delegates shared insights on pressing issues, including port operations, climate action, shipbuilding, and seafarer welfare. This global perspective underscores the importance of international collaboration in the maritime sector. Students from diverse backgrounds actively participated, embodying the spirit of "Ek Bharat, Shreshtha Bharat". They

CHAIR



Sarbananda Sonowal

Minister for Ports, Shipping and Waterways, India

MODERATOR



Sugandha Grover

Section Officer, Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways, India

REMARKS



Captain Radhika Menon

India's first merchant navy captain; Nari Shakti Awardee 2022 by the President of India



Reshma Nilofer Visalakshi

Master Pilot, India's first woman river pilot; Nari Shakti Awardee 2018 by the President of India



underscored the critical role of youth in shaping a sustainable and prosperous maritime future.

Captain Radhika Menon shared her pioneering journey in a male-dominated profession. She emphasised the importance of competence over gender and the need to cultivate resilience. She advised the young audience to choose careers wisely, prioritise skills over money, and develop hobbies for mental well-being is essential in every field. Her story of applying her meteorological knowledge to navigate a stormy rescue operation illustrated the value of practical learning, perseverance, and finding real-world applications for their knowledge.

Reshma Visalakshi noted India's significant contributions as the third-largest producer of seafarers globally and the largest employer of female seafarers. She encouraged students to embrace the opportunities available in the maritime industry, ranging from naval architecture to blue economy initiatives. Her focus on gratitude and dreaming big inspired the audience to pursue ambitious goals and rewrite tomorrow's history.

The Minister expressed immense pride in the presence of Captain Menon and Master Pilot Reshma, whose extraordinary achievements have brought



tremendous honour to India. Their inspiring journeys were a beacon of possibility for the students in attendance, motivating them to craft their success stories. He emphasised that the true measure of success lies not only in achievements but also in the happiness and pride derived from genuine, meaningful accomplishments, urging the students to aspire to such fulfilment in their own lives.

Drawing attention to the significance of the Dialogue's name, Sagarmanthan, the Minister highlighted the boundless opportunities the ocean represents. Just as the ancient wisdom of churning the ocean speaks of harnessing vast resources, he encouraged the students to tap into these resources in various fields, from maritime trade and shipbuilding to logistics and environmental solutions, to carve successful futures and contribute to national progress.

In the interactive Q&A session, the Minister outlined India's explicit goals for shipbuilding, aiming to be among the top 10 global shipbuilders by 2030 and in the top five by 2047, coinciding with the 100th anniversary of India's independence. To achieve this, initiatives are in place to expand capacity and meet domestic and international demands while ensuring sustainability. Public-private partnerships (PPP) are being fostered, with coastal states offering land to develop shipbuilding and repair clusters. Additionally, India is committed to



decarbonisation, focusing on climate action in line with international forums and the Prime Minister's target of achieving net-zero emissions by 2070, which includes mainstreaming alternative fuels and promoting participation at all levels. India's maritime security mechanism in international waters is robust, with a dedicated Navy and patrol systems extending throughout the Indian Ocean and beyond. As part of global security frameworks, India continues to enhance its competitive edge and contribute to international initiatives like the Combined Maritime Forces. India has developed a sea-river vessel model to improve transportation efficiency between rivers and coastal areas by optimising the use of inland waterways and coastal regions for seamless movement of goods. Over the next five years, India plans to convert 1,000 vessels to green versions, significantly reducing carbon emissions and ensuring a sustainable integration of *nadi* (river) and *sagar* (ocean) transportation.

The session provided a platform for knowledge exchange and emphasised youth's critical role in shaping the maritime sector's future. It also shed light on leveraging the ocean's vast potential for sustainable development, recognising the need for gender-neutral opportunities, breaking stereotypes in the marine industry, and encouraging a global outlook while strengthening national pride and contributions. The session exemplified the essence of maritime excellence. It empowered the next generation of leaders to take India to greater heights on the global stage, embodying the ideals of women and youth empowerment championed by India's leadership.

- Inayat Rai

Panel Discussion:

Smart Seas: Innovations in Shipping and Beyond

Day 2: November 19, 2024

As with most other sectors, shipping is also seeing its fair share of innovations thanks to increasing digitisation and emerging technologies like Artificial Intelligence (AI). Decarbonisation of the shipping sector is also underway given the increasing use of nuclear power and electric vehicles. The vital importance of the shipping industry for all national economies will ensure that this transition has long-term implications for the future and will involve advances and shifts in shipbuilding and fleet management, and skilling the maritime workforce.

Brent Sadler initiated the discussion by stating that the shipping industry has been actively pursuing lower-carbon propulsion systems. Nuclear

MODERATOR



Ishita Sharma
R&D Manager, Port of Esbjerg,
Denmark

PANELLISTS



Brent Sadler
Senior Research Fellow, Naval
Warfare and Advanced Technology,
Allison Center for National Security,
The Heritage Foundation, United
States of America



Dhruv Kotak
Group Managing Director,
J.M. Baxi Group, India



Edwin Kleingeld
Senior Policy Advisor, Ministry
of Infrastructure and Water
Management, Netherlands



Jens-Uwe Schröder-Hinrichs
Vice-President, Strategic Initiatives,
World Maritime University, Germany



Siv Remøy Vangen
Managing Director,
Norwegian Electric System, Norway



power is a viable alternative to fulfil the energy needs of the shipping sector. Technological developments like Small Modular Reactors will offer high reliability and low manpower costs. Other means of moving cargo, such as feeder vessels, dirigibles, drones, and riverine transport, will also be important. Ports and range-specific transportation like tugboats and marine crafts are likely to witness a greater adoption of electrification, particularly in markets like India, which possess a huge energy arbitrage and massive scope for this transition.

Dhruv Kotak remarked that among over 140 maritime nations, digitisation efforts like single window clearance will be important not just for customs but also transport, specifically for the lesser developed nations where these initiatives remain underutilised and can help level the playing field, thereby enabling them to catch up to the more developed nations.

He also pointed out that the process-intensive nature of shipping transport will enable AI to play a major role across all nodes of the supply chain. **Jens-Uwe Schröder-Hinrichs** noted that autonomous ships are environmentally friendly and will be important for the next generation of seafarers. However, smart ships with some human supervision are a more realistic mid-term target. Additionally, datasets are offering immense opportunities for optimisation.

Edwin Kleingeld noted that international organisations like the International Maritime Organization (IMO) serve as an important forum for discussion. IMO also has a significant technical cooperation programme, which offers support to individual countries struggling to cope with technology standards.

All the speakers were of the opinion that the transition to a more tech-focused shipping industry will help garner more talent from the youth and serve as a viable source of employment. **Siv Remøy Vangen** underlined that technology will also help create a more enabling environment for women. Both Vangen and Kotak cited the example of electric trucks which are easier to drive and can encourage more women drivers. Kotak also noted that in 2024, a container terminal inaugurated in Tuticorin possesses a 50 percent female workforce, which is among the highest in the world for any port.

The transformation of the shipping industry presents both opportunities and challenges for all nations. Schröder-Hinrichs emphasised that national capacities will also need strengthening. National clusters and fora with different stakeholders can help create combined knowledge. Vangen noted that cargo owners also need to be brought on board these, in addition to the fleet, ship designers and builders. Kotak highlighted the necessity of more affirmative action by the Indian government such as the Green Tug Transition Programme which is promoting green tugboats will be essential.

