Dr Martin Stopford
President, Clarkson Research
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Notes on key issues: "Tomorrow's Maritime World"

Issue 1: Global economy & carbon – is sea trade slowdown inevitable?
Should the Maritime industry be planning for slower growth in future? Over the last 50 years sea trade has grown at around 3% per annum, and is currently about 11 million tonnes. But if that growth rate goes on, by 2050 trade will have trebled to 30 Mt. Is that what the world economy will need and can it be sustained in terms of emissions and the industry's carbon footprint?

Issue 2: geopolitics & the maritime economy: power or pain?
Since 1997 the OECD's sea imports have stabilized at around 3.5 bill tonnes a year and non-OECD imports have trebled to 6 billion tonnes. Most of this growth was into Asia. Will Asia's role as trade powerhouse continue in the coming decade? How important is one belt, one road? (memo: Africa and South America only account for about 10% of world seaborne imports).

Issue 3: London's maritime service franchise – the business case:
London has a historic franchise as a maritime services centre. It's heritage; language; location; BBC World Services; time zone; maritime education; journalism; English law; and its experts have maintained the franchise despite the decline of UK shipbuilding and domestic shipowning. With growth moving away from the N. Atlantic, but with better global communications, can London's franchise be maintained or even increased?

Issue 4: global energy and the environment:
Global crude oil trade has not increased significantly over the last decade, averaging around 1.9 billion tonnes a year. Over the same period the LNG trade has grown by 70%, but remains quite small - 300 Mt, the amount of crude oil shipped in 1955. With the prospective move to a low pollution economy and electric vehicles, could LNG follow a similar growth path to oil in the coming decades?

Issue 5: digital technology:
Great discussion recently about digital technology to improve sea transport – even autonomous ships. Land-based companies such as UPS, UBER, railways and the manufacturing sector already using this technology intensively, with dramatic results. Do shipping companies have the organisations needed to manage this transition? How disruptive will it be? How much support will they get from shipbuilders; class societies and regulators? How long will it take?

Issue 6: people in shipping – how many, where and what gender?
Skilled personnel matters to shipowners. Currently there is about 1.3 million seafarers. How many might there be in 2030? Women only account for 1.6% of seafarers, less than a decade ago. Is there a future role for women at sea? If there is, what changes to personnel management policies will be needed to achieve this?

Issue 7: world shipbuilding – friend or foe?
World shipbuilding output has fallen 40%, but the capacity reduction is less and there is still a substantial. The three big shipbuilders, China, South Korea and Japan are all struggling to maintain output and China is committed to a leading place in both shipbuilding and Marine equipment by 2025. Is it realistic to expect further significant reductions in shipbuilding output over the next 5 years? Or will the industry be propped up by "bargain orders? also, will China's succeed as a cruise ship builder?