Welcome by Aleka Sheppard (Founder of the LSLC and YMP) to the young maritime professionals at their 15th anniversary party.

I am thrilled to see so many of you here and I am very proud of YOU.

This is your 15 years' anniversary of solid and impressive work.

I have observed your career successes over these years and you have indeed become the leading force of this generation.

No doubt, you would have become capable and distinguished professionals whether the YMP existed or not.

The YMP provided you the platform to perform and test your skills, to make connections, and friends, and learn from each other.

Thank you for giving me that joy – you are young, eager, hopeful and ambitious – some of you no longer so young but mature.

Such as the founding members of the YMP; to mention just a few: Ted Zaimis, Menelaus Kouzoupis (1st Chairman), Ian Woods (2nd Chairman), Ravi Aswani, James Watthey, Andrew Stevens, Alex Wright. I thank them for their commitment and belief in the cause of the YMP. May you continue to guide the next generation of maritime professionals.

You are holding a pivotal place in the history of our profession and the shipping industry; you have had many opportunities,

unlike my generation. Research has been made faster for you with AI.

Some may think that AI can write your submissions if you handed over the files to it – but what about client privilege?

Some even think that arbitrators can ask AI to write their awards – but what about confidentiality? Perhaps we should have an event on these topics?

There are huge challenges in front of you with responsibilities.

The fact is that the Genie is out of the bottle. I am sure you are aware of various reports by experts of the imminent dangers of AI's fast development.

It is up to the legal profession to start, or rewrite, without delay, efficient regulation to control those in charge of developing AI so fast.

An international body like in the aviation and in the shipping industries should oversee compliance. Heavy fines should be imposed for flouting regulation.

Presently, the only counter to the speed of AI development is to apply wisdom.

I hope that the leaders of States will implement regulation fast, so that by 2036 – your next anniversary – you will be here to celebrate.

Enough of this gloom – **today you celebrate**. Forget about tomorrow!

On my part, I am grateful to so many sponsors supporting this event, and this is one indication of how much the older generation values our young.

Now over to Ian Woods to say a few words and then to your Chairman, the ever energetic Francesca Cappa.