Kleingeld noted the importance of international collaboration and building good bilateral relationships, which will promote knowledge exchange. Sadler stated that in addition to international organisations, the importance of smaller, like-minded common interest groups cannot be ignored. There should be room for maritime groups of nations with shared interests in developing new technologies such as smart ships and nuclear-powered vessels. These can serve as tools for coordinating regulations, standards, and government subsidies relating to the shipping sector, as well as promoting awareness amongst the youth.

- Prateek Tripathi

[Watch the full session here](#)

Panel Discussion:

Shaping Investment Flows: The Oceans Imperative for the Global South

Day 2: November 19, 2024

The panel explored the increasing influence of emerging economies in shaping global trade, investment flows, and maritime governance. Speakers from diverse backgrounds analysed the evolving geopolitical and economic dynamics, emphasising collaboration and sustainability to address the challenges and opportunities faced by the Global South.

The session began with remarks by **Kanishka Narayan** who highlighted the significance of maritime sectors in global trade. He discussed the necessity of adapting to shifting economic realities and ensuring sustainable investment flows while fostering international cooperation.

MODERATOR



Kanishka Narayan

Member of Parliament,
United Kingdom

PANELLISTS



Feride Gulsen Inan

Director, Center for Goeconomic
Studies, The Economic Policy
Research Foundation of Turkey,
Türkiye



Harry Theoharis

Member of Parliament,
Greece



Juita Mohamad

Resource Person, All Party
Parliament Group on SDGs, Malaysia



Renato Flôres

Director, International Intelligence
Unit, Fundação Getulio Vargas, Brazil



Tomasz Łukaszuk

Researcher, University of Warsaw;
Former Ambassador of Poland to
India, Poland



Representatives from countries such as Malaysia, Brazil, Greece, Poland, Türkiye, and the United Kingdom emphasised that collaborative efforts are pivotal for building resilience and fostering equitable growth in the maritime domain.

Harry Theoharis delved into the complexities of the shipping industry, drawing parallels to tourism in its need for coordination and strategic investment. He highlighted the substantial rise in foreign direct investment in India, from US\$ 24 billion in 2013 to US\$ 90 billion in 2023, as a case study for how targeted investments can empower the Global South. Aligning investments with consumption patterns, regulatory frameworks, and production capabilities is important. South-South trade is expected to surge and liberalisation, a skilled workforce, and long-term strategic vision will be essential elements for sustainable growth.

Feride Gulsen Inan underscored the importance of diversifying trade linkages and fostering South-South partnerships. For this alternative trade routes, such as the Trans-Caspian corridor, will play a critical role in building trade resilience. At present, there is a lag in global trade infrastructure compared to the rapid shift of production hubs toward the East. Inan emphasised that overcoming Western maritime dominance and improving regional connectivity are critical for achieving balanced global trade dynamics and equitable growth.

The shift in global trade from ownership of shipping assets to controlling goods and services has challenged Europe's relevance. For Europe, it is important to modernise its infrastructure, strengthen trade agreements, and revitalise production and connectivity to maintain competitiveness in a trade landscape increasingly dominated by Asia and emerging economies.

Tomasz Łukaszuk pointed out that the European Union (EU) has lost the first two decades of the 21st century to China, which has enhanced its global competitiveness through the Belt and Road Initiative, and other communication corridors. For the EU to rejoin the chain of production and capture a sizeable portion of global value chains, the architecture of Free Trade Agreements with the Global South needs to be reinstated. The EU cannot limit itself to ship ownership but has to contribute as a producer to recover its global position. Building on the idea of strategic reintegration, **Renato Flôres** stressed the need for a unified investment strategy, especially in the maritime sector. The focus should be on port development, ship diversification, and seabed technology, while also addressing environmental challenges like ocean pollution. Flôres advocated joint ventures between developed and developing nations will ensure that both coastal and landlocked countries benefit equitably from maritime opportunities.

Juita Mohamad highlighted how the Global South's enhanced role in trade gives it a stronger voice in global governance. She emphasised the importance of sustainable fishing practices, reducing carbon emissions, and fostering technological innovation to address the environmental challenges posed by maritime industries. For this, the Global South needs to align priorities and advance knowledge sharing.

The discussion highlighted the critical role of the Global South in shaping the future of ocean governance. Speakers emphasised that sustainable investment, improved infrastructure, and regional cooperation are essential for fostering resilience and ensuring equitable growth. As the geopolitical and economic landscape shifts, the proactive engagement of the Global South will be instrumental in navigating the challenges and opportunities of maritime governance.

- Arya Roy Bardhan

[Watch the full session here](#)

Panel Discussion:

Blue-Green Strategies: Building Resilience and Prosperity Along our Coasts

Day 2: November 19, 2024

MODERATOR



Nancy Karigithu

Special Envoy and Advisor, Blue Economy, Executive Office of the President, Kenya

PANELLISTS



Ayla Bajwa

Group Senior Vice President, Sustainability, DP World, United Arab Emirates



Mohamed Aslam

Former Minister of National Planning, Housing and Infrastructure and Housing and Environment, Maldives



Renato Salvatecci

Scientific Project Manager, Kiel University, Germany



Roberto Danovaro

Professor, Polytechnic University of Marche, National Biodiversity Future Centre, Italy



Sushil Kumar Singh

Chairman, Deendayal Port Authority, India

Roberto Danovaro began the session by stressing that oceans, coasts, and coastal communities are at the heart of the war against climate change and the quest for a sustainable planet. Coastal regions face multiple problems related to chemical pollution, warming ocean temperatures, sea-level rise, ocean acidification and other extreme weather events due to climate change. **Renato Salvatecci** highlighted that the Arabian Sea, in particular, is at great threat as it is warming faster than other oceans. He further added that climate change contributes to lower phytoplankton levels and consequently lower fish stocks and increases the incidence of



storms and heatwaves. Consequently, fishing communities in coastal areas are suffering immensely due to lower fish catch and lower fishing days due to storms.

For low-lying island nation like Maldives, said **Mohammed Aslam**, a climate change is an issue of survival. Therefore, climate adaptation is crucial. Despite the grave threat that climate change poses to small island developing countries, global finance for adaptation has not been forthcoming. Although the global community has let down small nations, some larger developing countries in the neighbourhood, like India, are making robust contributions to Maldives by helping the nation address challenges like groundwater salinisation.

Ayla Bajwa highlighted that while climate change poses a grave threat to oceans, it is important to avoid the carbon tunnel approach. Instead, port operations should adopt a sensitive approach which prioritises engaging with local people, ensuring income generation for coastal communities, just transition, coastal adaptation as well as decarbonisation. A sustainable oceans strategy has various components like promoting healthy waters, coastal restoration, nature-based solutions like living sea walls, green technology which improves marine biodiversity, and community development.

Oceans are the driving force of economic activities for the coastal communities, noted **Sushil Kumar Singh**. The accelerated pace of urbanisation and increased population is putting immense pressure on coastal resources and adversely impacting coastal populations. The way forward is to adopt a hybrid approach which combines blue and green infrastructure with grey or hard infrastructure, which is better suited to the changing climate. However, existing evidence is biased towards grey or conventional designs as less data is available for green and nature-based solutions. Therefore, financing is easier in the case of grey infrastructure.

