



PRESS RELEASE

IMO: First ever plan to steer a course towards decarbonisation welcomed, but strong near-term action is crucial to meet Paris climate goals

13 April: The International Maritime Organisation (IMO) has agreed on an initial strategy to decarbonise international shipping and reduce emissions from ships by at least 50% by 2050. While this agreement falls short of the 70 to 100% reductions by 2050 that the Pacific Islands, the EU and others were calling for ahead of the meeting, it keeps a window open to meet the Paris climate goals and is undeniably a game changer for the shipping sector.

This plan serves as a welcome first step to phase out emissions from the sector, but the IMO must now build on the agreed minimum target of 50% reductions in the next review of the strategy to comply with its fair share of emissions under the Paris Agreement. It must commit to the rapid and strong implementation of near-term measures, which will be discussed later this year, to stay on track with the Paris climate goals to limit warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius.

Shipping accounts for 2% of global emissions and it is time the IMO got on board with the rest of the world to seriously tackle climate change.

Members and partners of the Climate Action Network reacted to the outcome:

John Maggs, senior policy advisor, Seas At Risk and president of the Clean Shipping Coalition, said: *“We have an important agreement and this level of ambition will ultimately require a sector-wide shift to new fuels and propulsion technologies, but what happens next is crucial. The IMO must move swiftly to introduce measures that will cut in-sector emissions deeply and quickly in the short-term. Without these the goals of the Paris agreement will remain out of reach.”*

Manuel Pulgar-Vidal, global climate and energy programme leader, WWF, said: *“This is very welcome news, a good first step and an important policy signal. Shipping is responsible for more than 2 percent of global emissions, and this is growing. The agreement today is an opportunity to bend this curve to align with the Paris Agreement. This needs to translate into urgent action - now.”*

Mark Lutes, senior global climate policy advisor, WWF, said: *“The decision sends a strong signal to the shipping industry and fuel suppliers, that they need to scale up investments in new technologies and their rapid deployment, including alternative fuels and propulsion systems.”*

Catherine Abreu, executive director, Climate Action Network Canada, said:

"This IMO initial strategy represents a small step from the shipping industry to contribute to the long-term goal of the Paris Agreement, to limit the increase of emissions to 1.5C. A 1.5C scenario of international shipping emissions requires decarbonization of the sector between 2035 and 2050 and the reduction of shipping emissions of 70%, aiming to 100% by 2050. Canada, who has the world's longest coastline, should use its position as G7 President and ensure that it calls the IMO to further pursue ambitious and transparent actions to address shipping emissions in a way that it aligns with the objectives of the Paris Agreement."

Kelsey Perlman, international transport policy officer, Carbon Market Watch, said: *"It's encouraging to have an emissions reduction plan for shipping, which for 30 years has avoided serious climate action, although ambition will ultimately be determined by how fast the sector adopts measures. An effective carbon price coupled with technology and operational improvements will be key to unlocking the huge potential for pollution-free shipping."*

Kelsey Perlman on behalf of the International Coalition for Sustainable Aviation (ICSA) said: *"Today's outcome puts international shipping ahead of aviation, short of the type of ambition required by the Paris Agreement, but with a clear, long-term commitment to decarbonize in-sector and peak emissions as soon as possible. This decision should light a fire under ICAO, which has been dragging its feet for over a decade on a vision for long-term decarbonization, arriving only at the mid-term emissions target of carbon neutral growth from 2020 levels. The agreement on shipping emissions today should make people question whether aviation's emissions should be allowed to grow with no concrete plan to decarbonize."*

Bill Hemmings, shipping director, Transport & Environment, said:

"The IMO should and could have gone a lot further but for the dogmatic opposition of some countries led by Brazil, Panama, Saudi Arabia. Scant attention was paid to US opposition. So this decision puts shipping on a promising track. It has now officially bought into the concept of decarbonisation and the need to deliver in-sector emission reductions, which is central to fulfilling the Paris agreement."

Veronica Frank, international political advisor, Greenpeace, said: *"The plan is far from perfect, but the direction is now clear - a phase out of carbon emissions. This decarbonisation must start now and targets improved along the way, because without concrete, urgent measures to cut emissions from shipping now the Paris ambition to limit warming to 1.5 degrees will become swiftly out of reach."*

"Although the deal lists possible mitigation measures, the lack of an action plan for their development and the tone of discussions at the IMO does not give much confidence that measures will be adopted soon. Greenpeace urges the industry to transform these goals into concrete, urgent steps to decarbonise in full as soon as possible and by 2050 at the latest."

"The IMO plan is a first step in the right direction, but much more needs to be done to achieve climate stability. The initial deal will be revised in 2023 and reviewed again in 2028, giving opportunities to strengthen the targets."

Manfred Treber, senior adviser climate/transport, Germanwatch said:

"The Kyoto Protocol adopted in 1997 had stated that the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) should pursue the limitation or reduction of emissions of greenhouse gases not controlled by the Montreal Protocol from international aviation, the IMO should do this for emissions from marine bunker fuels."

It took 19 years until ICAO agreed on CORSIA as a first global instrument to begin to fulfil this task. Now after 21 years - meanwhile the Paris Agreement had been adopted and has entered into force - we welcome that the International Maritime Organisation (IMO) is joining the world to combat climate change. We all know that their step is by far not sufficient to bring us close to the goals of the Paris Agreement with net zero emissions in the second part of this century."

Aoife O'Leary, legal analyst, Environmental Defense Fund Europe said: *"The shipping sector's greenhouse gas emissions reduction target represents an important step forward. The IMO has been talking about climate change for twenty years but the strategy agreed this week marks the beginning of a focused debate about the policies and measures that will help it to modernise and regain the status of a clean and efficient mode of transport. The target falls short on ambition but should be sufficient to drive policy development and consequently investment in clean fuels and technology. EDF remains committed to working with stakeholders including those in the industry to find the ways that will work in order to peak shipping emissions as soon as possible."*

Jennifer Tollmann, climate diplomacy researcher, E3G, said: *"One of the key messages of the Paris agreement was that everybody needed to do more. With today's agreement, one of the most serious climate laggards has acknowledged its responsibility. The IMO has taken an important first step in accepting the role it has to play in contributing to shifting us towards a carbon free future and to finally starting to bring the shipping sector in line with fulfilling the promise of the Paris Agreement. Now it's up to the IMO to build on this to start delivering the ambition and climate action the world is coming to expect."*

About Climate Action Network:

Climate Action Network (CAN) is a global network of over 1200 NGOs working to promote government and individual action to limit human-induced climate change to ecologically sustainable levels. www.climatenetwork.org

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