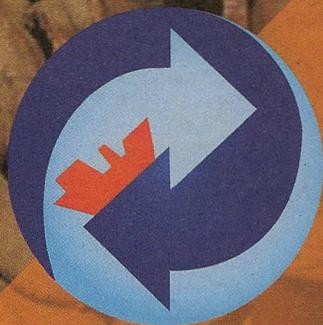


2009



NGO
SHIPBREAKING
PLATFORM

ANNUAL REPORT

Member Organisations

The NGO Shipbreaking Platform is a global coalition of environmental, human and labour rights organisations working together to reverse the environmental and human rights abuses of current shipbreaking practices and to ensure the safe and environmentally sound dismantling of end-of-life vessels world-wide.

The Basel Action Network (BAN) confronts the issues of environmental justice at a macro level, preventing disproportionate dumping of the world's toxic waste and pollution on our global village's poorest residents.
www.ban.org



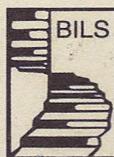
Ban Asbestos is a network of local organisations monitoring anti-asbestos legislation where it exists and litigating for the abolition of asbestos where anti-asbestos legislation is lacking.
www.banasbestosfrance.com

The Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers Association (BELA) is an advocacy group that monitors and pursues the implementation of laws and regulations to protect the environment. It is considered a pioneer in public interest environmental litigation (PIEL). **www.belabangla.org**



The Bellona Foundation is a multi-disciplinary international environmental NGO based in Oslo, Norway. It is a recognised technology and solution oriented, environmental defender with offices on two continents.
www.bellona.org

The Bangladesh Institute of Labour Studies (BILS) endeavors to uphold the causes of working people and trade unions of Bangladesh. 13 major National Trade Union Federations are associated with BILS.
www.bilsbd.org



The International Federation of Human Rights (FIDH) includes 141 national human rights NGOs world-wide. FIDH has a generalist mandate and consequently works on all human rights be they civil, political, economic, social, or cultural rights. **www.fidh.org**

The European Federation for Transport & Environment (T&E) is Europe's principal environmental organisation campaigning on sustainable transport. T&E's primary focus is on European policy to promote an environmentally sound approach to transport. **www.transportenvironment.org**



The International Ban Asbestos Secretariat (IBAS) is an independent body dedicated to the world-wide eradication of the continuing use of asbestos and the minimisation of dangers from asbestos products already within society. **www.ibas.btinternet.co.uk**

Greenpeace is an international non-governmental organisation working on global and environmental problems. Greenpeace started its shipbreaking campaign by highlighting this environmental and human rights disaster in 1998. **www.greenpeace.org**



The Bangladesh Occupational Safety, Health and Environment Foundation (OSHEF) is a specialized labour foundation established in 2003 by workers. It concentrates on issues affecting employment, income, economy, environment and the livelihoods of working people.
www.oshebd.org

The North Sea Foundation, a Dutch NGO, is a lobbying organisation with a constructive approach enabling a practical influence to be exerted over the marine environmental policies of governments and user groups.
www.noordzee.nl



Toxics Link
for a toxics-free world

Toxics Link is an Indian NGO working for environmental justice and freedom from toxins. It provides information on the poisons in our environment and bodies and on clean and sustainable alternatives for countries world-wide. **www.toxicslink.org**

The Prevention of Hazardous Shipbreaking Initiative is a coalition of environmental and labour rights NGOs based in Turkey. The group focuses on proper waste management and respect of labour rights at the shipbreaking sites in Aliaga.



Young Power in Social Action (YPSA) is an organisation that promotes social and sustainable development. It works on issues related to workers' rights as well as advocacy work to ensure human rights in the Bangladeshi shipbreaking industry. **www.shipbreakingbd.info**
www.ypsa.org

The Corporate Accountability Desk – The Other Media coordinate a corporate accountability and environmental health desk that extends technical, logistics, legal and strategic support to communities that are fighting corporate crime. **www.sipcotcuddalore.com**



PLATFORM HIGHLIGHTS



In Hong Kong, May 2009, the Platform organised two demonstrations during the IMO Diplomatic Conference to alert governments, international institutions and the general public on the flaws of the new convention on ship recycling.

ACTIVISM AT A GLOBAL LEVEL

At the international policy level, the Platform's main objective has been to guarantee that any new legislation on shipbreaking ensures the protection of people and the environment.

Hong Kong Convention

The Platform has actively participated in the negotiations of the International Maritime Organisation's Hong Kong Convention which was adopted in May 2009. It has been criticised by NGOs globally to represent a major step back with regards to existing international legislation aiming at protecting the environment and vulnerable communities in developing countries – namely the Basel Convention. According to the Platform and many other concerned parties, the Hong Kong Convention will not prevent a single toxic ship from being exported and dumped on the beaches of India, Bangladesh or Pakistan or any other developing country.

The Platform organised two demonstrations during the IMO Diplomatic Conference in Hong Kong to alert governments, international institutions and the general public of the flaws of the new convention. *More than 100 environmental and human rights organisations around the world voiced their support to the Platform human rights and environmental objectives* to end the dangerous and polluting practice of breaking ships on tidal beaches. The demonstrations and the Platform's call were extensively covered by international media. The Platform has also remained active at the Basel Convention meetings and is now sending out an SOS to the nations of the world to prevent Basel from ceding any of its competence on toxic ships to the Hong Kong Convention.