Sustainable ocean practices require a holistic and multi-pronged strategy. Firstly, it is important to engage with the community, particularly the youth. Secondly, capacity building is of utmost importance. Thirdly, financial institutions have an important role to play, as finance is a critical barrier to sustainable development. For vulnerable coastal regions, adaptation is a difficult process and not a one-time affair. Small interventions are needed continuously. Here, nature-based solutions are the potential game changers. A hybrid approach, i.e., the blue-green-grey strategy of development and scaling up the learnings from success stories, which take care of the ecological aspects as well, is important. Coastal communities must be involved in the decision-making and policymaking process. Lastly, more research on non-conventional methods that offer adaptive solutions to climate change and blue growth opportunities is needed.

- Malancha Chakrabarty

[Watch the full session here](#)

Panel Discussion:

New Routes for New Resources: Connectivity for Critical Minerals

Day 2: November 19, 2024

The world is experiencing an unprecedented demand for critical minerals such as lithium, cobalt and rare earth elements (REE). This is driven by their use in fuelling new sectors' growth, such as electric vehicles, semiconductors, and green transition. Amidst this increasing competition, some regions that are resource-rich stand at the forefront of the contestation for critical minerals. For instance, new geographies like Latin America hold 50 percent of global lithium reserves, and Southeast Asia is leading in nickel production, particularly Indonesia. Therefore, this demand has increased focus towards these geographies and associated issues, such as in sectors like connectivity and finance. This raises

MODERATOR



Gunter Rieck Moncayo

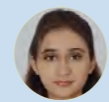
Economic and Trade Policy Advisor,
Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung, Germany

PANELLISTS



Dulciana Somare Brash

Development Specialist, DevCom
Pacific, Papua New Guinea



Jhanvi Tripathi

Associate Fellow, Observer Research
Foundation, India



Raimund Bleischwitz

Scientific Director, Leibniz Centre
for Tropical Marine Research (ZMT);
Professor, Global Sustainable
Resources, University of Bremen,
Germany



Renato Flôres

Director, International Intelligence
Unit, Fundação Getulio Vargas, Brazil



Witold Sobków

Minister Plenipotentiary, Ministry of
Foreign Affairs, Poland



important questions about reshaping the connectivity paradigm, lessons for inclusive growth, and financing private sector investments.

Dulciana Somare Brash shared the perspective of Papua New Guinea (PNG), particularly emphasising the importance of geographies and connectivity. She said, for Papua New Guinea (PNG), one problem that the country suffers from is institutional incapacity. So, as part of this challenge, infrastructure development and transport routes become critical. Due to the inadequacy of the domestic transport infrastructure, PNG, although in a strategic position, has not been able to benefit from the increasing demand for certain minerals like cobalt and nickel, which are abundant in the country. Providing an Indian perspective, **Jhanvi Tripathi** stated that as an emerging power, India is a mineral-hungry economy. She said that a major part of India's critical mineral strategy is oriented towards working with groups like Mineral Security Partnerships and with countries like Chile and Argentina. This strategy drives India to engage and invest more in geographies that provide opportunities like in Latin America, investing more in their supply chain.

Conversely, Europe's viewpoint was reflected by **Witold Sobków**. He emphasised that Europe has tried to formulate a strategy that aims to reduce their dependence on third countries for their mineral needs by cooperating with

new geographies like Australia, the US, Brazil, Indonesia, and Peru. But it also looks at the circular economy part of the critical minerals supply chain strategy to overcome its mineral problem and dependencies on old geographies; this method looks at addressing the rising demand for critical minerals, which can also benefit countries like India. Witold also underlined the importance of another critical area that needs much attention, which is seabed mining, which has also gained traction in the last few years. However, **Raimund Bleishtwitz**, shared his caution when it came to deep-sea mining due to its environmental implications. On the other hand, **Renato Flôres** shared the importance of mining for the Global South countries. He said that looking at this new opportunity will help the Global South countries. Forming joint ventures among developing nations with mining expertise is one potential solution to the mineral challenge.

Flôres further argued that with rising mineral demand, one problem that countries will likely face is overcapacity in transport routes in the sea, particularly at the choke points. Therefore, it would be critical to find solutions to this problem by reducing the additional stress on the Panama and Suez Canal. He suggested that one way we could leverage the pressure is by adopting smart logistics with the help of technology in our new infrastructure developments and shipping. In this context, South-South and North-South partnerships will play a vital role. In her concluding remarks, Brash highlighted an important area for collaboration between Global North and South, which is social and environmental safeguards. She shared an example of this between PNG and Australia. She ended by stating that thus, state strategies need to focus on addressing the mineral challenges as well as the structural issues of lack of infrastructure and investment.

- Abhishek Sharma

[Watch the full session here](#)

Valedictory Ministerial Address

Day 2: November 19, 2024



Shantanu Thakur

Minister of State for Ports, Shipping and Waterways, India

This ministerial address by **Shantanu Thakur** recaptured the spirited discussions that had taken place over the two days of the conference. He touched upon the rising prominence of India as a maritime power—about the expanding trade networks, connectivity architecture, and increasing investment in infrastructure in the maritime domain. He asserted that a gathering as diverse as the Sagarmanthan reflects India's burgeoning growth in this field and encourages an atmosphere of dialogue amongst varied stakeholders. He explained that to harness the full potential of a resource as mighty as the ocean, all such stakeholders must be brought together on a common platform to build cooperation and synergy

In the spirit of maximising the potential of oceans, he elaborated on India's use of Artificial Intelligence (AI), specifically in the shipbuilding sector. By leveraging such technology, India can achieve certain ambitious targets—such as being a top 10 shipbuilding nation by 2030. Minister Thakur remarked that such enterprising thinking redefines AI as representing 'Aspirational India. However, he explained that to achieve such targets, India must push for robust international financial instruments that help support the blue economy and the growing maritime needs of the Global South. He expressed that building the blue economy is a crucial step towards creating a green planet.



Rounding out the address, the Minister spoke on the coastal communities and the importance of creating an open and secure maritime network that empowers such populace and helps secure access to maritime resources. Elaborating on the Indian Ocean's usefulness for both Western and Eastern Asia, Minister Thakur expressed the need for India to utilise this critical resource better, as we are not currently enjoying all the benefits we can accrue. To this end, he referenced the government's concerted efforts to expand the ports' establishment, which would not only contribute to the Indian economy but also India's friends in the region. Overall, this session encapsulated the spirit of India's

expected meteoric rise in the maritime sector through strategic investments, the use of emerging technologies, and the building of lasting partnerships founded on common values.

- Roshani Jain

[Watch the full session here](#)

Valedictory Session:

In Conversation

Day 2: November 19, 2024

The maritime domain and the shipping industry have been foundational to human civilisation for millennia. In the modern era, bulk shipping was a key driver in establishing economic globalisation. Today, when globalisation needs refurbishing, the global shipping industry and the countries that participate therein will have a critical role in reshaping economic globalisation. In this regard, the India-US partnership will be pivotal in shaping the future. **Bruce Jones** opined that there is bipartisan consensus in the US on strengthening economic and strategic cooperation with India across various domains, including the maritime sector.

