The Joint Working Group should:

1. Consider the respective work programmes of the International Labor Organization (ILO), the International Maritime Organization (IMO), and the Conference of Parties to the Basel Convention, on the issue of ship scrapping in order to avoid duplication of work and overlapping of responsibilities and competencies between the three organizations, and identify further needs.

2. Facilitate the exchange of views between the three organizations in order to ensure a coordinated approach to all relevant aspects of ship scrapping.

Introduction – The Anatomy of Failure

The first meeting of the joint ILO/IMO/Basel Convention Working Group was remarkable in that it managed to make the already unfortunate situation of distrust and poor communication that existed between the various stakeholders and global agencies involved in seeking to properly regulate shipbreaking and ships waste trade far worse.

Rather than coming together to improve communication in order to really find the best solutions to a problem, and engage in an open discussion about what is best for this world, a very determined IMO/maritime industry engaged a strategy designed well in advance of the meeting to “win” an outcome to best serve the narrow interests of one very powerful industry. This industry and its surrogates such as large flagging states and owner states (e.g. Norway, Liberia, Malta, and Greece), came not to “consider respective work” or facilitate an “exchange of views.” Rather they came to the table with swords drawn, positions pre-locked in place, a long list of taboo subjects not to be allowed an airing, and a strategy to veto anything that might give recognition of the Basel Convention’s legal status over ships.

This was a stunning result and indeed the very definition of failure because the idea of the meeting was to accomplish the opposite – a dialogue.

One was left with the conclusion that the shipping industry is so addicted to the immense profits gained by their current ability to externalize real environmental costs by shipping contaminated vessels, and by the reaping of the steel windfall at their end-of-life, that they cannot humanly or humanely judge the immorality of their ship disposal business as currently practiced.
While the meeting was subject to repeated indignant claims that the shipping industry was an honorable one, it became increasingly clear that it does not act as such. Much of the shipping industry is revealed to be one of the last industries on earth that really operates without transparency, without respectful process, and due to such aberrations as flags-of-convenience, without controls over much of their business. Certainly they are an industry completely out of touch with the polluter pays and producer responsibility principles.

As we stated at the meeting it appeared that rather than an atmosphere of cooperation it was an atmosphere of extreme competition – it seemed like a race, to see who could establish their leadership role the quickest on the issue of waste ships. Unfortunately, however it was clearly a race to the bottom and not to the top in terms of providing rigorous controls to ensure environmental justice.

One must recall however that the meeting was designed to defray battle lines, not to fully engage in UN civil war. One must recall that the meeting was first proposed by Denmark within the Basel Convention, after it became clear that the IMO and the Basel Convention were proceeding rapidly on what appeared to be competitive and at times contradictory pathways, rather than working within existing competencies cooperatively. An openness and exchange of views and perspectives was sought. As the Danish Delegate explained on the floor on the morning of the meeting’s third and final day, “We came hoping to be able to learn each other’s languages, to discuss and to listen.” Instead, as the United States delegation noted also on the floor, “we are spending all of our time talking about what we cannot talk about.”

Indeed, dictatorial control by chairs and open contradiction of the terms of reference were the order of the day so that nothing that the IMO, ILO or Basel Convention is currently proceeding on, could be questioned, let alone discussed. Never has BAN witnessed a UN meeting that was so shocking in its lack of proper process and fairness and that was clearly “stitched-up” in advance.

These narrow interests frightened as they are of halting the disproportionate dumping of hazardous wastes on developing countries, approached the meeting as a battlefield and did well to dig the trenches and gird themselves by taking full advantage of its structure -- the venue, the chairmanship, and the Rules of Procedure, to “stack the deck” in their favor, sacrificing all pretense of real diplomacy. It was a shameless mugging by one UN institution (IMO) of another (UNEP), with the ILO being largely neutralized.

**Tipping the Scales**

We do not see it all as an accident that the first meeting was held at the IMO; that the two most significant chair positions out of three, rested with shipping giant Norway, and their IMO representatives – not their environmental representatives; that the members of the working group were more than 2 to 1 positioned to be in support of the IMO/Maritime
interests; that a challenge to open up the rules of procedure to make things more democratic were rebuffed by edict from the Norwegian chair.