UN special rapporteur

In September 2009, the UN Special Rapporteur, Mr. Okechukwu Ibeanu,

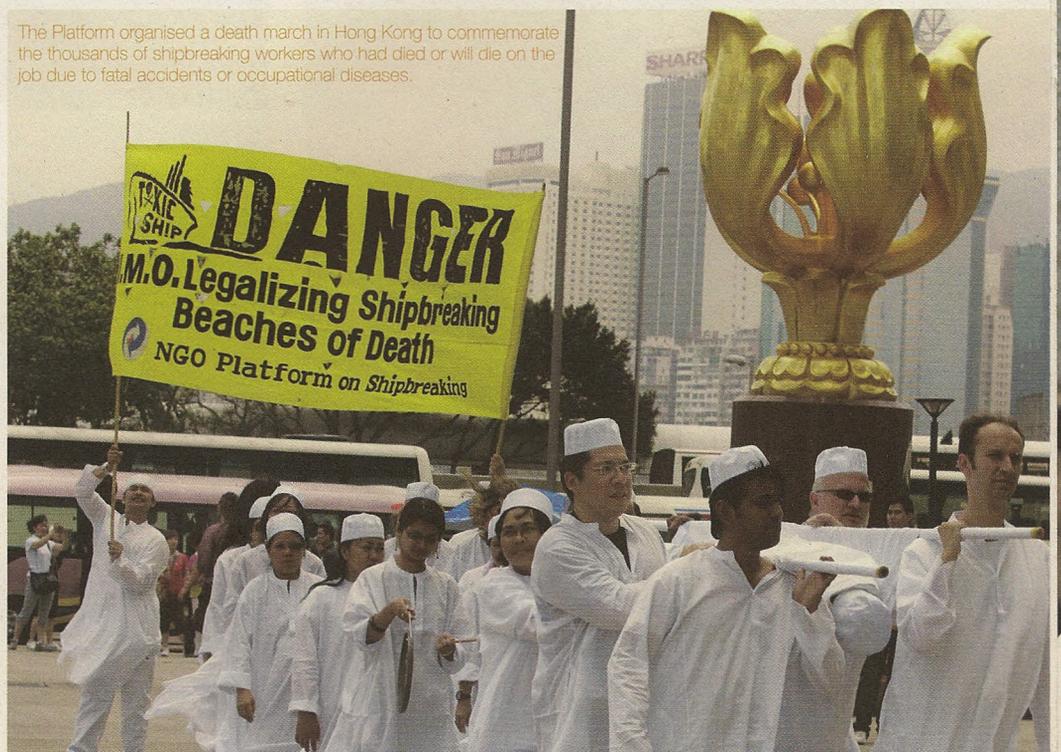
visited India to study the illicit effect of hazardous wastes on the enjoyment of human rights. He presented a report to the Human Rights Council to which the Platform had contributed with substantial information on the situation in South Asia as well as on the recent developments of international law.

ADVOCACY IN EUROPE

The NGO Shipbreaking Platform is calling on the EU to take responsibility and provide the leadership necessary to put an end to the dumping of toxic European ships on the beaches of South Asia.

The NGO Platform on Shipbreaking's main focus in Europe for 2009 has been to actively participate in the development of a European shipbreaking strategy and to give input to the decision making process of the EU on matters related to end-of-life ships. The aim has been to ensure that the Platform's aims are reflected at the European level.

The Platform organised a death march in Hong Kong to commemorate the thousands of shipbreaking workers who had died or will die on the job due to fatal accidents or occupational diseases.



European Parliament

The Platform was particularly successful in getting the Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) to support the Platform's aims. In fact, the Platform's policy recommendations were closely reflected in a Resolution adopted by the Parliament on 26 March 2009, particularly when calling for an "explicit prohibition on beaching of end-of-life ships" in South Asia and when calling for "concrete regulatory action at the EU level that moves beyond the regrettably weak remedies of the IMO".

European Commission

The Platform has provided the Commission with regular updates on legislative and on-the-ground developments in India and Bangladesh, along with keeping track of and denouncing European owned toxic ships that were dumped on the South Asian beaches in 2009.

Building coalitions

In addition to advocacy work targeting the European institutions, the Platform has expanded its networks by liaising with other environmental and human rights NGOs to find common grounds to build momentum for corporate accountability in Europe.

The Platform has also taken part in a civil society participatory movement, the Spring Alliance, which drafted a manifesto on sustainable development which was presented before EC President, José Manuel Barroso, and Environment Commissioner, Stavros Dimas, at a high-level conference in Brussels.

SUCCESSES IN SHIPBREAKING COUNTRIES

Bangladesh

Following legal action of member organisation BELA, the Bangladeshi High Court ordered in March 2009 the closure of all yards not holding required environmental clearances. It also ruled that only toxic-free ships are allowed to enter Bangladesh for dismantling. None of the then 36 yards in Chittagong were in possession of the required environmental clearances. The Court further expressed shock over the lack of compliance with Bangladeshi labour law at the yards, and established a committee responsible for developing new rules for dismantling ships. Platform member organisations BELA and BILS have been appointed to join this committee.

Following the Court decision, the Platform met with the Bangladeshi Environment Minister and Labour Minister to discuss the next steps to be taken concerning the shipbreaking industry. To gain support for the High Court decision, members of the Platform also met with the Embassies of Norway and the Netherlands, the EU delegation, as well as with representatives of the ILO and World Bank in Dhaka. Two workshops with trade union representatives were organised in Dhaka to discuss common goals and actions.



Members of the Platform met with the Bangladeshi Environment and Labour Ministers to discuss the future of the shipbreaking industry in the country.

India

The Platform visited Delhi, India, to participate in a round table discussion organised by the trade unions. The objective of the meeting was to draft a common statement co-signed by trade unions and environmental and human rights NGOs, denouncing the environmental pollution and labour rights abuse of the Indian shipbreaking industry.

Large amounts of hazardous materials in the ships are not and cannot be contained or controlled when broken apart on beaches. The consequences are disastrous for the environment and for human health.