MODERATOR



Samir Saran

President, Observer Research Foundation, India

PANELLISTS



Bruce Jones

Senior Fellow, Strobe Talbott Center for Security, Strategy, and Technology, Brookings Institution, United States of America



Sanjeev Sanyal

Member, Economic Advisory Council to the Prime Minister, India



He also shared the perspective that an expansion in India's shipbuilding, shipping, and naval capabilities will be conducive to free, open, and rules-based oceans—a policy objective for both New Delhi and Washington. Providing an Indian perspective to these arguments, **Sanjeev Sanyal** remarked that New Delhi has historically subscribed to a landlocked view of the world. To develop India's shipping and maritime industry, he opined, Indian policymakers need to accommodate a maritime worldview. He noted that one of India's largest imports today is freight and shipping insurance costs incurred by Indian companies and businesses to conduct international trade. Strategically, this leaves the country open to geopolitically motivated supply chain disruptions. Economically, India's shipping industry is an untapped economic opportunity for India and the world. Notably, in the oceanic worldview, the Indian neighbourhood is a more geostrategically amiable environment, housing nations with whom India shares historic trade and cultural ties.

Agreeing with Sanyal, Jones remarked that the US shares a similar landlocked worldview when it comes to trade, as much of its manufacturing occurs in landlocked regions. Despite having a navy that spans all the global seas, the commercial view from the US is very landlocked. Indeed, close to US\$ 10 trillion worth of financial transactions are an everyday occurrence, instrumentalising the subsea cables and infrastructure. US naval capabilities is lacking when it


comes to protecting commercial trade and subsea infrastructure. As a result of these material and capacity deficiencies, India and the US have outsourced their commercial shipping to East Asian countries.

Today, pioneer shipbuilding nations such as China, Japan, South Korea, the US, and the European nations have lost or are losing their demographic dividend—imperative to build ships, which is largely a manual process and requires a young workforce. Agreeing, **Samir Saran** opined that India is ideally positioned in this regard of necessary capacity to emerge as a shipbuilding hub. As a capital-intensive industry, foreign investments and international partnerships among a consortium of these countries will play a major role in India's shipbuilding and shipping industry's growth. He also highlighted that India needs adequate policy and regulatory ecosystems to facilitate international investments and property acquisitions to develop this economic imperative.

Saran also sparked the conversation about another emerging facet in the maritime domain—the effect of climate change on trade routes. The melting of Arctic ice, he opined, will lead to a new northern route to Europe. However, Bruce expressed caution regarding the year-round traversability of the emerging northern sea route in the plannable future and the entire exercise of developing the Arctic route. The Red Sea supply chain disruptions were perceived to drive up shipping costs but the result was a marginal increase in the cost of finished goods for customers, he explained. Conclusively, the panellists agreed that while diversification of trade routes is essential, it should also be efficient, dependable, and resilient.

- Prithvi Gupta

[Watch the full session here](#) 

SAGARMANTHAN

— THE GREAT OCEANS DIALOGUE —

AGENDA

DAY ONE: MONDAY, NOVEMBER 18, 2024

14.00 - 15.30	Registration
15.30 - 16.30	<p><i>Indian Ocean Hall</i> Inaugural Ministerial Session</p> <p>Welcome Remarks: T K Ramachandran, Secretary, Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways, India</p> <p>Addresses: María Lorena Villaverde, National Representative for the Province of Rio Negro, Argentina Amzath Ahmed, Minister of State for Fisheries and Ocean Resources, Maldives Shantanu Thakur, Minister of State for Ports, Shipping and Waterways, India Christos Stylianides, Minister of Maritime Affairs and Insular Policy, Greece Sarbananda Sonowal, Minister for Ports, Shipping and Waterways, India</p> <p>Host: Samir Saran, President, Observer Research Foundation, India</p>
16.30- 16.45	Transition
16.45 - 17.25	<p><i>Indian Ocean Hall</i> Setting the Stage</p> <p>Keynote Addresses: Sanjeev Sanyal, Member, Economic Advisory Council to the Prime Minister, India Signe Brudeset, Director General, Regional Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Norway John Kayode Fayemi, President, Forum of Regions of Africa, Nigeria Rizwan Soomar, CEO & Managing Director, Middle East, North Africa & India Subcontinent, DP World, United Arab Emirates</p> <p>Host: Samir Saran, President, Observer Research Foundation, India</p>

DAY ONE: MONDAY, NOVEMBER 18, 2024

17:25 - 18:15

Indian Ocean Hall | **Sea Lanes and Fast Lanes: A New Vision for Connectivity**

New infrastructure corridors have the potential to reshape trade in dynamic regions like South and West Asia. If designed appropriately, they will provide multi-modal connectivity and catalyse intra-and inter-regional economic integration. To reach its full potential, ports along planned routes will need to be developed and expanded, including improving facilities for transfer between modes. This panel will examine recent developments pertaining to such corridors, as well the partners and priorities relevant to large infrastructure projects.

- How will economic integration be impacted by infra corridors? What changes to trade policy and procedures are needed to make them effective?
- What developments in logistics management are being made to harness the potential of such corridors? How can specialised supply-chain capabilities be built up?
- How are ports and allied infrastructure assets being leveraged and upgraded through these plans?
- How do the various strategic investments in corridors and infrastructure by regional and global players mesh with each other?

Abla Abdel-Latif, Executive Director and Director of Research, Egyptian Center for Economic Studies, Egypt

Bart de Jong, Special Advisor, International Relations, Ministry of Infrastructure and Water Management, Government of the Netherlands

Marco Dreosto, Senator and the Secretary of the Permanent Committee for Foreign Affairs and Defence, Senate of the Republic, Italy

Rizwan Soomar, CEO & Managing Director, Middle East, North Africa & India Subcontinent, DP World, United Arab Emirates

Rohit Rathish, Joint Secretary, Development Partnership Administration III, Ministry of External Affairs, India

Moderator: Anna Maria Corazza Bildt, Former Member of the European Parliament

18:15 - 18:35

Break**DAY ONE: MONDAY, NOVEMBER 18, 2024**

18:35 - 19:25

Indian Ocean Hall | **Black Swans at Sea: Are We Prepared for the Future?**

Oceans are vast and rife with complexities beyond pre-emption. The imminent paradigm shift in how countries are approaching the oceanic space, with the advent of new technologies, green transition in shipping and infrastructure, proliferation of new actors, demonstrate that the maritime domain is continually evolving. In such a context, it is vital to envisage a forward- looking approach of how the global maritime architecture is poised to appear, even accounting for developments which may not be predictable today.

- How do we maintain the integrity of global maritime trade routes in the face of black swan events?
- What are the implications of emerging technologies, green transition and new actors, in the shipping and logistics sector? What are the risks that need to be mitigated and opportunities leveraged?
- What emerging threats are most likely to cause significant disruptions to global connectivity ambitions? How can they be anticipated and managed?

Aaja Chemnitz, Chair, Standing Committee of Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region; Member, Danish Parliament, Denmark

Henk Smith, Director and Co-founder, Marine Masters, Netherlands

Hsiang-Wen Huang, Professor, National Taiwan Ocean University

Rajesh Kumar Sinha, Additional Secretary, Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways, India

Stella Mantzari, Chief Executive Officer, A.S. Marine Ltd., Greece

Moderator: Matthias Catón, Managing Director, German Maritime Centre, Germany

DAY ONE: MONDAY, NOVEMBER 18, 2024

19.25 - 20.55

Arabian Sea Hall | Invite-only Ministerial Dinner Roundtable with the Think Tank Community

This invite-only session will be a freewheeling conversation between senior policy practitioners and leading thinkers on the subject of maritime governance and development. It will discuss key issues that emerge from the broader themes of the conference – growing the blue economy, enhancing sustainability, promoting shipbuilding, developing maritime infrastructure and pushing forward innovation and the energy transition.