First there was the unbalanced stacking of the deck of the “voting members” of the working group with the blatant manipulation of the International Labour Organization’s tripartite structure. While the tripartite system of the ILO set out in the treaty of Versailles in 1919, which required representation from employers, employees and governments, was meant to be a breakthrough in egalitarianism and inclusion, such purpose was deliberately and maliciously corrupted in this case.

Instead of “employers” of shipbreakers (the laborers of concern in this issue) we had 3 representatives of shipowners. Likewise instead of trade unions representing shipbreakers on the ground we had representatives of large tangentially related unions – International Metalworkers Federation (IMF) and the International Transport Workers Federation (ITF). And, worse, it appears that the shipowners had exacted a position from the ITF of supporting their rather singular legal analysis (see our annotated version of this at: http://www.ban.org/Library/Legal%20application.pdf ) that a ship cannot be a waste under the Basel Convention. On this occasion their support was on and off again and it was difficult to tell if they had a voice much different from that of their employers. Stranger still, despite the insistence on sticking to the tripartite system, the ILO government representatives never materialized. So the seeming care to preserve the tripartite representation was made meaningless without representatives from Labor Ministries.

It is important in this particular meeting where the cultural and political lines were so clearly drawn, to see who in fact was in the Basel camp and who in the IMO camp. Lest BAN is accused of polarizing the debate, by pointing out the demarcations, bear in mind that we are utterly opposed to this type of worldview which relegates important moral issues to a situation not unlike a football match. Indeed this meeting was designed precisely to defuse this polarization, but since those attending were clearly behaving as if it was, we must report on the uneven playing field and uneven representation.

Among the 5 Basel delegates, two were clearly represented by Maritime authorities (Jamaica and Russia). Among the IMO delegates, only one was represented by an Environment authority (Netherlands). The tally of affiliations appears below:

**Members:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Delegation</th>
<th>Representing</th>
<th>Labor/ILO or other</th>
<th>Maritime / IMO Affiliation</th>
<th>Environment/ Basel Affiliation</th>
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<tr>
<td>Mr. Sveingung Oftedal, Norwegian Maritime Directorate, <strong>Norway</strong></td>
<td>IMO</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mr. Michael Carter, US Maritime Administration, USA</td>
<td>IMO</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Mr. Shinichiro Otsuba, Shipbuilding Division, Maritime Ministry of Land, Infrastructure and Transport, Japan</td>
<td>IMO</td>
<td>Japan</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mr. Kees Luttikhuizen, Ministry of Housing, Spatial Planning and Environment, Netherlands</td>
<td>IMO</td>
<td>Netherlands</td>
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<td>Mr. Taiyebur Rahman, Ministry of Shipping, Bangladesh</td>
<td>IMO</td>
<td>Bangladesh</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mr. Oleg Zborovskiy, Maritime, Russia</td>
<td>Basel</td>
<td>Russia</td>
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<td>Mr. Roy Watkinson, Environment Agency, UK</td>
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<td>Captain Lennox Bailey, Maritime Authority of Jamaica, Jamaica</td>
<td>Basel</td>
<td>Jamaica</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mr. Njai Saikou, National Environmental Agency, Gambia</td>
<td>Basel</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mr. Bin Zhang, State Environmental Protection Administration, China</td>
<td>Basel</td>
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<td>Mr. Brian Parkinson, International Shipping Federation (ISF)</td>
<td>ILO</td>
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<td>Mr. Torben Strand, The Baltic and International Maritime Council (BIMCO)</td>
<td>ILO</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mr. Bernard J.M. Veldhoven (P and O Nedlloyd)</td>
<td>ILO</td>
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<td>Mr. Rob Johnson, International Metalworkers’ Federation (IMF)</td>
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<td>Mr. Vidyadhar V. Rane, IMF (India)</td>
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<td>Mr. John Quigly, IMF</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mr. John Bainbridge, International Transport Workers’ Federation (ITF)</td>
<td>ILO</td>
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TOTALS 4 9 4

Observer Affiliations (determined by the Ministries or NGO’s represented)
If the representation of the meeting seemed lopsided, it was. As can be seen from the above more than 2:1 ratio existed between IMO/Maritime affiliated institutions or countries in the actual members. And with respect to total participants the score was 28 to 9 – or more than a 3:1 ratio in favor of the IMO/Maritime interest.