China

The Platform visited the Changjiang Ship recycling Yards located at the New Port Area of Jiangyin, near Shanghai in China, to get a better understanding of the ship dismantling methods used and the conditions of the yards.



In May 2009, the Platform's team visited the Changjiang Ship recycling Yards. In China, the shipbreaking industry is regulated and is cleaner and safer than the beaching method used in South Asia.

RAISING AWARENESS AND PROMOTING SAFE AND GREEN SHIP RECYCLING

Conferences

Raising awareness of the environmental and human rights abuses linked to shipbreaking is one of the Platform's main objectives – to do this, the Platform has, among other things, facilitated the screening of the award winning documentary "Iron eaters"; been invited to hold university lectures; published a report and communication material on the fatal flaws of the beaching method; published a report on downstream waste management at the Turkish shipbreaking yards in Aliaga and presented this report in Izmir, Turkey at a workshop organised by the European Commission sponsored DVEST project.



The NGO Shipbreaking Platform team at the AGM in Dhaka, Bangladesh.

The Platform has also presented its views at a number of industry conferences around the world and there is increasing support for the Platform's demands amongst progressive stakeholders. The Platform is now being approached for advice on dismantling methods and best practice, such as was the case when oil company Total decided to dismantle the barge Serepca 1.

Capacity building

The Platform's second Annual General Meeting was held in Dhaka, Bangladesh and was a great success thanks to the contributions of all member organisations and, especially, our hosts in Bangladesh: BELA, YPSA, BILS and OSHE. With the aim to increase its membership basis, the Platform met with NGOs based in Norway, Italy and Greece.

Industry Events 2009

Lloyds Events
Tradewinds
ISO workshop
Lloyds Marine Academy
Hellenic Institute for Marine Technologies

Research and tracking vessels

The Platform has been actively tracking vessels and collecting data related to shipbreaking. We have been alerting the concerned governments when toxic vessels have left their ports sold to the South Asian beaches for breaking, such as was the case of the Finnish passenger ship the Onyx and LNG tanker, the Margaret Hill.

Honours

In April 2009, Rizwana Hasan, member of the Platform's Board, received the prestigious Goldman Prize 2009 in recognition of the legislative and on-the-ground achievements of BELA and of the Platform's struggle on the shipbreaking issue. She was also one of Time magazine's 2009 Environmental Heroes.

Financial statements 2009 (audited)

The Platform is grateful for the generous support it has received from its members, the agencies and the charitable organisations mentioned below.

Shipbreaking Platform Balance Sheet in Euros – 31 December 2009

INCOME

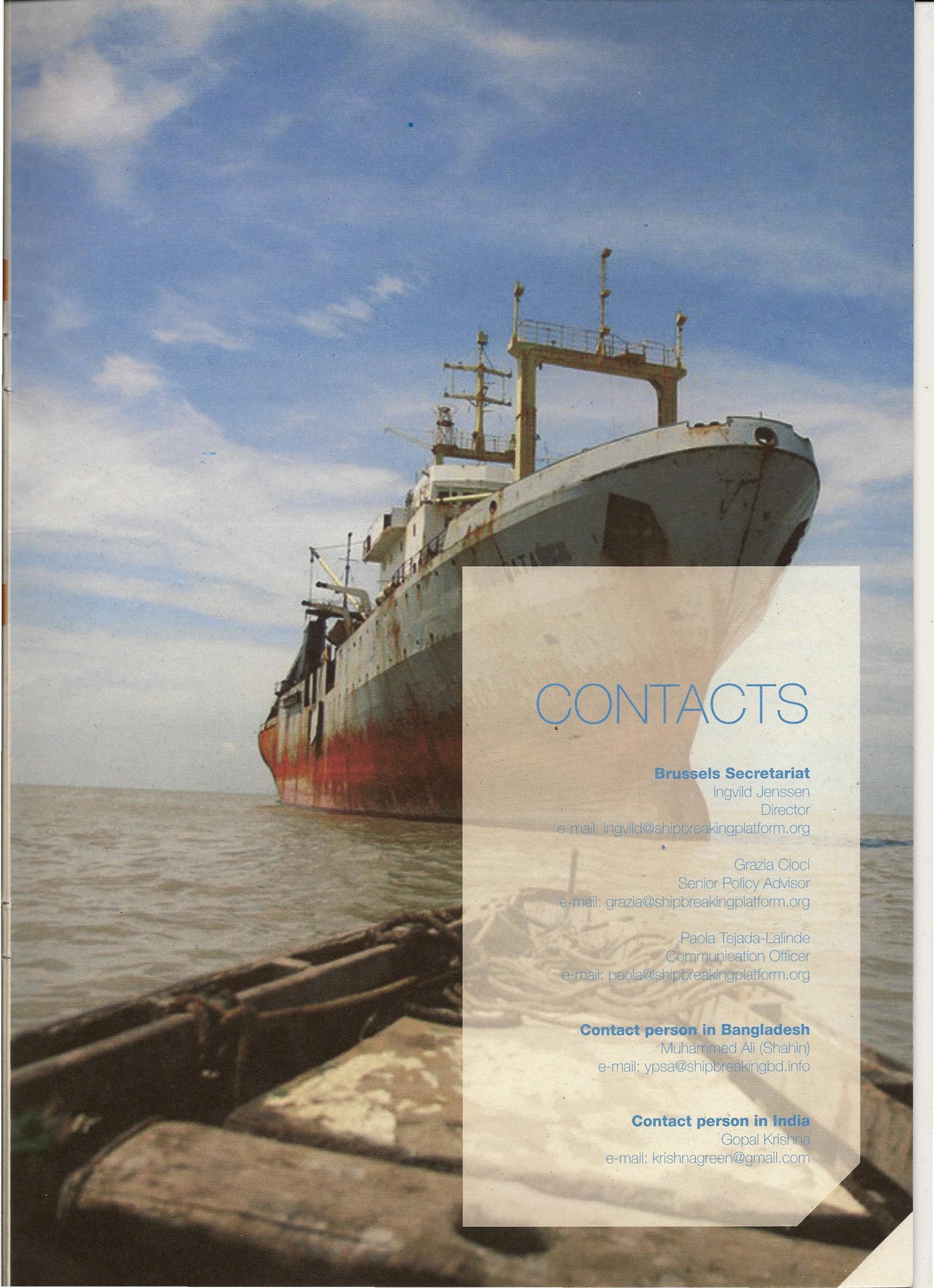
■ Accumulated results 2008	8,482.69
■ Contributions from member organisations	72,122.53
■ Dutch Ministry of Economic Affairs Senternovem	12,741.14
■ The Sigrid Rausing Trust	14,734.78
■ Miscellaneous / Financial Income	55.20
■ European Commission DG Environment	110,011.57
■ TOTAL INCOME	218,147.91

