Welcome Message by the Conference Chairman

I am delighted to welcome you to the “Regional Maritime Safety Conference, 2019”, which is being held in the historic city of Mumbai which, of course, enjoys global renown as the maritime gateway to India and the country’s commercial capital.

Maritime transportation has been central to international trade since the earliest days of mankind. The UNCTAD’s “2017 Review Report” confirms that global merchandise trade, conducted via the medium of the seas, has been on the rise since 1975. Today, over 80% of global trade by volume and 70% by value is conducted within the maritime domain.

In the world of maritime trade, the Indian Ocean Region has, over the years, acquired a very important position. Over 120,000 ships transit across this oceanic expanse every year, carrying 66% of the world's oil, 50% of the world's container traffic and 33% of the world’s bulk-cargo. The Strait of Bab-el-Mandeb and the Gulf of Aden witness the transit of some 22,000 ships each year, but even this staggering number is dwarfed by the 90,000 ships that transit the Malacca Strait annually.

This increase in the number and variety of shipping is likely to be a characteristic feature of the Indian Ocean Region for a long time to come, largely due to the resurgence of several Asian economies. In turn, this brings to the fore the criticality of a number of aspects related to maritime safety and human-security within the maritime domain that are relevant to several littoral States, as also to numerous maritime transport operators and seafarers of various types and hues. Thus far, maritime safety has, for the most part, been discussed only as a subset of either security, or within a purely economic paradigm. As a result, maritime safety has not often received the attention it deserves. It is high time, therefore, for concerned stakeholders to discuss maritime safety in its varied forms, incorporating, amongst other facets, maritime search-and-rescue (SAR), marine oil-pollution, sustainable fisheries, and, port-security. The Regional Maritime Safety Conference organised by the National Maritime Foundation (NMF) will attempt to address specific issues that shape regional maritime safety practices, but which have not yet received sufficient attention.

With industry experts from around the world coming together at such a conference, the NMF expects to achieve all-inclusive, cooperative solutions to the several problems associated with maritime safety. Towards this end, distinguished experts from across the world have been invited to generate fresh ideas for cooperative solutions in all aspects of maritime safety. A Technical Evaluation Committee has been specially constituted to ensure the desired level of takeaway(s) from this conference.

It is my earnest hope that you will find this inaugural edition of the Regional Maritime Safety Conference to be intellectually stimulating even as you take in the architectural and cultural beauty of Mumbai and imbibe the vibrant joie de vivre that the city so effortlessly exudes.

VAdm Pradeep Chauhan AVSM & Bar, VSM, Indian Navy (Retd)  
Chairman of the Conference  
Director  
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New Delhi