**ITF Reverses Long Held Solidarity on Waste Trade**

Perhaps most surprising, and disappointing was to see the International Transport Workers Federation which had in the past, passed resolutions at its Congress that condemned waste trade of all kinds and for any reason, and whose members in far corners of the world, had become engaged in various campaigns to refuse to allow toxic waste trade, now reverses itself and cozy up to big shipping business.

At the Basel Convention’s COP7 meeting industry had circulated a legally spurious argument that a ship could not be a waste. The analysis was so weak that no Basel Party took it seriously and BAN did not bother to respond at that time. But now it appears it actually was taken seriously by the ITF and they signed onto the document, basically agreeing with untenable legal arguments that exempt ships as waste from falling under a regime that could go a long way toward actually protecting workers from the “death a day” they now experience.

However, at the joint meeting BAN/Greenpeace decided to provide the legal analysis which deconstructs the International Chamber of Shipping (ICS) mantra that a ship cannot be a waste. The ICS document boils down to the assertion that a ship because it is a large unit that contains waste and does by itself not possess a hazardous characteristic until broken, cannot be considered a waste. Unfortunately this notion of a “ship as a unit” not possessing hazardous characteristics falls flat on its face (it would mean that any waste contained as a unit (e.g. in a barrel) would be exempt from Basel and has no basis under the law.

**Rules of Procedure**

Prior to the meeting BAN and Greenpeace, lodged a protest statement regarding the Rules of Procedure of the meeting once it was revealed that the ILO tripartite rules
effectively placed industry NGOs as voting members, while environmental NGOs were relegated to observer status.

This in our view was clearly unacceptable, and would lead to the meeting lacking balance and therefore credibility. In our years of work dealing with UN bodies, it was unprecedented at a United Nations forum to not be placed on an equal footing with industry NGOs. We urged that some simple changes to the Rules of Procedure which would make all participants equal in terms of voting, which would be done by consensus, and assurances that all were equal when it came to sub-meeting attendance.

BAN and Greenpeace raised these concerns within the Basel Convention pre-meeting which was attended by all Industry NGOs. Despite our insistence that were the situation reversed, we would argue strongly for equal footing for industry, the industry delegations made no peace gesture in support of the proposal despite it receiving broad support from the country delegates at the meeting. Canada in fact had already drawn up draft rules of procedure that would reflect such changes. The Basel Convention pre-meeting agreed to suggest the new rules at the beginning of the joint meeting. There were no objections made especially as it was noted that the meeting was not there to make decisions in any case, but only recommendations.

However, it was clear that some in the room had strong objections. When the issue of Rules of Procedure arose on the agenda the following day, the UK, Netherlands and Canada all tried to suggest changes in favor of consensus decision making. The Norwegian chair Jens Koefoed, simply shut them down. It was clear that he had already decided that there would be no discussion on the rules of procedure at this meeting and he stated as much.

As was to be the pattern throughout the entire meeting, Norway would make the proposal (basically renouncing Basel delegates), and Japan, and Greece would quickly follow in support, giving the chair his “consensus”. He ruled that the rules would stand for this meeting but could be changed at the next after proposals to change them were circulated. He also reiterated that in this meeting we will always work to achieve consensus.

Thus it was that BAN and Greenpeace’s concerns, and the Basel Group’s proposed rules (as were to be submitted by Canada) were completely ignored and set aside. Let it also be noted that during the course of the meeting, no major recommendation or decision was made by consensus, rather, they were made almost entirely by heavy handed rulings from two chair positions both held by Norway.

**Chairs – The Roles played by Norway**

One would have thought that Norway, would be in the perfect leadership position on the subject of shipbreaking due to that country’s well recognized commitment to sustainable development, human rights, as well as playing a leadership role in global shipping and maritime law. Norway was strongly committed to all three organizations represented at the meeting, and their legally binding commitments and missions. Thus their selection as
overall chair of the meeting in Mr. Jens Koefoed, and Mr. Sveittung Oftedal as chair of
the working group on Future Work Plans was seen as highly appropriate at the outset.

The other chair position for the working group on promotion and implementation of the
guidelines was given to the UK. While the UK Basel membership might have provided a
counterpoint to the IMO hard edged positions, as this group’s scope was limited to
promoting guidelines already developed, it was far less important meeting with respect to
exploring overlapping competencies and roles and future implications.

Those who believed that Norway would lend balance and harmony to the discussions
were betrayed and many in attendance privately voiced shock at what eventually
transpired. Norway clearly came to the meeting to use its chair positions to manipulate
the meeting and move it very clearly away from Basel Convention competence and in
favor of the work program and agenda of the IMO.