Opening Remarks:

Shantanu Thakur, Minister of State for Ports, Shipping and Waterways, India

Keynote Address:

Sarbananda Sonowal, Minister for Ports, Shipping & Waterways, India

Interventions:

Abla Abdel-Latif, Executive Director and Director of Research, Egyptian Center for Economic Studies, Egypt

Brent Sadler, Senior Research Fellow, Naval Warfare and Advanced Technology, Allison Center for National Security, The Heritage Foundation, United States of America

Bruce Jones, Senior Fellow, Strobe Talbott Center for Security, Strategy, and Technology, Brookings Institution, United States of America

Jungho Nam, Senior Research Fellow, Korea Maritime Institute, Republic of Korea

Konstantinos Foutzopoulos, Senior Program Officer, Circle the Med Forum, Greece

Ruben Eiras, Secretary General, Fórum Oceano, Portugal

Sachin Chaturvedi, Director General, Research and Information Systems for Developing Countries, India

Vice Admiral (Retd) G Ashok Kumar, National Maritime Security Coordinator, India

Moderator: Harsh V Pant, Vice President, Observer Research Foundation, India

Vote of Thanks: Vijay Kumar, Chairman, Inland Waterways Authority of India, India

DAY ONE: MONDAY, NOVEMBER 18, 2024

19.25 - 20.55

Bay of Bengal Hall | Technical Session over Dinner: 'Resilient Communities'

This session will explore how grassroots action across the Global South and beyond is working to increase the resilience of coastal and island communities in the wake of the climate crisis and public health emergencies. We will share examples of new forms of leadership, and identify measures that link these communities to the broader global conversation on ocean governance.

- What pressures have been put on coastal areas and ocean-dependent communities in this era of pandemics, austerity, and climate change?
- What mechanisms for support to these vulnerable groups have evolved and worked across the world – especially when it comes to climate adaptation?
- Can we identify a model of the blue economy that centres the experience and aspirations of coastal communities? How can their concerns be raised at the global level?
- Have new leaders and inspiring stories emerged in these past years?

Linda Etta, Senior Blue Economy Adviser, African Union Commission

Malshini Senaratne, Assistant Head of Department, University of Seychelles, Seychelles

Senthilkumaran Krishnan, Head, Platforms (Information Services), Reliance Foundation, India

Simone Smith-Godfrey, Founder, Blue Heritage Chamber of Commerce, South Africa

Weliswa Matekenya, Senior Lecturer, Nelson Mandela University, South Africa

Moderator: Julie Leuzinger, Co-Founder & Managing Director, Ghost Partners, New Zealand

19.25 - 20.55

Inaugural Dinner

DAY TWO: TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 19, 2024	
09.30 - 10.00	Registration
10.00 - 10.25	<p><i>Indian Ocean Hall</i> In Conversation</p> <p>Sarbananda Sonowal, Minister for Ports, Shipping and Waterways, India Samir Saran, President, Observer Research Foundation, India</p>
10.25 - 10.40	<p><i>Indian Ocean Hall</i> Speed Talk</p> <p>The Climate Crisis: Using Images to Bridge the Gap Between Science, Industry and Policy</p> <p>Christian Clauwers, Ocean & Polar Explorer, Environmental Reporter, Documentary Photographer, Belgium</p>
10.40 - 11.30	<p><i>Indian Ocean Hall</i> The Euro-Afro-Asian Century: Connecting the Heartlands of Future Growth</p> <p>The economies of India and the African Continental Free Trade Area will both approach \$5 trillion in the coming years. This growth will be catalysed and supported by the investment and markets of Europe and West Asia. Reimagining the partnership with improved maritime connectivity holds the potential to quadruple trade, unlocking immense economic benefits for these interconnected regions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What do African countries, India, and their partners in Europe and West Asia require in terms of infrastructure to turn this potential into reality? How can they use multimodal corridors to propel trade-led development? • How can pools of global finance and world-class technology be made available for the task of building this connective infrastructure? • How can future trade patterns be made more inclusive, as well as politically and economically sustainable? <p>Anusha Kesarkar Gavankar, Senior Fellow, Observer Research Foundation, India Geoffrey E Kaituko, Principal Secretary, State Department for Shipping & Maritime Affairs, Ministry of Mining, Blue Economy & Maritime Affairs, Kenya Lord Karan Bilimoria, House of Lords, United Kingdom Ruben Eiras, Secretary General, Fórum Oceano, Portugal Unmesh Wagh, Chairman, Jawaharlal Nehru Port Authority, India</p> <p>Moderator: Ayoade Alakija, Chair, Board of Directors, FIND; Co-Chair, C7 Impact Investment Initiative in Global Health</p>

DAY TWO: TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 19, 2024	
11.30 - 11.50	Break
11.50 - 12.40	<p><i>Indian Ocean Hall</i> Energy and Shipping: Charting a Course to Sustainable Trade</p> <p>The global green transition, if it is to be just and effective, will need the shipping and broader trade sector to deal with a critical challenge: Decarbonising its operations without disrupting global supply chains. Such a transition to environmentally conscious, sustainable strategies presents significant hurdles, but also promising opportunities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the key obstacles and potential benefits of the shipping sector's shift to cleaner energy sources? • How can digitalisation of logistics aid the greening of trade? • Which low-carbon fuels hold the most promise for the shipping industry, and what obstacles prevent their widespread use? • How can financial incentives and public-private partnerships accelerate investment in clean maritime technologies? <p>Ahmed Mohamed Hussein Selim, Senior Economic Research Specialist, Suez Canal Authority, Egypt Arun Sharma, Advisor to the Chairman, Group Head for Sustainability and Climate Change, Adani Group, India Dawoon Jung, Lecturer, Australian National Centre for Ocean Resources and Security, University of Wollongong, Australia Johannah Christensen, Chief Executive Officer, Global Maritime Forum, Denmark Luc Arnouts, Vice President, Port of Antwerp-Bruges, Belgium</p> <p>Moderator: Sunjoy Joshi, Chairman, Observer Research Foundation, India</p>

DAY TWO: TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 19, 2024

12.40 - 14.10

Arabian Sea Hall | **Invite-only Ministerial Roundtable over Lunch****The New Blue: Collaboration and Creation for an Ocean-Based Economy**

This invite-only roundtable will focus on how global collaboration and domestic energy is revitalising our approach to the blue economy. It will share creative solutions and new policy directions that empower coastal communities and oceans-based businesses; identify the pathways and trade routes of the future that will catalyse prosperity and secure supply chains; and provide examples of effective partnerships between the local, the global and the corporate.

