

**Seminar on CSR Activities for the Shipping Industry**  
**Marina Mandarin**  
**Thursday 26 April**



**Opening Remarks by Yudhishtir D Khatau, President of BIMCO**

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Good afternoon Excellencies, distinguished delegates, friends, ladies and gentlemen

BIMCO is pleased to co-host today's seminar on corporate social responsibility together with the Nippon Foundation and the Japan International Transport Institute, and as co-hosts we welcome and appreciate the support from the MPA and the Japanese Shipowners' Association for this seminar.

As organizers we are pleased to see that the turnout for today's seminar illustrates a strong interest in this subject.

Many of you here this afternoon may be seeking clarifications on what exactly CSR is and how it can be applied in the shipping industry.

Rest assured that you are not alone!

Together the three co-hosts have put together a program which we hope will serve well to answer many of the questions and address the concerns that you may have when the concept of corporate social responsibility is raised in the context of merchant shipping.

In a general sense the concept of CSR is not entirely new. The phrase first appeared about 50 years ago, in the 1960s. Much has happened since then, and in many respects other industries have been more visible in regard to their CSR initiatives.

This is not to say that the shipping industry has been complacent. To the contrary many stakeholders in this business have taken bold measures to protect the environment, to improve training and working conditions, and to support community social programs.

Consider if you will the various green ship and green port programs that have been introduced in different parts of the world.

Such voluntary programs provide incentives to stakeholders who take steps beyond what is required by local or international regulations, actions that indeed are very close if not identical to the spirit of corporate social responsibility.

However in the pursuit of such activities, to date few have done so under the banner of CSR.

This is now beginning to change.

Now we have shipping awards with categories for CSR efforts. One of the winners of such an award will be speaking this afternoon to describe not only how they qualified and won, but also how other stakeholders are involved with and applying CSR.

Nowadays it has also become more common to see shipping companies' annual reports including sections on CSR activities. This is also true of my company, Varun Shipping, as our annual report covers our continued support of a wide spectrum of community initiatives through NGOs as well as programmes for health, education and environment.

You may well be in for some surprises this afternoon, as certain CSR myths and misconceptions fall by the wayside! In a few minutes you will learn that it is not only companies that are introducing CSR related policies and programs, but governments and international organizations are also bringing CSR concepts into their policymaking processes and programs.

It is one thing to identify a trend, however yet another thing to identify the underlying causes.

One key challenge that this industry has faced relates to image. Sadly shipping only comes into the spotlight in times of crisis. This situation works against our efforts to attract young people to a career at sea which will provide the much-needed knowledge and experience for eventual shore-based employment, either on the commercial side or with port and flag administrations.

It has been suggested that adoption and implementation of CSR initiatives can contribute towards improving our industry's image, and create a situation in which a career at sea is once again an attractive option for the youth of the world.

Perhaps the potential of CSR to improve the industry's image has been one of the causes behind this new trend?

I would not say that CSR is the silver bullet that will solve all of our challenges, it is rare that we can rely on one cure in an industry facing challenges on so many fronts.

However it is safe to say that this seminar will provide plenty of food for thought regarding how CSR initiatives can play a key role in not only improving the image of this industry, but also in finding sustainable solutions to the many challenges we face.

In addition, I am sure that by the end of the afternoon we will all have learned quite a lot more about CSR than we were aware of this morning!

Thank you.