

Global Maritime Forum

Shared seas, shifting horizons

Annual Summit 2026–Shanghai

The programme is still under development and subject to change. Last updated on 25 August 2026.

Wednesday, 21 October:

12:00-14:00	Arrival lunch and registration
14:00-15:15	<i>Plenary session</i> Shared seas, shifting horizons The Annual Summit takes place at a pivotal moment for global trade. The maritime sector is grappling with the far-reaching, often violent implications of a shifting geopolitical landscape and macroeconomic uncertainty that challenge its ability to safely maintain the lifelines that deliver food, energy, and essential goods to the global market.
15:15-16:00	<i>Plenary session</i> The state of the sector with IMO Secretary-General Arsenio Dominguez Few are as qualified to speak about the state of the shipping sector in times of rupture as International Maritime Organization Secretary-General Arsenio Dominguez. In a wide-ranging session, Dominguez will touch on the IMO's efforts to address the risks with false and fraudulent flags that currently jeopardise safety at sea, with the pending decision on the IMO's Net-Zero Framework, and on how to equip the maritime workforce for the future. • Arsenio Dominguez, Secretary-General, International Maritime Organization
16:00-16:30	Coffee and tea break
16:30 -17:30	<i>Breakout groups</i> Learning sessions Parallel sessions exploring urgent questions and new ideas Topics include: • Trading in conflicted waters: Examine how the Strait of Hormuz closure and threats of attack in the Red Sea are disrupting supply chains and threatening seafarer safety, and discuss how to improve maritime resilience in conflict zones. • Leading through periods of extreme uncertainty: What does it take to be a leader in times of geopolitical upheaval, threats to safe passage, and trade volatility? Explore the unique leadership challenges facing today's maritime sector. • Lessons from the energy shock: Explore how learnings from the energy security vulnerabilities exposed by the Hormuz crisis and the Ukraine war can improve future resilience through fuel diversification and stronger regulations.

	• Addressing gaps in maritime governance: Join the new maritime governance task force to discuss critical gaps in existing international frameworks. Learn how the industry can address freedom of navigation, deceptive practices, and substandard shipping. • The High Seas Treaty: Understand the implications of its legal framework to protect biodiversity in international waters. What will the creation of marine protected areas and mandated environmental impact assessments mean for maritime trade? • Advances in battery technology: Discover the latest breakthroughs in marine battery technology and explore the potential and limits of battery-electric propulsion in the sector's energy transition. • Fuel production in China: Learn how China is winning the global green fuel race by becoming the world's biggest developer of green methanol and one of the top developers of green ammonia. What lessons can be drawn from China's initial wave of projects, and what are the remaining bottlenecks? • China's five-year plan and what it means for shipping: Understand China's 15th five-year plan and its direct implications on global seaborne trade, from reduced commodity imports and manufactured exports to the impacts of China's minerals and rare earths strategy.
17:30-18:30	<i>Plenary session</i> Green shipping corridors: How China is re-energising the global movement In conjunction with the release of a Global Maritime Forum report on green shipping corridors in China, participants will learn how China's actions are helping to spur first-mover initiatives both domestically and internationally. The session will also look at the current state of the global green corridor movement and how these dedicated trading routes can lead where regulation has yet to follow.
18:30-21:30	Summit Dinner
21:30-23:00	Nightcap

Thursday, 22 October:

8:30-09:00	Arrival and networking
09:00-10:15	<i>Plenary session</i> Welcome and special session Reflections on leadership.
10:15-10:45	Networking break
10:45-12:15	<i>Breakout groups</i> Setting the course toward a resilient maritime sector (Round I) Parallel sessions will dive into the key challenges and opportunities facing the maritime industry and seek potential ways to address them through collective action and leadership. The themes are:

Trade in a time of rupture

The rules-based order that shipping has long depended on is under extreme pressure, while the same geopolitical forces reshaping the global order have also reached the IMO. Regional wars are directly impacting shipping, closing key trade lanes and putting vessels and crew in the line of fire, and disrupting energy markets. An expanding segment of substandard shipping is exposing gaps in existing governance structures, while trade wars and tariffs have created an undercurrent of market uncertainty.

Topics:

- AI, accountability, and competitive advantage
- Multilateralism under pressure
- Energy security and shipping's energy transition
- Operating through chronic conflict
- Shadow fleet and governance gaps
- Seafarer perspective

Leading by example through uncertainty

In a time of political uncertainty and inertia, leading by example is essential to drive change and put the maritime sector on a path to resilience, prosperity, and sustainability. Industry leadership, as well as public-private collaborations, individual states, and coalitions of the willing must help fill the void and forge progress.

Topics:

- Leveraging data and transparency for tangible action
- Lessons from first deployments of breakthrough ship technologies
- Coalitions of the willing
- Strategic infrastructure investments
- Green fuel production in the global transition
- AI and human talent: Responsible adoption and operational integration

Equipping the sector for the future

Maritime trade faces a convergence of pressures, including technological disruption from zero-emission fuels and AI, an evolving policy landscape, and growing tensions between freedom of navigation and coastal states' need to protect their environments and populations. Preparing for this future means planning across multiple scenarios, identifying and managing risks, upgrading infrastructure, and upskilling maritime professionals while ensuring safe working conditions.

Topics:

- Pathways forward for shipping decarbonisation regulation
- AI-enabled transition
- The future of maritime governance
- Strategies for managing transition risks and strengthening resilience
- Assessing the commercial, societal, and market readiness of technologies
- Scaling up the fuels: Lessons from China and the implications of regional differences in the scale and speed of the transition

12:15-13:15

Lunch

13:30-14:15	<i>Plenary session</i> How to lead in an age of disruption How can the sector's leaders remain focused on the big picture at a moment of profound geopolitical and economic change?
14:15-15:30	<i>Breakout groups</i> Setting the course toward a resilient maritime sector (Round II)
15:30-16:00	Networking break
16:00-17:00	<i>Plenary session</i> Closing plenary: Moving forward, together Cover the concrete outcomes of the previous two days and chart a clear course forward for global seaborne trade.
17:00	Closing reception