Opening Remarks:

Shantanu Thakur, Minister of State for Ports, Shipping and Waterways, India

Keynote Address:

Sarbananda Sonowal, Minister for Ports, Shipping and Waterways, India

Interventions:

Yuvraj Narayan, Group Deputy Chief Executive Officer and Chief Financial Officer, DP World, United Arab Emirates

Ahamed Saïd Abass, Special Envoy, Government of Comoros

Johannah Christensen, Chief Executive Officer, Global Maritime Forum, Denmark

M Angamuthu, Chairman, Visakhapatnam Port Authority, India

Madhu S Nair, Chairman & Managing Director, Cochin Shipyard, India

Mads Qvist Frederiksen, Executive Director, Arctic Economic Council, Norway

Moderator: Samir Saran, President, Observer Research Foundation, India

Vote of Thanks: Susanta Kumar Purohit, Chairman, V O Chidambaranar Port Authority, India

DAY TWO: TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 19, 2024

12.40 - 14.10

Bay of Bengal Hall | **Technical Lunch Session – Riding the Currents: Creating a Circular Blue Economy**

Our relationship with the oceans can no longer be purely extractive. From fishing, to leisure travel, to biodiversity, sustainability at sea must become a priority. Global agreements and domestic norms must both shift to make this a reality.

- How can the common resources of the oceans be sustainably used to promote human welfare? What regulatory models find the right balance between sustainability and growth of the blue economy?
- How can recycling, conservation, and circularity work for businesses, and what is their importance for the preservation of the oceans?
- Can our norms surrounding fishing be altered so that traditional and artisanal mechanisms, which prioritise a symbiotic relationship between fishing communities and ocean resources, are preserved?

Nadeem Nazurally, Associate Professor, University of Mauritius, Mauritius

Nancy Karigithu, Special Envoy and Advisor, Blue Economy, Executive Office of the President, Kenya

Nwabisa Matoti, Research Director, South African International Maritime Institute, South Africa

Oda Korneliussen, Program Manager, Avfall Norge, Norway

Peter Aukamp, Senior Advisor, goodcarbon, Germany

Moderator: Rolf Rødven, Executive Secretary, Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Program, Arctic Council, Norway

12.40 - 14.10

Lunch

DAY TWO: TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 19, 2024

14.10 - 15.10

Indian Ocean Hall | **A Decade of Development: Ship-building Hub for the 21st Century**

It is necessary for economic and maritime security and resilience that shipbuilding and recycling resources not be dominated by any one country or areas. India, for example, is investing in shipbuilding, repair, and recycling and aims to be one of the five largest shipbuilding nations in a decade.

- Why is it necessary to restore resilience and decentralised production to global shipbuilding?
- What are the frameworks and incentives required to foster innovation and streamline processes in the shipbuilding industry?
- What lessons could be drawn and locally adapted from the world's leading shipbuilding nations?
- How can shipyards compete for space in a tough global marketplace?

Scene Setting Remarks:

R Lakshmanan, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways, India

Panel Discussion:

Arjun Chowgule, Executive Director, Chowgule and Company, India

Harrie de Leijer, Partner, Nestra, Netherlands

José Digerónimo, President, Maritime Chamber of Panama, Panama

Line Ollestad, Advisor, Norwegian Shipowners' Association, Norway

Sherine El Naggar, Chief Executive Officer, Naggar Maritime Ltd., Egypt

Moderator: Erin Watson, Managing Director, Baker & York, Australia

DAY TWO: TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 19, 2024

14.10-15.10

Arabian Sea Hall | **Rethinking Labour at Sea: Overcoming Enduring Inequalities**

On any given day, millions of seafarers support the tens of thousands of vessels that make up merchant shipping. Yet they labour under dire working conditions — and can be unprotected by decent labour regulations or subject to contradictory and oppressive laws. The outcome, frequently, is actual or apparent discriminatory treatment of maritime labour based on their nationalities, particularly those from the Global South.

- Is the maritime labour force a new domain for the old scourge of imperialism? How can we work towards a level playing field for all seafarers irrespective of their nationalities?
- How can we ensure that the industry is more inclusive — of both marginalised communities and of women?
- How can we frame global conventions, rules and regulations that are just, equitable and sustainable for all nation-states and how do we monitor their implementation?
- How do we address the problems of overexploitation and abuse within the international maritime community?

Scene Setting Remarks:

Shyam Jagannathan, Director General of Shipping, Directorate General of Shipping, India

Panel Discussion:

Angelos F Vlachos, Chief Executive Officer, Kavala Port Authority S.A., Greece

Anil Devli, Chief Executive Officer, Indian National Shipowners' Association, India

Helene Tofte, Executive Director, Norwegian Shipowners' Association, Norway

Luisito delos Santos, Director, Planning and Policy, Maritime Industry Authority, Philippines

Shyam Jagannathan, Director General of Shipping, Directorate General of Shipping, India

Moderator: Sophie Deyon, Team Lead Policy & Government Engagement, Global Maritime Forum, Denmark

DAY TWO: TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 19, 202415.10 - 16.00 *Indian Ocean Hall* | **Gateways & Debt-traps: Financing the Future of Development**

Developing ports and associated infrastructure is vital to accommodate evolving shipping markets, ship sizes, and cargo profiles. However, financing costs to build and run these infrastructural assets pose a significant obstacle. The global lending landscape is plagued by mismatched gains, which severely affect project viability, particularly for nations in the Global South, leading to a debt trap for many countries, making it imperative to think of innovative financial solutions and mechanisms.

- What kind of innovative financial solutions and approaches could be explored to make projects viable and competitive, especially for nations for whom the cost of borrowing through traditional routes is high?
- Is there room to reduce the cost of capital for nations most impacted by mismatching gains, within the existing lending frameworks?

Carl Bildt, Former Prime Minister of Sweden and Co-Chair, European Council on Foreign Relations, Sweden

Mehdi Jomaa, Former Prime Minister, Tunisia

Mohamed Nasheed, Former President, Maldives

T K Ramachandran, Secretary, Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways, India

Moderator: Harsh V Pant, Vice President, Observer Research Foundation, India

16.00-16.20 **Break**16.00-17.00 *Bay of Bengal Hall* | **Invite-only Minister's Interaction with Youth Delegates**

Chair: Sarbananda Sonowal, Minister for Ports, Shipping and Waterways, India

Captain Radhika Menon, India's First Merchant Navy Captain & Nari Shakti Awardee 2022 by the President of India

Reshma Nilofer Visalakshi, Master Pilot, India's First Woman River Pilot and Nari Shakti Awardee 2018 by the President of India

Moderator: Sugandha Grover, Section Officer, Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways, India

DAY TWO: TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 19, 202416.20 - 17.10 *Indian Ocean Hall* | **Smart Seas: Innovations in Shipping and Beyond**

Growth along new corridors, and in a competitive geo-economic environment, requires cutting-edge innovation. New corridors and trade routes will survive only if they modernise infrastructure and streamline supply-chain processes – integrating solutions such as smart ports, automated shipping systems, and real-time data analytics. Meanwhile, the fleets of the future may also be unrecognisable, requiring advances and shifts in shipbuilding and fleet management, and new skills for the maritime workforce.

- What will the fleets and ports of the future look like? How are AI, new energy, and digitalisation transforming processes and mechanisms?
- What role does investment in public infrastructure, whether physical or virtual, have in supporting this transformation?
- What can like-minded countries learn from each other, and how can we support each other in creating resilient, innovative and secure supply chains?
- How can large datasets be leveraged to ensure security at sea?