EXPENDITURE

Activities	
■ Travel	21,861.93
■ Annual General Assembly	4,954.42
■ Consultants / Research	28,492.03
■ Regional Branches	46,000.00
■ Total Activities	101,308.38
Administrative / General Costs	
■ Rental costs	4,220.26
■ Office costs	1,458.03
■ Communication costs	3,998.41
■ External costs	1,805.00
■ Other costs	1,437.82
■ Total Administrative /General Costs	12,919.52
Staff / Personnel Costs	
■ Total Staff / Personnel Costs	103,920.01
■ TOTAL EXPENDITURE	218,147.91

NET INCOME

0



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e-mail: ypsa@shipbreakingbd.info

Contact person in India

Gopal Krishna

e-mail: krishnagreen@gmail.com



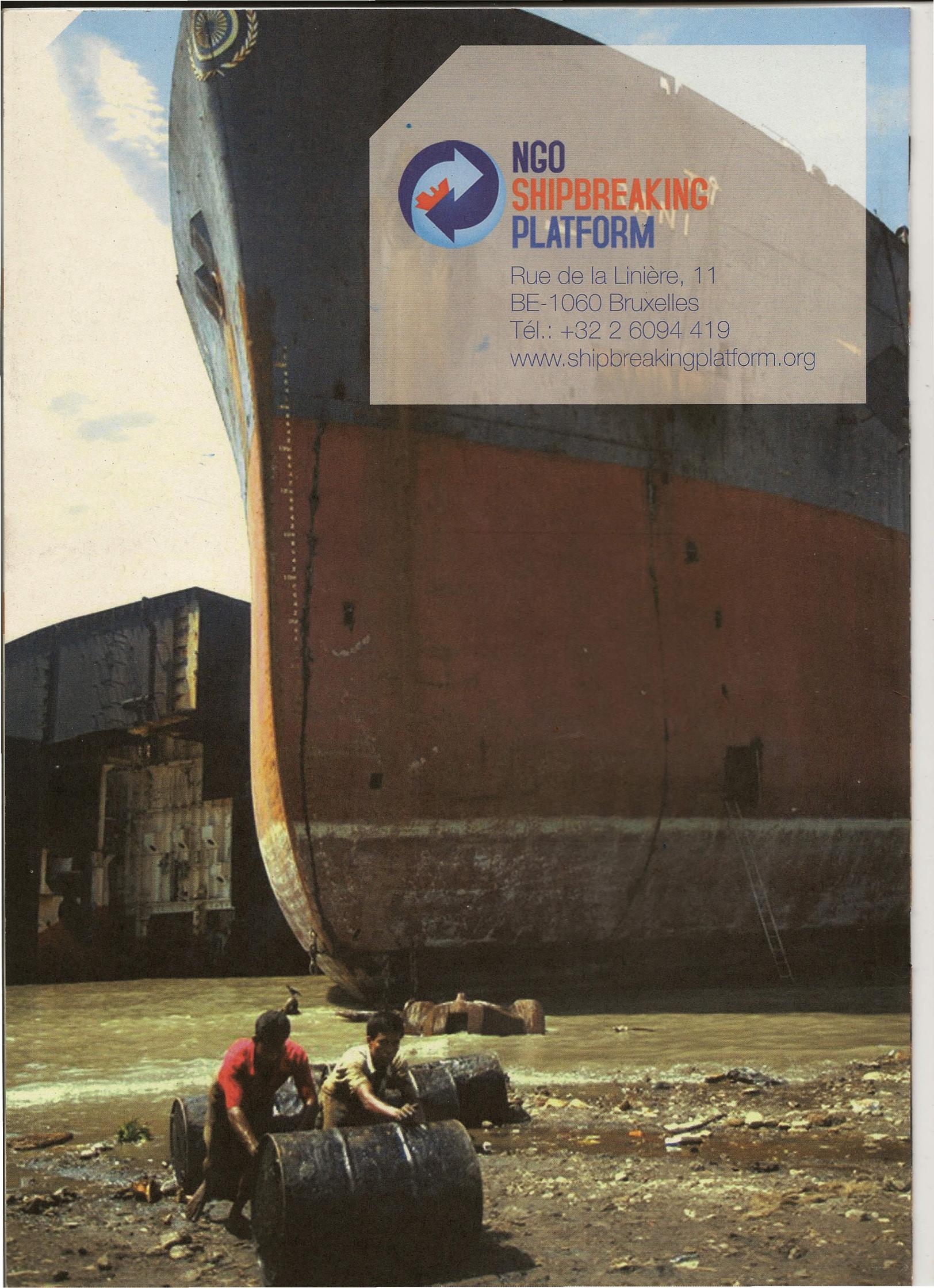
NGO
SHIPBREAKING
PLATFORM

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Tél.: +32 2 6094 419

www.shipbreakingplatform.org





Message from the Director

An exceptionally large number of ships were pulled out of service in 2009 to be dismantled. This increase in the number of ships was followed by a disastrous increase in the number of fatal accidents in South Asia. In Bangladesh more than 30,000 protected mangrove trees were cut to make room for additional shipbreaking activities on the Chittagong beach.

The need for the NGO Shipbreaking Platform to counterbalance arguments from a strong shipping industry not used to being held accountable for its substandard practices proved to be crucial in 2009 – and thanks in no small part to the continued efforts of the Platform and its member organisations. Concerned policy makers and companies have now joined the Platform in calling for just, sustainable and urgent solutions to the global shipbreaking crisis.

In recognition of the Platform's struggle and following legal action of member organisation, BELA, the Bangladeshi High Court ordered, in March 2009, the closure of all shipbreaking activities in Bangladesh. None of the yards in Chittagong are in possession of required environmental clearances, nor are they respecting existing labour laws.

In Europe, the Platform was particularly successful in getting the European Parliament to support the Platform's aims. A clear message is being voiced by the Parliamentarians: the EU needs to take responsibility and provide the leadership necessary to put an end to the dumping of toxic European ships on the beaches of South Asia.

When the International Maritime Organisation adopted the Hong Kong Convention on Ship Recycling in May 2009, more than 100 NGOs around the world supported the Platform's call for a ban on the dangerous and polluting practice of breaking ships on tidal beaches. Falling short of this and ignoring well established human rights and environmental laws, the Platform condemned the IMO's new convention as a failure. The Hong Kong Convention will not prevent a single toxic ship from being exported and dumped on the beaches of India, Bangladesh or Pakistan or any other developing country.

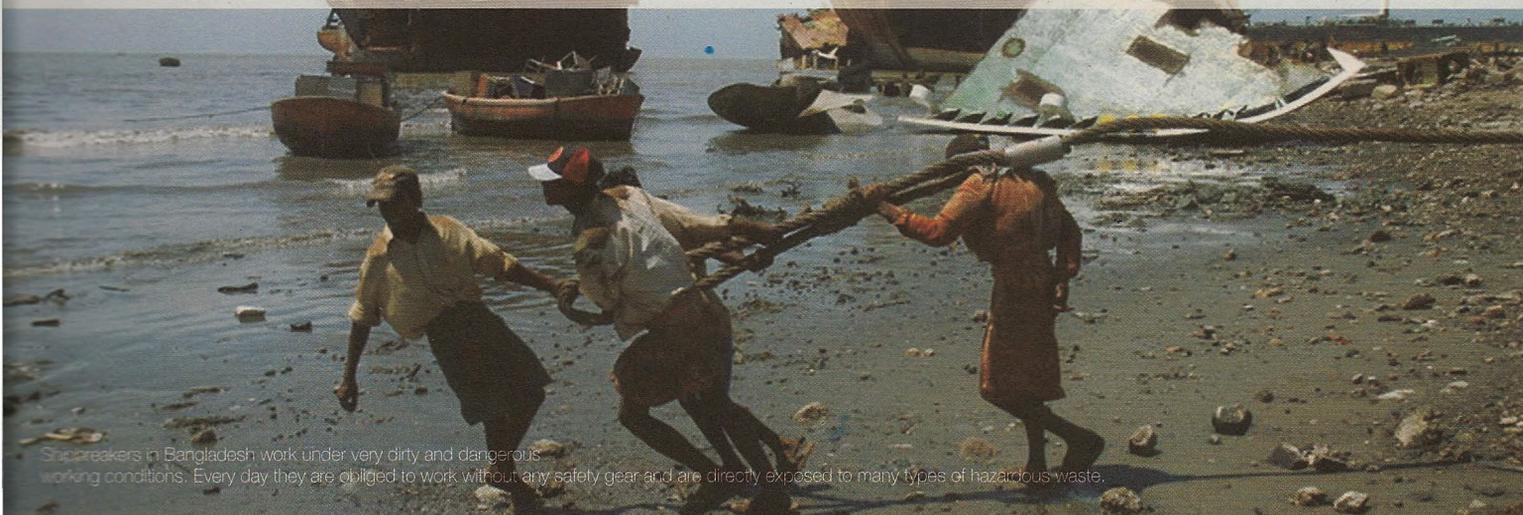
Existing international law – the United Nation's Basel Convention – makes it illegal to export toxic waste to developing countries and to disproportionately burden the poor with pollution. Important debates on whether the IMO's Hong Kong Convention should replace the Basel Convention on toxic ship trade will take place in the coming years. At the heart of this debate is the question of whether the Hong Kong Convention will protect people and the environment against the illicit effects of toxic waste on board ships.

The Platform has sent out an SOS to the nations of the world to prevent the Basel Convention from ceding any of its competence to the Hong Kong Convention.

With continued commitment from the Platform member organisations globally and increased cooperation with industry leaders, the Platform's struggle to prevent the human rights abuses and environmental injustice provoked when toxic ships are dumped on developing countries continues strengthened in 2010!

Ingvild Jenssen
Director, NGO Shipbreaking Platform

ABOUT US



Shipbreakers in Bangladesh work under very dirty and dangerous working conditions. Every day they are obliged to work without any safety gear and are directly exposed to many types of hazardous waste.

The NGO Shipbreaking Platform is a coalition of environmental, human and labour rights organisations first created in September 2005 after a few NGOs (non-governmental organisations) working on the issue noticed that a broader base of support, both geographically and in orientation, was needed to challenge the political clout of the global shipping industry. Due to increased political momentum, in part generated by the Platform itself, the coalition quickly evolved from being a European Platform to a global one, including NGOs based in the largest shipbreaking countries - India and Bangladesh. The Platform is now also recognised by the United Nations and the European Union as the pre-eminent international NGO advocacy organisation on this critical subject.

AIMS

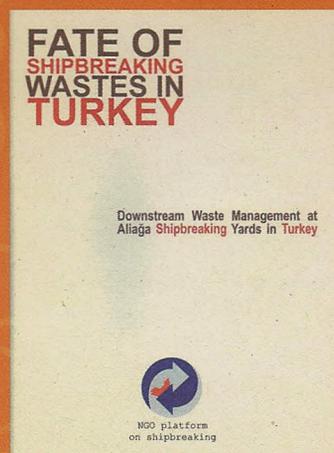
NGO Shipbreaking Platform works to reverse the environmental and human rights abuses of current shipbreaking practices and to ensure safe and environmentally sound dismantling of end-of-life vessels by:

- supporting regulation and action at the international level to uphold the principles and obligations of the Basel Convention and International Labour Organisation Regulations;
- advancing regulation and action at the European level that upholds the principles of environmental justice and polluter pays;
- advocating regulation and action in shipbreaking countries to move activities off the beach and enforce labour standards and human rights for shipbreaking workers;
- promoting the NGO Platform's Clean & Safe Ship Recycling Standard at government and corporate levels;
- pushing for the Substitution Principle and Clean Shipbuilding;
- and strengthening the role of civil society in safeguarding safe and environmentally sound shipbreaking.



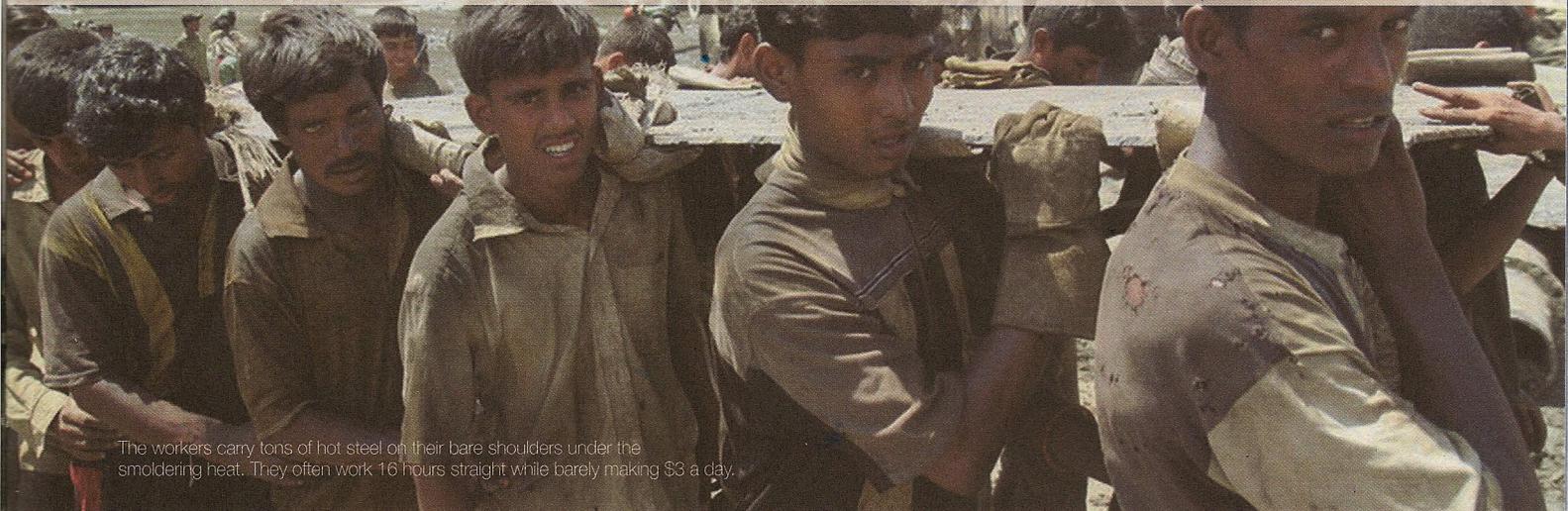
An inside look into the social and environmental consequences of the shipbreaking practice on the beaches of South Asia.

The dangers of beaching are explored and solutions are proposed to improve shipbreaking standards.



An in-depth technical report on the treatment of waste generated by the shipbreaking industry in Turkey, as well as recommendations from the Platform on how to improve it.

WHAT IS SHIPBREAKING?



The workers carry tons of hot steel on their bare shoulders under the smoldering heat. They often work 16 hours straight while barely making \$3 a day.

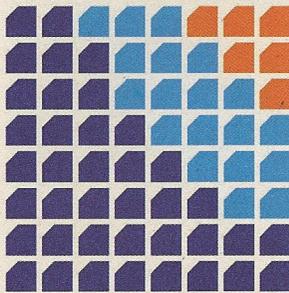
For most ships, the final port of call is a scene of death, injury and pollution as toxic end-of-life cruise liners, cargo ships and tankers are broken in uncontrolled and hazardous dismantling operations on the beaches of developing countries.

A polluting practice

It is after 25 to 30 years that ships are at the end of their operational life. They are then sold and dismantled to recover valuable steel that makes up 90% of their structure. However, not everything on the ship can be recycled - ships also contain large amounts of hazardous materials, such as asbestos, waste oils, heavy metals and PCBs which are not and cannot be contained or controlled when the ships are broken apart on beaches. This causes some of the world's most vulnerable workers to suffer of deteriorating health while coastal ecosystems and communities that depend upon them are devastated by pollution.

REPORTED NUMBER OF SHIPS BROKEN IN SOUTH ASIA 2009

435 India
214 Bangladesh
68 Pakistan



Sources: Robin des Bois, NGO Shipbreaking Platform

Dangerous working conditions

Ships are simply run ashore on tidal beaches where thousands of migrant workers dismantle these huge structures by hand. In Chittagong, 20% of the shipbreaking workforce is under the age of 15 according to a report by Platform members, FIDH and YPSA, "Childbreaking Yards", 2008.

There are no safety measures to protect the workers from deadly accidents such as explosions or being crushed by falling metal plates. The ILO considers the shipbreaking profession as one of the most dangerous in the world. In Bangladesh, last year alone, 26 young men were reported to have died on the job and there were over 100 accidents. Local NGOs estimate, however, the actual number of deaths and accidents to be much higher. The situation is alarming and must change now. Without training, access to labour unions or protective gear,

these workers labour under dangerous conditions which few other countries would ever accept.

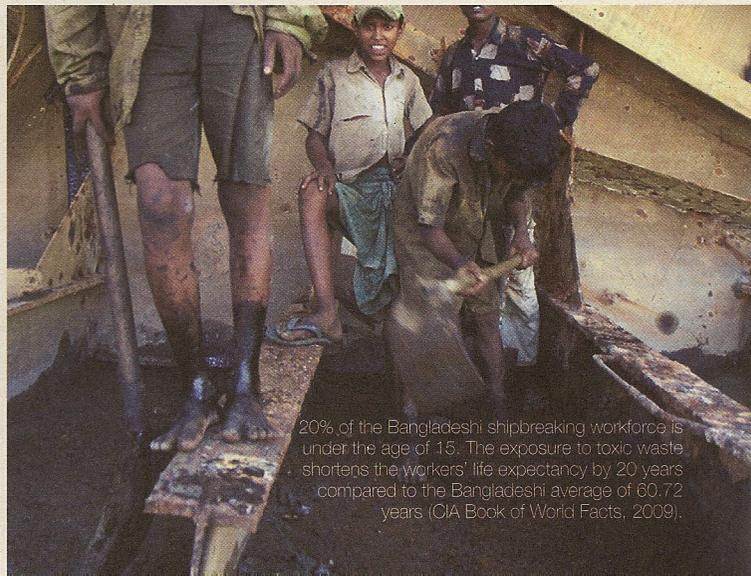
A race to the bottom

Exporting toxic ships to developing countries is illegal according to international and European law. Still, today, approximately 80 percent of end-of-life ships are sent to the beaches of Chittagong in Bangladesh, Alang in India and Gadani in Pakistan.

Ships can be dismantled in a safe and environmentally sound way that helps in global recycling efforts and provides good employment opportunities; though, the majority of shipowners choose to maximise their profits by selling their ships to shipbreaking yards in countries where environmental law and workers' rights are poorly enforced, lax or non-existent. Paying workers as little as two dollars a day and making little or no investment in equipment and infrastructure to make their yards safe and clean, ship breakers on the beaches of South Asia can pay shipowners up to ten times as much per ton of steel as a ship recycler based in a developed country.

Call to action

Responsible leadership is needed by the entire global community to set an industry standard that will get dangerous shipbreaking activity off the beach and support a safe and pollution free working environment.



20% of the Bangladeshi shipbreaking workforce is under the age of 15. The exposure to toxic waste shortens the workers' life expectancy by 20 years compared to the Bangladeshi average of 60.72 years (OIA Book of World Facts, 2009).

Message from Rizwana Hasan

Board Member and winner of the Goldman Prize 2009

Shipbreaking operates in Chittagong, Bangladesh on two main pleas - one, that the country does not have its own iron ore deposit and hence needs the ships for supplying iron and, second, that the industry creates employment for about 20,000 workers directly and benefits indirectly to many more. Both the pleas are wrong and misused to disguise an illegal trade in hazardous waste.

In the world, only 14 countries have their own iron ore deposit. Five countries are engaged in commercial shipbreaking. If the remaining countries - mostly poor - can still meet their demand for iron without breaking ships, why can't Bangladesh? The answer is simple - because shipbreaking offers cheap, but low quality raw material and a dumping place for European toxic ships.

On the issue of employment - there are no official records to show that the industry actually employs 20,000 workers as it is pertained by the industry itself. On the contrary, the most recent statistics of the Ministry of Labour in Bangladesh (21 March 2010) show that the industry employs only 3,500 permanent workers, the other 13,000 being temporary workers. This means that in terms of employment, shipbreaking offers little help to a country that has a population of 150 million.

The supporters of shipbreaking in Chittagong ignore the fact that the ship-breaking workers are exposed to deadly materials and diseases. They also completely miss out on the thousands of coastal fishermen whom - due to the pollution caused by shipbreaking - have lost their livelihood! Poverty can never justify exposing people to cancer in the name of "employment".

No official and independent social and environmental impact assessment of the industry has ever been made, nor has there been any cost-benefit analysis. The industry is very powerful in Bangladesh as it has money. It has never been to the advantage of the shipbreaking industry to have an objective cost-benefit analysis made.

Following several fatal explosions on the shipbreaking beaches, the Bangladeshi High Court Division in March 2009 gave directions to the government to regulate the industry and ensure its environmentally safe and sound operation. The Court also emphasised the obligation to ensure that all imported ships are toxic-free. These directions have been systematically violated by the shipbreakers and by-passed by invested government officials.

The struggle of the Bangladeshi environmentalists is to ensure environmentally sound and safe dismantling of ships or to look for alternative sources of iron and employment. The support of groups like the NGO Platform on Shipbreaking has complemented the struggle with necessary technical analysis, data, information, and acted as an important link to key European actors.

The issue of toxic end-of-life ships is a transboundary one that requires responsible and lawful behaviour of both the exporters and the importers. Monitoring the traders and linking the struggles in North and South are the most important tasks which the Platform is efficiently performing. ***Without the Platform, sharing of successes and challenges for better strategizing would not be possible at all!***



Rizwana Hasan
Executive Director, BELA

Board Members

The NGO Shipbreaking Platform's Board members are international experts in a wide range of sectors related to maritime policies, waste management, environmental law and occupational health. Their experience and know-how contribute immensely to the Platform's activities and successes.

Marietta Harjono

is a senior campaigner in Greenpeace Netherlands and has been working on the shipbreaking issue since 1998. She now also coordinates Greenpeace's work on the Probo Koala/Trafigura case.



Rizwana Hasan

is an advocate of the Supreme Court of Bangladesh and Programs Director of the Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers Association (BELA). She received the Goldman Prize 2009 for her work on the shipbreaking issue.



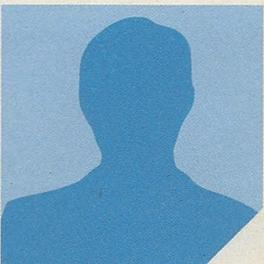
Eelco Leemans

is an initiator of the ProSea Marine Awareness Course for Seafarers and the founding father of the Clean Ship concept. He is currently a campaigner for the North Sea Foundation and leading a team of NGO's at the International Maritime Organisation (IMO).



T. Mohan

is a practising lawyer in Chennai, India. He is a part of the Environmental Law Alliance Worldwide (E-Law), an international electronic network of environmental lawyers.



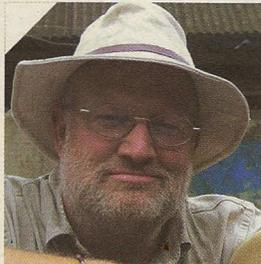
Helen Périvier

is a qualified navigation officer and has ten years on ships serving as a maritime professional on environmental research, advocacy and education tours. She led the Greenpeace campaign on the European REACH chemicals legislation.



Jim Puckett

has been an environmental health and justice activist for 22 years. He is the founder of Earth Economics and the Basel Action Network program. He has represented civil society within the Basel Convention since its inception in 1989.



Konrad Pütz

is educated as a naval engineer and has a Masters degree in environmental economics. He headed Bellona's work on maritime transport.



Annie Thébaud-Mony

is a sociologist, occupational health expert, and director of the French National Institute of Health and Medical Research (Inserm). She also is the spokesperson for the Ban, Asbestos Network in France.





SHIPBREAKING A

NGO Shipbreaking Platform Members

- | | | | |
|---|---|----|--------------------------------------|
| 1 | Basel Action Network (BAN) | 10 | Indian Office of the NGO Platform |
| 2 | Ban Asbestos | 11 | International Ban Asbestos |
| 3 | Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers Association (BELA) | 12 | NGO Platform on Shipbreaking |
| 4 | Bellona Foundation | 13 | North Sea Foundation |
| 5 | Bangladesh Institute of Labour Studies (BILS) | 14 | Bangladesh Occupational Safety |
| 6 | Corporate Accountability Desk – The Other Media | 15 | Prevention of Hazardous Shipbreaking |
| 7 | European Federation for Transport & Environment | 16 | Toxics Link |
| 8 | International Federation of Human Rights (FIDH) | 17 | Turkish Office of the NGO Platform |
| 9 | Greenpeace | 18 | Young Power in Social Activism |



ROUND THE WORLD

Shipbreaking yards

Shipbreaking beaches

Ship dismantling areas (where beaching is not practiced)

International Forum on Shipbreaking
Secretariat (IBAS)
Regional Headquarters

International Safety, Health and Environment Foundation (OSHE)
Shipbreaking

International Forum on Shipbreaking
Secretariat (YPSA)

Message from Member of European Parliament

I am very pleased to be able to contribute to this annual report of the NGO Shipbreaking Platform as during fifteen years in the European Parliament I think it was **one of the best NGOs working in this very challenging field**.

When I was asked last year to go to the Gulf to speak at an international conference on Shipbreaking in South Asia, a friend cynically remonstrated with me, 'I didn't know Dubai or Bangladesh were in the EU!'

Of course neither are, nor will they ever be, but Europe must always recognise our responsibility to South Asia and other places where European ships are being dismantled. Many of the ships sent to be broken are of European origin (two thirds of all end-of-life ships worldwide – and one third of EU flag ships – are sent for scrapping in South Asia).

I have been to the shipbreaking yards in Chittagong and other parts of Bangladesh. I've seen the appalling conditions in which the work is done. I felt in danger just walking around, without heavy boots, no hard hats nor any protective clothing. And I wasn't touching anything nor using oxyacetylene cutters!

The EU must 'lead the way and encourage global action, with a clear objective of gradually ending the current practices of ship dismantling in Southern Asia, and move towards the adoption and implementation of an international convention setting environmental and social standards for all parties involved'. This is why the work of the Shipbreaking Platform is so important. Without this NGO and a few other worthy organisations, this abhorrence would not have been brought to the attention of western lawmakers.

When I was an MEP, I was very pleased to play my part in getting the European Parliament to adopt a resolution stating that the European Parliament 'considers it ethically unacceptable to permit the humanly degrading and environmentally destructive conditions involved in the dismantling of ships to continue any longer, thereby accepting that the health of thousands of employees in the Far East is put at risk in conditions with totally inadequate safety regulations' and furthermore, we called for a ban on children working in the shipbreaking yards, and especially carrying out 'hard and hazardous work' and all this without being provided with 'sufficient educational and recreational facilities'.

At all times, in Brussels, **the excellent staff at the Shipbreaking Platform played a crucial role in providing information and support for me as an MEP and I am proud to acknowledge their vital work in this field.**

Robert Evans
Member of the European Parliament Transport Committee
Chair of the South Asia Delegation
London MEP 1994 – 2009