Interestingly, it did not appear that there was a common position worked out for the
government of Norway, with two representatives from the Ministry of Environment of
Norway, in attendance, clearly pushed aside, and at times rebuffed by their Maritime
Ministry compatriots.

As a chair of the key working group on Work Plans, Mr. Oftedtal was so combative and
antagonistic to the Basel regime that BAN approached the Norwegian representatives
asking, “just what was the position of Norway with respect to controlling the export of
ships for scrap?” Norway was one of the first countries to ratify the Basel Ban
Amendment and implement it into national law and had already recognized in the past
that ships were waste under the Convention. Thus we were very confused why Norway
was advocating a position denying competence of the Basel Convention. The Norwegian
delegate admitted that yes, if a ship were leaving Norway for an Asian destination and it
was carrying asbestos in its hulk, it would have to be stopped under Norwegian law.
Thus Norway was found arguing against itself.

But this amazing assertion, contradicting what was being asserted in the meeting by the
Norwegian chairs, was not made on the floor of the meeting but only whispered in the
hallways. Discussion of the current legal applicability of Basel and the steadily
developing case-law on the subject was disallowed.. The fact that this taboo was being
imposed by Norwegian leadership (Basel champions from the very beginning and well
known as a country where the concept of sustainable development was born and with a
strong record on human rights) was all the more disturbing.

Statement by Special Rapporteur of the UN High Commission for Human Rights

BAN had learned that the new Special Rapporteur on Human Rights on the Adverse
Effects of the Illicit Movement and Dumping of Toxic and Dangerous Products and
Wastes on the Enjoyment of Human Rights wished to issue a statement to the meeting
and had done so on the first day of the meeting by fax (see Annex II of this report).
When I inquired as to whether they had received it, on the first day I was told no. On the
second day, they still said that it had not been received. So BAN then called the High Commission Office in Geneva to see if they could not resend it. Then after that phone call direct from Geneva, it was suddenly found and it was agreed that it would be distributed to the meeting. BAN next asked that it be attached to the report and the chair at first refused to do so. It was only after BAN said that if that was the case, then we wanted to see it attached to our statement in the report, the chair finally agreed to attach it to the report. This letter/statement and that of Greenpeace and BAN marked the only time the issue of human rights was raised in the course of the meeting.

**Work Programmes of the Three Bodies**

Norway (Mr. Oftedtal) proposed that the consideration of the work programmes of the three bodies be moved to a working group. He was then asked by his compatriot (Mr. Koefoed) to chair that meeting. Mr. Oftedtal then came to the meeting with a matrix of recommendations already set out on paper. These he proceeded to “work through” but allowed no substantive changes to them even when proposed by Norwegian Basel delegates.

The recommendations were highly biased in the direction of IMO taking full legal competence of the shipbreaking issue, some of them even reading like self-congratulatory acclamations. For example: “The possible development of mandatory requirements on ship recycling in the IMO is of utmost importance. Therefore the three organizations should: conduct their work to ensure a positive momentum on this issue.” etc.

When BAN, citing the terms of reference of the meeting as working to “avoid duplication of work and overlapping of responsibilities and competencies between the three organizations, and identify further needs as well as facilitating the exchange of views between the three organizations in order to ensure a coordinated approach to all relevant aspects of ship scrapping,” asked that the future work include “identifying existing regimes, including the Basel Convention with a view to not having overlapping mechanisms,” he was told that no, that was not appropriate. On cue, Japan agreed with his assertion. BAN had to take the floor again and state, “are you meaning to say that we are not to accomplish what the meeting was asked to do in its terms of reference?” we were told, “there is no support for your idea from members, only observers.” This statement belied the Joint Meeting Chair’s assurances that decisions would be made by consensus. When BAN protested to him (Mr. Oftedtal about this manner of running the meeting, he suggested BAN take it up with Mr. Koefoed).

Thus it was that even the terms of reference of the meeting itself were conveniently discarded by the chairs, and indeed almost any issue of a principle or obligation as required in the Basel Convention was made a taboo subject.

But such treatment was not just relegated to an environmental NGO like BAN. Similarly even the UK (one of two working group chairs) and other EU states were rebuffed by the chair of the meeting on numerous proposals. The UK subsequently was forced to issue a statement attached to the report of the meeting which called among other things for issues
which they and others had tried to raise, to no avail, to be placed on the agenda of the second meeting.