Brent Sadler, Senior Research Fellow, Naval Warfare and Advanced Technology, Allison Center for National Security, The Heritage Foundation, United States of America

Dhruv Kotak, Group Managing Director, J M Baxi Group, India

Edwin Kleingeld, Senior Policy Advisor, Ministry of Infrastructure and Water Management, Netherlands

Jens-Uwe Schröder-Hinrichs, Vice-President, Strategic Initiatives, World Maritime University, Germany

Siv Remøy Vangen, Managing Director, Norwegian Electric System, Norway

Moderator: Ishita Sharma, R&D Manager, Port of Esbjerg, Denmark

DAY TWO: TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 19, 2024	
16.20 - 17.10	<p><i>Arabian Sea Hall</i> Shaping Investment Flows: The Oceans Imperative for the Global South</p> <p>The West no longer rules the oceans unchallenged. It is the Global South's markets, populations, and resources that will determine the shape of ocean trade in the 21st century. As the balance of power shifts South, the governance of oceans must be reformed in tandem.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> As the balance of power shifts and investment flows are reshaped, how can we think of pathways to engage with this new political order that affects global economic equity? What mechanisms are needed to balance the influence of dominant maritime nations and ensure that global governance architectures and trade networks serve common global interests? <p>Feride Gulsen Inan, Director, Center for Geoeconomic Studies, The Economic Policy Research Foundation of Turkey, Türkiye Harry Theoharis, Member of Parliament, Greece Juita Mohamad, Resource Person, All Party Parliament Group on SDGs, Malaysia Renato Flôres, Director, International Intelligence Unit, Fundação Getulio Vargas, Brazil Tomasz Łukaszuk, Researcher, University of Warsaw; Former Ambassador of Poland to India, Poland</p> <p>Moderator: Kanishka Narayan, Member of Parliament, United Kingdom</p>
17.10 - 18.00	<p><i>Indian Ocean Hall</i> Blue-Green Strategies: Building Resilience and Prosperity Along our Coasts</p> <p>Coasts are at the frontline of both the war against climate change, and the fight for future prosperity. Maritime trade hubs, coastal areas, ports, and marine ecosystems are extremely vulnerable to rising sea levels, increasing salinity, weird weather, and pollution. Alongside this, economic development in these coastlines is demanded by their populations – but it is expected, also, that this development be green and sustainable.</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What do the communities along our coastline expect in terms of development? How can they be given the tools to be resilient in the face of the climate challenge? How can we ensure maritime development and port operations respect the climate challenge and embrace the energy transition? Will knowledge and technology sharing between nations help, and how can we facilitate it? Coastal communities and maritime businesses are already adapting to the effects of climate change. What do they need in terms of adaptation finance? How can we facilitate the transition toward a sustainable circular economy within the blue sector? <p>Ayla Bajwa, Group Senior Vice President, Sustainability, DP World, United Arab Emirates (Virtual) Mohamed Aslam, Former Minister of National Planning, Housing and Infrastructure and Housing and Environment, Maldives Renato Salvattecì, Scientific Project Manager, Kiel University, Germany Roberto Danovaro, Professor, Polytechnic University of Marche, National Biodiversity Future Centre, Italy Sushil Kumar Singh, Chairman, Deendayal Port Authority, India</p> <p>Moderator: Nancy Karigithu, Special Envoy and Advisor, Blue Economy, Executive Office of the President, Kenya</p>
18.00-18.20	Break
18.20-19.10	<p><i>Indian Ocean Hall</i> New Routes for New Resources: Connectivity for Critical Minerals</p> <p>The routes and infrastructure of the 20th century will not serve the goods and geographies that determine the fortunes of the 21st century. The value of new-age resources such as critical minerals will increase manifold in the coming decades; as a consequence, new locations where value is added in Latin America and the Indo-Pacific will become vital nodes in the global trade map. Connectivity between regions such as India, Southeast Asia and Latin America will need to be upgraded to match this economic reality.</p>

- How can regions such as Southeast Asia and Latin America redesign their connectivity paradigm to reflect these economic realities? Who are the global partners in this effort, and what can India do to help?
- How can we learn from the experiences of the past to make new resource-powered growth more inclusive and less extractive?
- Who will invest in, finance and construct the capacity upgrades required to connect these emerging geographies with areas where critical minerals can be consumed or processed?
- What are the geo-economic drivers of trade in critical minerals and how is the private sector preparing for them?

Dulciana Somare Brash, Development Specialist, DevCom Pacific, Papua New Guinea

Jhanvi Tripathi, Associate Fellow, Observer Research Foundation, India

Raimund Bleischwitz, Scientific Director, Leibniz Centre for Tropical Marine Research (ZMT); Professor, Global Sustainable Resources, University of Bremen, Germany

Renato Flôres, Director, International Intelligence Unit, Fundação Getulio Vargas, Brazil

Witold Sobków, Minister Plenipotentiary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Poland

Moderator: Gunter Rieck Moncayo, Economic and Trade Policy Advisor, Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung, Germany

19.10-19.20

Indian Ocean Hall | **Valedictory Ministerial Address**

Shantanu Thakur, Minister of State for Ports, Shipping and Waterways, India

DAY TWO: TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 19, 2024

19.20-19.50

Indian Ocean Hall | **Valedictory Session: In Conversation**

This session will tease out the themes that emerged from the previous days' discussions, and examine how partnerships can be developed and enhanced going forward. It will discuss in particular how a concert of democracies can emerge on the seas – in domains from shipbuilding to logistics to infrastructure.

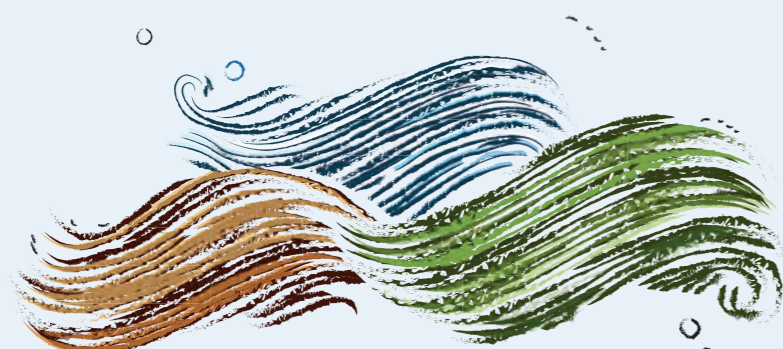
Bruce Jones, Senior Fellow, Strobe Talbott Center for Security, Strategy, and Technology, Brookings Institution, United States of America

Sanjeev Sanyal, Member, Economic Advisory Council to the Prime Minister, India

Moderator: Samir Saran, President, Observer Research Foundation, India

20.00 onwards

Dinner



SAGARMANTHAN

— THE GREAT OCEANS DIALOGUE —

STUDIO AGENDA

STUDIO AGENDA

Ganga Hall | **Arteries of Civilisation: How Inland Waterways are Key to the Past and the Future**

Inland waterways are, both in terms of cost and in terms of safety, the most efficient form of transport — particularly of large and bulky commodities. Canals and rivers have been the incubators of civilisation from time immemorial; and, in the 21st century, may prove to be a crucial and transformative addition to multi-modal logistics strategies — if they receive focused attention, new forms of finance, and technological upgradation.

- How are large markets like India and the European Union improving internal connectivity through upgrading their inland waterways?
- Does inland shipping provide an answer to the problem of how to make freight transport more environmentally sustainable?
- Are there some good recent examples of the integration of inland waterways into multi-modal transportation that can serve as templates for future development?

Nicole van Spronsen, Project Manager, Maritime Research Institute Netherlands (MARIN), Netherlands

Vijay Kumar, Chairman, Inland Waterways Authority of India, India

Moderator: Dhaval Desai, Senior Fellow and Vice President, Observer Research Foundation, India

Ganga Hall | **Cruising to Growth: Blue Tourism and Sustainability**

Tourism, including cruise tourism, is an integral component of many island and coastal nations' plans to grow their blue economy. The industry supports millions of workers directly and indirectly and is a crucial source of income for many otherwise underdeveloped parts of the world. Already trying to shake off its pandemic-era losses, it must also transform itself structurally to thrive in an era of climate action and e-tourism.

- What are some of the technological advances that can make sustainable blue tourism a possibility?
- How does blue tourism affect the coastal and island communities that depend on it, and is it a truly symbiotic relationship?
- What new models of tourism management and novel forms of travel experience show promise for the industry's future?

Alexis Papathanassis, Rector and Professor, Bremerhaven University of Applied Sciences, Germany

Angelos F Vlachos, Chief Executive Officer, Kavala Port Authority S.A., Greece

Moderator: Malshini Senaratne, Assistant Head of Department, University of Seychelles, Seychelles

STUDIO AGENDA*Ganga Hall* | **From the Keel Up: Redesigning the Ships of the Future**

Ensuring that the shipping industry of the future is sensitive to the environment begins with the transformation of shipbuilding. Vessels – whether coastal, inland or seagoing – will have to be reimagined if sustainable shipping is to become a reality.

- What are the ways in which ship design is changing to reflect these new requirements?
- How are new energy sources and propulsion systems being incorporated into these designs, from batteries to hydrogen?
- What are the possibilities for retrofitting existing fleets? Are costs coming down fast enough for novel designs?
- Can future customers of sustainable ships expect greater efficiency and an enhanced user experience?

Madhu S Nair, Chairman & Managing Director, Cochin Shipyard Ltd., India
Siv Remøy Vangen, Managing Director, Norwegian Electric System, Norway

Moderator: Jaibal Naduvath, Vice President and Senior Fellow, Observer Research Foundation, India

Ganga Hall | **Trust and Integrity: Reviving Cooperation at Sea**

Nations are increasingly rushing to seek access to trading routes and critical resources, including minerals, energy, and food in oceanic theatres. This high-stakes competition has fostered a climate of mistrust and suspicion among countries, leading to significant and adverse consequences, including environmental degradation, livelihood loss, and disruptions in global trade. Intergovernmental organisations are poised to play a critical role in the mitigation of such imminent challenges by advancing efforts for inclusive and collective cooperation.

- How can maritime players foster trust and promote transparency in efforts to mitigate environmental challenges?
- How can existing systems that undergird ocean governance be made more effective for environmental protection of the seas and to preserve freedom of navigation?
- What new frameworks or mechanisms need to be developed to enhance cooperation and trust among stakeholders, ensuring equitable access to and sustainable use of marine resources?

Dawoon Jung, Lecturer, Australian National Centre for Ocean Resources and Security, University of Wollongong, Australia
John Ulanga, Director of Economic Diplomacy, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and East African Cooperation, United Republic of Tanzania

Moderator: Vishal Surbun, Senior Law Lecturer, University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa

STUDIO AGENDA*Ganga Hall* | **Plastics in the Ocean: Cleaning Up Our Common Heritage**

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has called for legal restrictions on single-use plastics across the G-20 nations and committed the Indian Navy to directly cleaning up plastic pollution in the oceans.

- What measures can be taken to make the dream of plastic-free maritime regions a reality?
- What sectors can be quickly reformed to reduce their reliance on plastics that cause pollution?
- How can the various stakeholders be given the right incentives?

Paritosh Chakor Deshpande, Associate Professor, Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU), Norway

Simone Smith-Godfrey, Founder, Blue Heritage Chamber of Commerce, South Africa

Moderator: Jaibal Naduvath, Vice President and Senior Fellow, Observer Research Foundation, India

Ganga Hall | **Gender in the Maritime Domain: Breaking Barriers**

Shipping, whether on the oceans or inland, has traditionally been a gendered occupation. Yet, in past decades, women have broken into previously male-dominated professions in this sector.

- What are their experiences?
- How can we make the sector more welcoming?
- Are there regulatory or norm changes that are required, in various geographies and at the multilateral level, that would help?

Captain Radhika Menon, India's First Merchant Navy Captain and Nari Shakti Awardee, 2022 by the President of India

Reshma Nilofer Visalakshi, Master Pilot, India's First Woman River Pilot and Nari Shakti Awardee, 2018 by the President of India

Moderator: Nicole van Spronsen, Project Manager, Maritime Research Institute Netherlands (MARIN), Netherlands

STUDIO AGENDA*Ganga Hall* | **Not So Distant: The Arctic and Us**

The Arctic region is a fragile and yet vitally important ecosystem — and one under pressure from the intensifying effects of climate change. The indigenous communities, biodiversity, and traditional ways of life in the regions are under threat. At the global level, swifter climate action is needed; but, at the local level, adaptation to a changing climate is already underway.

- How are the settlements, communities and indigenous peoples of the region dealing with a changing Arctic?
- Can we find new ways to increase global awareness of the effects of climate change on the Arctic, and its implications for the globe?
- What forms of international cooperation and multilateral action are needed to manage and mitigate these changes?

Christian Clauwers, Ocean & Polar Explorer, Environmental Reporter, Documentary Photographer, Belgium

Erkki Parkkinen, Mayor, Municipality of Salla, Finland

Ishita Sharma, R&D Manager, Port of Esbjerg, Denmark

Moderator: Rolf Rødven, Executive Secretary, Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Program, Arctic Council, Norway

Ganga Hall | **The Internet of Maritime Things: Automation, AI, and the New Blue Economy**

The shipping industry is on the verge of a profound technological transformation. New energy and autonomous vessels poised to revolutionise shipping; AI and the Internet of Things will transform logistics. This will examine how new tech is transforming the maritime business and examine how governance and regulatory frameworks will need to be updated to stay in alignment with this altered reality.

Martin Røymo Skedsmo, Key Account Manager, Kongsberg Satellite Services, Norway

Venkata Ramana Akkaraju, Chairperson, New Mangalore Port Authority, India

Moderator: Erin Watson, Managing Director, Baker & York, Australia

STUDIO AGENDA*Ganga Hall* | **Europe in the Indo-Pacific: Markets, Manufacturing and Sustainability**

The nations of Europe increasingly have well-defined and converging strategies for engagement with the Indo-Pacific, most of which prioritise the sustainable development of the region. The prosperity of the two regions is inextricably linked, and secure supply lines between them is important for that prosperity. This session will deliberate on exactly how the nations of Europe envision their interests in the Indo-Pacific, and the role that ocean trade and maritime security plays in that vision.

Anna Maria Corazza Bildt, Former Member of the European Parliament

Bart de Jong, Special Advisor, International Relations, Ministry of Infrastructure and Water Management, Government of the Netherlands

Moderator: Kabir Taneja, Deputy Director and Fellow, Observer Research Foundation, India



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