

Good afternoon, Ladies and Gentlemen. My name is Masafumi Shukuri, serving as the Chairperson of the Japan Maritime Center (JMC).

To begin with, I would like to thank Mr. Gaute Sivertsen, Director of the International Oil Pollution Compensation Funds (IOPC Funds), Capt. Aaron Cooper of the Oil Companies International Maritime Forum (OCIMF), and Ms. Ayumi Therrien of the International Tanker Owners Pollution Federation (ITOPF) for taking part in today's seminar despite long-haul travel.

The theme of our seminar today is "The role of the IOPC Funds in the protection of the marine environment". This is the first opportunity for JMC to host a seminar together with the IOPC Funds. We are lucky to have a large number of audiences today, both at this venue and via online streaming, and I would like to express my sincere gratitude to those attending.

JMC has been a core public interest incorporated foundation in the Japanese maritime sector, since its establishment in 2007. We have dedicated ourselves to specialized research programs and a wide range of grant programs, reflecting the domestic and international trends as appropriate. One of our important activities is to prepare for the IOPC Funds' Governing bodies and various committees of the IMO. Our researchers have been attending those meetings as a part of the Japanese delegation. In order to contribute to the debate at these meetings and committees, we have set up five committees of our own under the umbrella of the Center's Research Group on Shipping Issues, thus providing fora to discuss the issues among the Japanese industry, Government, and academia, and making considerable contributions to the discussions at respective committees.

In addition, as soon as the restriction imposed regarding the Pandemic was lifted last year, the Center started visiting international organizations and exchanging information actively. In September last year, I visited the headquarters of the IMO and the IOPC Funds office in London and had a meeting with Mr. Sivertsen, the Director, which resulted in the co-hosting of today's seminar as a part of mutual cooperation and collaboration.

As you are aware, the IOPC Funds is an international organization established in the aftermath of the Torrey Canyon disaster in 1967 and has played a major role in providing prompt and adequate compensation to victims of oil pollution damage caused by oil tanker accidents to date.

If we look at recent years, major incidents such as Heibei Spirit occurred, and the IOPC Funds have contributed significantly to the relief of victims and restoration of the marine environment.

The present Fund, established in 1992, has a compensation limit of 203 million SDRs (approximately 36.5 billion yen). The basic structure is that the Funds start to provide compensation in case the amount of established oil pollution damage exceeds the shipowner's limit of liability. Now, 121 countries are the State members of the 1992 Fund. Japan had been the largest contributor to the Funds since its establishment and is currently the second largest contributor to the 1992 Fund after India.

By the way, I remember when I joined the Ministry of Transport in 1974, my first assignment was to work at the General Affairs Division of the Shipping Bureau, where I was thoroughly involved in the preparation for the enactment of the Oil Pollution Damage Compensation Bill until it eventually passed through the National Diet and became a law in the following year.

This law was enacted to implement two Conventions for Japan to ratify. These are the International Convention on Civil Liability for Oil Pollution Damage of 1969 (69 CLC) and the International Convention on the Establishment of an International Fund for Compensation for Oil Pollution Damage of 1971 (71 FC).

Seven years later, from 1982 to 1983, as the Director of the Marine Pollution Countermeasure Office of the Environment Division in the Minister's Secretariat, I was involved in the ratification and implementation of the Protocol of 1978 relating to the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships, 1973, which is so-called MARPOL 73/78 Convention, adopted by the IMO at that time.

Ten years later, in 1994, when I was serving as a Legal Counsellor to the Cabinet Legislative Bureau, I was involved again in the amendment of the Oil Pollution Damage Compensation Law for Japan to accede to the Protocol to Amend the 1969 and 1971 Conventions, so called CLC92 and FC92. These were adopted to increase the limits of liability of shipowners and the limits of compensation payable by the IOPC Fund.

Each of these works has been very demanding. When I look back at these past works, what I can find is that I have been involved, as a civil servant, in every significant change of the systems concerning ship source oil pollution damage compensation regime and marine pollution and disasters prevention regime. For this reason, I am very pleased to see that our Center is holding this seminar today.

I would like to add that a number of officers from the former MOT and the present MLIT have taken offices in turn at the IOPC Funds since 1982. Currently, Mr. Okugawa is working for the Funds with Mr. Sivertsen, and he is also attending this seminar. Dr. Hideo Osuga, who is going to have the closing remarks of this seminar today, worked for the IOPC Funds for four years from 1993 and has been a member of the Fund's Joint Audit Body since 2020. He is currently in his first term and has filed his candidacy for re-election to be held at the Assembly of the Funds in November this year. I would like to ask all of

those attending today, including the members of embassies, to please support Dr. Osuga for his re-election.

We are having distinguished speakers today to cover various topics related to oil pollution compensation, marine pollution prevention, and the protection of the marine environment. The speakers are in addition to Mr. Sivertsen, Capt. Cooper, Ms. Therrien, whom I introduced at the outset, Mr. Shinichiro Otsubo, former Director General of the Maritime Bureau, MLIT, Capt. Haruhisa Fujino of Nippon Yusen Kaisha (NYK), and Mr. Motonari Adachi of the Japan Coast Guard.

The presentations will be followed by a panel discussion with six speakers, coordinated by Professor Tomotaka Fujita of Graduate Schools for Law and Politics, the University of Tokyo. Professor Fujita is the chair of the Center's relevant committees regarding the IMO Legal Committee and the IOPC Funds issues.

I hope that this seminar will contribute to provide the attendees with rich new insights and useful hints for future challenges and also that it will contribute to further progress in the challenges concerning international compensation for oil pollution damage and protection of marine environment.

Thank you very much for joining us today.