These issue areas included:

- To discuss the responsibility of flag states and other concerned states such as port states and recycling states in the context of the environmentally sound management of ship scrapping.
- The basic principles of an applicable control mechanism
- Pre-cleaning of ships and its role in sustainable ship scrapping operations
- Understanding of concepts such as environmentally sound management and prior informed consent.

The UK and Netherlands also asked for the second meeting to take place in the year 2005 so that meaningful action could be taken prior to upcoming meetings at both IMO and at Basel. This notion of a second meeting taking place in 2005 was vetoed by the chair disallowing further discussion on the matter.

In sum, the meeting closed abruptly with the chair claiming it to be a success “because we did not spend 3 days discussing the Rules of Procedure.” The only countries that were allowed to have their viewpoint prevail or even be discussed at length were the countries refusing to consider Basel Convention competence over end-of-life ships (e.g. Norway, Japan, Greece, Malta, Liberia). One was left with the impression that they had gotten through the Joint meeting without having to discuss the Basel Convention and its competence, principles or obligations, and they were now free to move with impunity within the MEPC to do whatever they could to try to subsume Basel competence on ships as waste.

**Conclusion**

At the close of the meeting BAN declared it an utter failure. Clearly it had failed in two of its primary mandates – to avoid duplication of work and overlapping of responsibilities and competencies between the three organizations, and identify further needs,” and to “facilitate the exchange of views between the three organizations in order to ensure a coordinated approach to all relevant aspects of ship scrapping.” (See attached press release)

Rarely have we had to denounce a meeting so strongly, nor to issue a report such as this. However it would be a dereliction of our duty as NGO watchdogs to resort to any form of diplomatic euphemism to describe what transpired at this first Joint meeting. Many present said they had never witnessed anything like it.

As a result of the diplomatic thuggery displayed at the first joint meeting, BAN no longer has any reason to have faith in the joint meeting process, nor any belief that the maritime industry wishes to consider any possibility that Basel principles, obligations or decisions apply to ships at end-of-life. Nor do we think that they believe they have to listen to what
Basel has to say. It is clear that this industry believes that they can ignore existing international law, write their own rules, and confine them to what benefits them alone – the world and especially the disempowered populations in it, be damned.

It is the politics of the bully, and it is ugly. If they get away with moving away from the fundamental principles of the Basel Convention which as stated in the Preamble include:

Recognizing also the increasing desire for the prohibition of transboundary movements of hazardous wastes and their disposal in other States, especially developing countries; and

Convinced that hazardous wastes and other wastes should, as far as is compatible with environmentally sound and efficient management, be disposed of in the State where they were generated.

…then the global community will have taken a massive backwards step away from sustainability and human rights.

The Basel Convention is far, far more than a reporting system and a call for using advanced technologies. Rather it was an instrument placing responsibility on those economic interests that benefit from hazardous waste generation. It was a call for upstream prevention of waste and its movement, not a regime to legitimize its exportation downstream. If the shipping industry succeeds perpetuating the disproportionate dumping of its toxic post-consumer ship wastes, on developing countries, simply because of their arrogance and power, it will be a devastating blow, not only to the Basel Convention but to global governance for the benefit of all present and future generations.

END

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ANNEX I

INDUSTRY SCUTTLES PROGRESS ON GLOBAL SHIP DUMPING

BAN and Greenpeace Press Release

London, 17 February 2005 -- Greenpeace and the Basel Action Network (BAN) condemned the special joint United Nations meeting (1) on shipbreaking as an utter failure today. The meeting was hijacked by the shipping industry interests throughout, blocking any attempts to end the practice of exporting toxic laden vessels to Asia, risking the health of workers and the environment. Attempts to ensure coordination, build on existing international law, and find practical solutions all failed.

"The meeting could be called a 'victory' for 'dumping-as-usual', and a source of temporary satisfaction for a shipping industry that does not wish to change its ways, and
for those states that support this irresponsible industry -- most notably Norway, Japan, and Greece, said Kevin Stairs of Greenpeace International. But for sustainable development, for environmental justice, for producer responsibility, for the spirit of cooperation, for even beginning to actually reduce the flows of toxic waste to the poorest communities on earth it was a total failure.

