

Press Release – New NGOs Report Calls on Pakistani Government to Improve Shipbreaking Industry

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Islamabad, 29 October 2013 - The NGO Shipbreaking Platform and one of its member organizations, the Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI) launched yesterday a research report titled "Pakistan Shipbreaking Outlook: The Way Forward for a Green Ship Recycling Industry" during a seminar held in Islamabad. The [research report](#) is a joint publication of the NGO Shipbreaking Platform and SDPI, and outlines policy recommendations for improving working conditions and environmental protection in the shipbreaking yards of Gadani. *"With our member organization SDPI, and with the rest of our coalition, we are calling on the Pakistani government to do the right thing and protect the workers and the environment from the dumping of thousands of tonnes of hazardous waste coming from end-of-life ships,"* said Patrizia Heidegger, Executive Director of the NGO Shipbreaking Platform. Contrarily to previous reports that focused mainly on the regulatory framework and the facilities needed to take care of the hazardous waste retrieved from the ships, "Pakistan Shipbreaking Outlook: The Way Forward for a Green Ship Recycling Industry" also gives a voice to the exploited workforce in the shipbreaking yards, highlighting the risks they are exposed to on a daily basis. SDPI conducted a survey amongst shipbreaking workers in Gadani in 2012 to get their side of the story. The findings include the facts that workers' rights are not sufficiently protected, notably health and safety rights, freedom of association, workers' welfare and benefits, and contractual rights. Syeda Rizwana Hasan, Chief Executive of the Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers Association (BELA) and Ritwick Dutta, an environmental lawyer from the Indian-based Legal Initiative for Forest and Environment (LIFE) said that if South Asian countries want to stop being the dumping grounds for developing countries' toxic ships, they need to enforce international waste trade law. *"Our laws are weak and this is why these ships choose to come to our beaches,"* said Syeda Rizwana Hasan. *"We cannot paint this industry green, but we need to make it green. The report is the start of a long term process."* BELA and LIFE are both member organizations of the NGO Shipbreaking Platform. About 150 people attended the seminar presenting the report, including researchers, representatives from governmental institutions and policy makers. Amongst others, two members of the National Assembly of Pakistan, Arifa Khalid and Romina Khurshid Alam, and the director general of the Balochistan Environmental Protection Agency, Naseer Khan Kashani were present and welcomed the publication of the research report. *"With a joint effort by the relevant government bodies, shipbreaking industry, civil society and a special support from international organisations we can turn this business into a modern and safe industry,"* said Patrizia Heidegger. The report can be downloaded here: http://www.shipbreakingplatform.org/shipbrea_wp2011/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/SDPI-NSP-Pakistan-Position-Paper-For-Printing.pdf CONTACT Delphine Reuter Communications Officer NGO Shipbreaking Platform delphine@shipbreakingplatform.org