

Statement by Prof. Orestis Schinas  
Permanent Representative of the Union of Comoros  
IMO Assembly  
27 November 2019 – 31st session

Mr. President,

Mr. Secretary-General,

Excellencies,

Distinguished delegates,

Ladies and gentlemen,

1. It is a unique privilege and an honor for me to address this assembly. We gather today under interesting and challenging circumstances. Climate change, immigration and the transition to the Blue Economy are only a few of the challenges faced by the international community.
2. Experience suggests acute environmental, safety and security challenges necessitate sound, effective and globally applied regulation. In this regard, the undisputed success of the IMO is supported by objective evidence. This success is due to the constructive contributions of Member States, the secretariat, staff and the governing framework of the Organization.

Challenges Today: Climate Change and Sustainable Use of the Ocean

3. Indisputably, the main challenge faced today by the international maritime community is no other than climate change, environmental degradation and the sustainable use of the oceans. It has already been accentuated by many delegations, that the latest developments on the regulation of air emissions result in contradictory outcomes for all stakeholders and especially for ship owners and operators. Hence, vigilant and collective attention, consultation and action is required.
4. In this regard, the Comorian Administration would like to stress our commitment and aim to contribute actively in the discussion on decarbonization. We also consider that any regulatory initiative should not

rebut operational pragmatism. In this regard, we strongly believe that gradual decarbonization should be advocated on the basis of clear and achievable goals that do not surprise or intimidate the market. Ergo, our Administration encourages the Member States to also consider proven wind-assisted power boosting devices as complementary technologies alongside the currently dominant combustion engines and as a vital tool in the move to a decarbonized fleet. There are currently multiple wind technology solutions becoming available for both large and small vessels and the regulatory effort is low, yet the benefits are high.

5. Regarding the sustainable use of the oceans, we see only opportunities and high-rewarding challenges for the international community. The adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in all levels of planning will disrupt existing business models and practices and offers a right set of circumstances for a better future for all Member States, including for the less developed ones and especially for the Small Island Developing States (SIDS).
6. Thus, our Administration will support by all means available the further implementation of the SDGs and policies towards a fair use of our oceans, as well as the active and effective participation of the IMO in the various bodies and forums of the United Nations. We applaud the good work that the IMO has already achieved in this arena and encourage all Member States to continue supporting and building the momentum that the IMO has already started in addressing all relevant issues.

### The Comorian Administration

7. Our commitment to the goals of IMO is substantiated from all the important milestones we have achieved in the recent years despite limited resources. Our Administration has successfully concluded the IMSAS Audit in 2019; valuable feedback on many issues is given, yet we consider as very important the attestation of the notable improvement of our Flag State obligations and of the advances in matters of Coastal and Port State. Moreover, all issues related to LRIT and GMDSS have been effectively dissolved. Additionally, our Administration has fully covered pending fees

to the IMSO and adheres to the plan for settling pending fees to the IMO. Besides, our Administration has nominated experts for further training and education, generously provided under the Technical Cooperation Programme. Last but not least, our Administration aims to be actively contributing in targeted fields by submitting documents and proposals for further consideration by the Member States.

### Conclusion

8. Mr. President, the Union of Comoros remains a firm supporter of the IMO leadership. We acknowledge the dedication of all the staff-members of the Organization and their endeavors during the 31<sup>st</sup> Assembly. We are all confident that challenges, such as climate change, will be addressed with operational pragmatism, international consensus and a scientifically supported vision for the future.

Thank you.