

A smiling man wearing an orange safety helmet and glasses, sitting on a ship's deck. He is wearing an orange safety suit with reflective stripes. The background shows the ship's structure and a clear sky.

Call to Action

For Achieving a Just Transition
for Africa's Seafarers

November 2024

Background

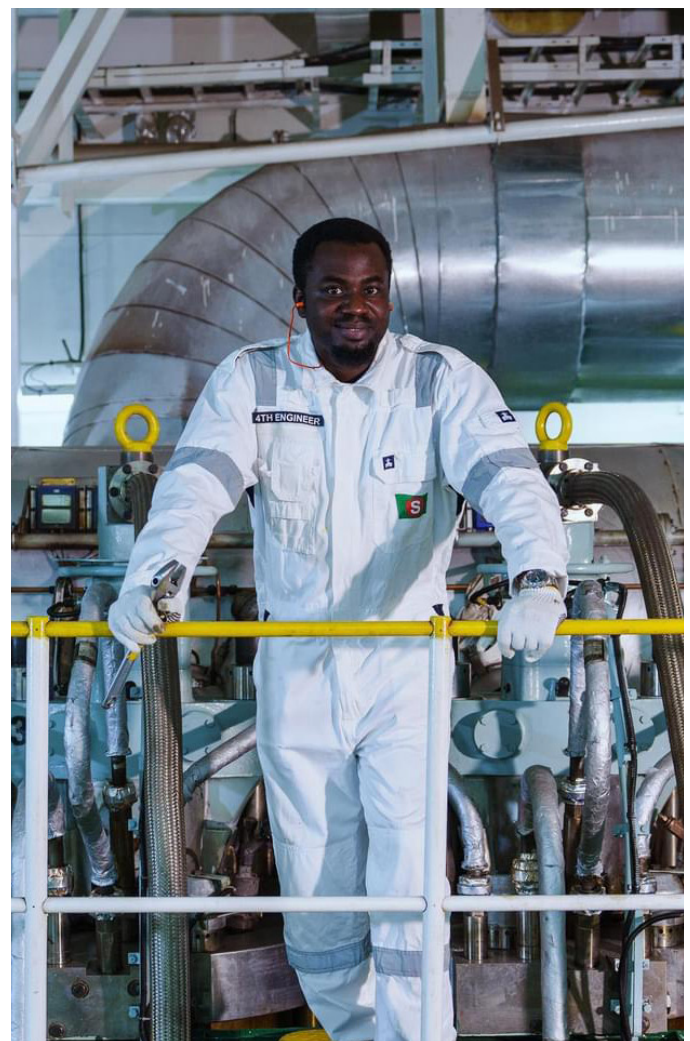
Climate action to cut global emissions of greenhouse gases (GHG) couldn't be more urgent than it is today. As the world seeks to limit global warming to 1.5°C, the global shipping industry came into sharp focus not only because it is reported to be responsible for some [2%](#) of historical global emissions but also because the emissions from shipping continue to grow by as much as [6%](#) year on year. It is for this reason that the International Maritime Organization (IMO) adopted the 2023 Revised GHG Strategy and has committed to cut emissions from shipping to net zero by around 2050. In order to achieve this Strategy, the shipping industry must transition away from conventional 'bunker' fuels towards zero or near-zero GHG emission technologies, fuels and/or energy sources.

As ships shift away from conventional fossil fuels to zero or near-zero GHG emission technologies, fuels and/or energy sources, some of which are now being tested and are considered volatile and dangerous, the men and women who operate these ships need to be able to do so safely. The energy transition therefore imposes additional training requirements for the world's estimated [1.89 million seafarers](#) with [studies conducted by DNV](#) showing that training to handle alternative fuels such as ammonia, hydrogen, methanol, etc. could be required for as many as 800,000 seafarers by the mid-2030s.

With the global community looking to put seafarer safety at the heart of shipping's decarbonisation, the Regional Maritime University (RMU), the South African International Maritime Institute (SAIMI) and the Climate Champions Team convened African stakeholders in the training, certification, employment and welfare of seafarers to discuss how to achieve a 'Just transition'¹ for Africa's seafarers. The discussion was framed around the Maritime Just Transition Task Force's '[10-point Action Plan to Achieve a Just Transition for Seafarers](#)' and further brainstormed on the actions that were considered vital for achieving a transition that leaves no African seafarer behind.

Stakeholders who participated in the engagements agreed that while a global plan is a laudable initiative, the African seafarer has specific circumstances and faces a myriad of peculiar challenges. These include amongst others the lack of access to vessels for practical training largely due to the limited African fleet ownership, the high cost of seafarer training not being affordable for many aspiring seafarers, the unavailability of new technologies and fuels for use in cadet training, the poor diversity with

very low numbers of African female seafarers, etc. With the already existing challenges, the decarbonization of the shipping industry presents an even greater challenge for the African seafarer. Firstly, the lack of clarity on the decarbonisation trajectories and which fuels will be viable under the upcoming IMO regulation has meant that it is difficult to identify which training to give seafarers for a decarbonized future. Secondly, vessel development and technology are out-pacing seafarer training and lastly, there is a lack of qualified trainers and training infrastructure.



¹According to the International Labour Organization, a Just Transition means "greening the economy in a way that is as fair and inclusive as possible to everyone concerned, creating decent work opportunities and leaving no one behind".

Stakeholders identified the following three points from the Maritime Just Transition Task Force’s 10-point Action Plan to Achieve a Just Transition for Seafarers as being the most important for the just transition of African seafarers:

1. Investing in skills

There is an urgent need for major investments to be made in seafarer training institutions to enable them to deliver the training necessary for a sustainable, highly-digitised and decarbonized shipping industry.

2. Gender and diversity

State and non-state actors to create favourable policies and incentives to increase Africa’s representation in the global seafarer community while attracting more African women to a seafaring career.

3. Global labour standards

Employers, unions and regulators to ensure that the maritime industry’s transition away from fossil fuels and the resulting impact on seafarers is aligned with globally established labour standards.



Without concrete action, many African seafarers will not receive the new skills and additional training required to safely handle the new fuels and technologies onboard zero emission vessels and will not only have a health and safety challenge but will also be at risk of being unemployable in a decarbonized shipping sector. We the undersigned believe that this situation is urgent and that shipping’s decarbonization should leave no African seafarer behind. In order to achieve this, we the undersigned call for the following actions.

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Key Actions Required

Governments, regulators and policymakers to:

- a. Invest in seafarer training institutions** equipping them with training infrastructure such as computers, simulators, training vessels, tools, personal protective equipment (PPE), etc.
- b.** Adopt clear and targeted policies to increase the number of African cadets produced each year. This will place the continent in good stead to seize the opportunity presented by decarbonization to **become a major supplier of qualified seafarers** globally and to fill the estimated annual gap of 90,000 seafarers per annum.
- c.** Ship registries of African states should mandate² **African flagged ships to offer sea time** to African cadets and to prioritise the employment of African seafarers.
- d.** Develop national and regional **campaigns to attract Africa's youth and especially women** to careers in maritime³.
- e. Promote Science, Technology, Engineering, Math (STEM)** skillsets in national education systems to support the future generation of seafarers.
- f.** Develop National Maritime Skills Councils to **monitor the development of skills required** to handle alternative fuels.

Training institutions to:

- a.** Foster the **training of competent trainers**.
- b.** Enter into collaborations and **partnerships with industry**⁴ to create more opportunities for familiarisation onboard ships and employment of seafarers.
- c.** Develop curricula **that reflects the demands of today's shipping industry** that is transitioning towards zero and near zero GHG emission fuels.
- d.** Include **business and other soft skills in the seafarer training** that may be transferable to a career after seafaring.

Industry to:

- a. Allocate funds for the upskilling and retraining** of already qualified seafarers to ensure a level playing field for all, especially for Africa's 78,000 seafarers.
- b.** In the recruitment of seafarers, give preference to **African seafarers particularly women** who will serve as role models and in turn encourage young African girls to choose careers in shipping.
- c. Involve seafarers in decarbonisation planning** and get seafarer buy-in for these plans.
- d. Support training institutions** with curriculum development⁵, guest lecturers, equipment etc. to facilitate cadet training.
- e.** Accelerate research and development to quickly **scale-up and de-risk zero emission fuels and technologies** for adoption.
- f.** Provide **mentorship and internship opportunities** for Africa's youth to expose them to various maritime career options.



² Similar to the UK Register's [Tonnage Tax Scheme](#) which requires a commitment by the shipping company to train or underwrite the training of sufficient UK seafarers in exchange for a favourable rate of Corporate Tax.

³ The Ghana Maritime Authority's ["Go to Sea" Campaign](#) is worth replicating.

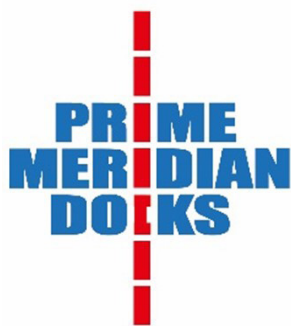
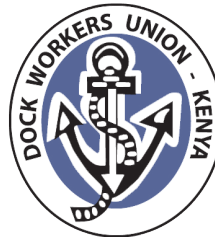
⁴ Hafnia and Regional Maritime University (RMU) have entered into a [partnership](#) in which Hafnia has committed to engaging 16 cadets from the university each year.

⁵ Lloyd's Register Maritime Decarbonisation Hub led several hybrid risk assessment workshops, the output of which will form the basis for the drafting of basic and advanced training frameworks as well as Instructor Handbooks for handling of methanol, ammonia, each marine fuel mentioned above.

Supporting Organisations



**INTERNATIONAL
TRANSPORT
WORKERS'
FEDERATION**

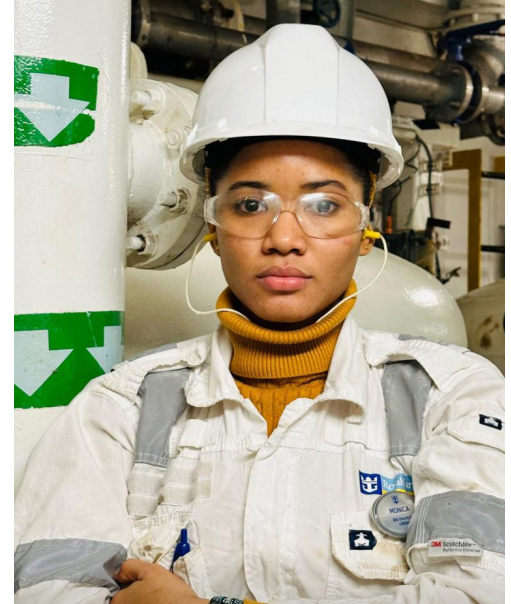


Summary

We believe that the above actions are necessary for the achievement of a just transition for African seafarers, and we will translate these into our strategies and plans for seafarer training, certification, employment and welfare.

We call on all stakeholders in the training, certification, employment and welfare of seafarers to meaningfully engage and collaborate to achieve a just transition for the African seafarer. State actors have an important role to play in embracing the opportunities created by shipping's decarbonization and in reorienting maritime training and certification. We call on climate finance providers to prioritise the funding of the investments that are required to upgrade African maritime training institutions and for developing new fit-for-purpose curricula. The shipping industry must support these efforts by offering African seafarers on-the-job training to safely handle these new fuels and technologies while offering cadets much needed sea time on zero emission vessels. Lastly, we highlight the opportunity for Africa to increase her contribution to the supply of seafarers globally and we commit to, and call on all stakeholders to be intentional in implementing policies to encourage African youth especially women to embrace careers in seafaring.

We the undersigned recognize that the achievement of a transition that leaves no African seafarer behind requires multi-stakeholder effort, and that we have different roles but shared responsibilities. We are ready to work in partnership with governments and with each other to collaboratively achieve an effective road map which prioritises the health, safety and well-being of the African seafarer and enables them to participate in and contribute fully to the achievement of shipping's net zero goals.



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