

Marine Biofouling and Its Impacts with Special Reference to China

Xu Xiaoman

Liaoning Maritime Safety Administration
People's Republic of China

In order to make ship sail faster and consume less fuel, various antifouling paints were used to cover ships' hulls. By the 1970s, most seagoing vessels had the organotin compound tributyltin (TBT) as the antifouling paints, which later was found harmful to the environment, especially the marine biodiversity.

As the specialized agency of United Nation on regulating safety and environment issues regarding ships, International Maritime Organization (IMO) developed a series of documents concerning TBT. Particularly, International Convention on the Control of Harmful Anti-fouling Systems on Ships (AFS Convention) was adopted in 2001 and entered into force on 17th, September of 2008. AFS Convention prohibits the application of harmful antifouling systems on existing ship hull by 1 January 2003 and all ships by 1 January 2008.

Shipping industry plays an important role in China economic activities. Meanwhile, China has a long coastline with some sea area, including the aquaculture farm, suffering the harmful effects of TBT. Consequently, it is important for China to take proper measures to address biofouling issues so as to protect environment without imposing unacceptable burden on ships.

In the case of China, the government has put efforts from a variety of aspects including legislation, technical, scientific and institutional. By these measures, China is capable to fulfill the obligations as regulated by AFS Convention, ship use efficient and cost effective alternative and the environment is free from the negative effective of TBT.



23-27 November • Manila, Philippines