Among the missed opportunities cited, the meeting:

- Refused to recognize existing international law (e.g. Basel Convention) and resulting case law forbidding the export of toxic ships
- Proposed nothing that will lead to programmes that will see more ships broken or pre-cleaned in developed countries (e.g. Europe, or North America)
- Failed to provide any direction for investors to promote pre-cleaning and green shipbreaking facilities
- Refused to recommend a global ship recycling fund based on the producer responsibility principle
- Refused proposals to operate in a transparent way, and gave ship owners voting power on the committee, while preventing environmental NGOs from participating as members.
- Failed to mend any fences between the International Maritime Organization and the Basel Convention
- Failed to discuss the human rights aspects of the meeting.
- Proposed nothing that will actually reduce even one kilo of the amount of PCBs and asbestos that currently moves by the hundreds of tonnes each year to Asia.

In October 2004 the Basel Convention (2) reiterated that waste ships fall under the Convention. The need for the signatories of the Convention to clean up the industry is all the more urgent with the European deadlines for phasing out over a thousand single hulled tankers only a matter of months away. (3)

According to environmentalists, the IMO delegates allied with the shipping industry held sway over the meeting with Norway at the helm, holding two of the three chair positions, effectively blocking most of the recommendations made by Basel delegates or non-governmental organizations.

"Instead of a spirit of cooperation, we got an ugly power play from one of the most powerful industries in the world," said Jim Puckett of the Basel Action Network. "It is clear that the real solutions to the problem will not be found at IMO, but with the 163 countries who made a commitment to the Basel Convention principle of minimizing transboundary movement of hazardous waste through pre-cleaning, strict controls, and the promotion of green ship design."

END
ANNEX II

TEXT OF LETTER FROM MR. OKECHKWU IBEANU, SPECIAL
RAPPORTEUR OF THE COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS REGARDING
SHIPBREAKING AND HUMAN RIGHTS

Distinguished Delegates and Participants of the Joint ILO/IMO/BC Working Group
on Ship Scrapping,

Allow me congratulate the Secretariats of the International Maritime Organization, the
Basel Convention, and the International Labour Organization, for their efforts in
organizing this meeting, the country Parties for their support of this work, and for the
civil society members present who are intimately involved with the issue.

The constitution of this working group presents a hopeful positive step toward addressing
the issue of shipbreaking at a global level.

This Office of the Special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights on Adverse
effects of the illicit movement and dumping of toxic and dangerous products and wastes
on the enjoyment of human rights has noted several waste phenomena of concern. In
2003, the Office issued a report [E/CN.4/2004/46/Add.1] where we noted with especial
concern the human rights implications of utilizing developing countries for undertaking
the very dangerous ship recycling enterprises that are made even more dangerous due to
the transboundary movement of many toxic wastes that take place when a ship carrying
asbestos, PCBs and other toxic substances in its structure is allowed to be exported for
recycling.

The United Nations Commission on Human Rights has long considered the issue of illicit
dumping of toxic and dangerous products and wastes in developing countries to adversely
affect the human rights to life and health of individuals in those countries.

This concern, together with the growing practice of the dumping in Africa and other
developing countries by transnational corporations and other enterprises from
industrialized countries of hazardous and other wastes gave rise to the adoption of
resolution 1995/81 at the fifty-first session of the Commission on Human Rights, which
created the Office of the Special Rapporteur.

The issue of human rights and the environment are closely interlinked and this is
especially the case in the matter of the transboundary movement of hazardous wastes,
whether in the form of obsolete ships or in barrels that are transported to our beaches in
the night. The net effect is the same – a transfer of pollution, often from strong
economies and powerful industries, to weaker economies and disempowered
communities.
Regrettably, I am unable to be present in this meeting. Nevertheless, in your deliberations this week and in future meetings it is my hope that you will endeavor not to forget the human rights aspects of this type of trade which, in its extreme form, could become a means of exploiting hapless desperate for any kind of wage. I am delighted by the gathering today which includes the International Maritime Organization, the Basel Convention on the Transboundary Movement of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal, the International Labour Organization, representatives from the shipping industry, and non-government organizations. There can be no better platform for finding sustainable and just solutions to this massive problem than this gathering. My best wishes in your important task goes out once more to all the Participants and the Secretariats, and good luck in the work ahead of you this week.

Yours sincerely,

Mr. Okechkwu Ibeanu
Special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights