

IMONNEWS

THE MAGAZINE OF THE INTERNATIONAL MARITIME ORGANIZATION



ISSUE 3 2008

IMO

IMO CELEBRATES

60 YEARS IN THE SERVICE OF SHIPPING



INTERNATIONAL
MARITIME
ORGANIZATION

World Maritime Day 2008

IMO: 60 YEARS IN THE SERVICE OF SHIPPING

Background paper

Origins

The year 2008 contains a number of key milestones and anniversaries for IMO. March 6th was the 60th anniversary of the adoption of the IMO Convention, by a conference held in Geneva in 1948, under the auspices of the United Nations; March 17th was the 50th anniversary of that Convention entering into force in 1958; and June saw the 100th meeting of the IMO Council, the executive organ of IMO, which is responsible, under the Assembly, for supervising the work of the Organization in between successive sessions of the latter.

IMO – originally known as the Inter-governmental Maritime Consultative Organization, or IMCO – held its first meeting in London in 1959. The purposes of the Organization, as summarized by Article 1(a) of its constitutive Convention, are “to provide machinery for co-operation among Governments in the field of governmental regulation and practices relating to technical matters of all kinds affecting shipping engaged in international trade; to encourage and facilitate the general adoption of the highest practicable standards in matters concerning maritime safety, efficiency of navigation and prevention and control of marine pollution from ships”. The Organization is also empowered to deal with administrative and legal matters related to these purposes.

The need for an international agency for shipping stems from the fact that shipping is perhaps the most international of all the world’s global industries. The ownership and management chain surrounding any particular vessel can embrace many different countries; it is not unusual to find that the owners, operators, shippers, charterers, insurers and the classification society, not to mention the officers and crew, are all of different nationalities and that none of these is from the country whose flag flies at the ship’s stern. And, shipping’s prime physical assets – the ships themselves – move permanently between countries and between different jurisdictions; hence the need for universal standards that can be applied to and recognized by all.

Shipping is also an inherently dangerous occupation, with ships having to confront the worst that the elements can throw at them. Sometimes, disaster strikes – as witnessed by high-profile incidents of the type involving ships such as **Torrey Canyon**, **Exxon Valdez**, **Estonia**, **Erika** and **Prestige**.

There is, therefore, an over-arching logic in favour of a framework of international standards to regulate shipping. Without internationally recognized and accepted standards, you might have the ludicrous situation that a ship leaves country A bound with cargo for country B, fully compliant with country A’s requirements for ship design, construction, equipment, manning and operation, only to find that country B has its own, different requirements. Clearly there has to be a common approach, so that ships can ply their trade around the world and that countries receiving foreign ships can be confident that, in accepting them, they do not place their own safety, security and environmental integrity at an unreasonable risk.

The recognition that the best way of improving safety at sea is by developing international regulations that can be followed by all shipping nations pre-dates the formation of IMO. From the mid-19th century onwards a number of such international treaties were adopted. One example is the 1863 rules of the road at sea – known as articles – which were adopted by more than 30 maritime countries.

It was the **Titanic** disaster of 1912 which prompted the adoption, in 1914, of the first International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea, known then, as now, as SOLAS, after the United Kingdom had called an international conference in the wake of the disaster.



The Convention establishing IMO (or the Inter-governmental Maritime Consultative Organization (IMCO) as it was then known), was adopted on 6 March 1948, at this conference, held under the auspices of the United Nations in Geneva



The first Assembly of IMCO was held in London on 6 January 1959 with representatives of some 30 countries present. Mr. Ove Nielsen (Denmark) was appointed as the first Secretary-General and is seen here (centre) taking the oath of office. On the right is the President of the Assembly, Mr. L.C. Audette (Canada)

It was the first convention to lay down international rules governing the safety of shipping, including construction of ships, maintaining a 24-hour listening watch for distress alerts, and making sure enough lifeboats and lifejackets are available on board for everybody on board. After the adoption of the first version, subsequent versions were adopted in 1929, 1948 and, under the auspices of IMO, in 1960. Today, albeit much revised and updated, SOLAS remains the most important of the international conventions regulating maritime safety. Nearly 160 countries are Parties to the SOLAS Convention and its provisions apply to almost 99 per cent of the world fleet.

But it was not until the establishment of the United Nations itself that a permanent international body was created to promote maritime safety more effectively – and that body is IMO. Since its formation, IMO's main task has been to develop and maintain a comprehensive regulatory framework for international shipping. Its mandate was originally limited to safety-related issues but, subsequently, its remit has expanded to embrace, among other things, environmental considerations, legal matters, technical co-operation, issues that affect the overall efficiency of shipping - such as how to deal with stowaways or how a cargo manifest should be transmitted to the authorities ashore; piracy and armed robbery against ships, and maritime security.

Maritime safety and security

One of the first tasks facing the newly established IMO was to review and revise the 1948 SOLAS Convention. It was in May 1960 that IMO convened its first international diplomatic conference to consider a new SOLAS Convention.

The SOLAS Convention adopted by the 1960 conference (which entered into force in 1965) covered a wide range of measures designed to improve the safety of shipping, including subdivision and stability; machinery and electrical installations; fire protection, detection and extinction; lifesaving appliances; radio; the safety of navigation; the carriage of grain; the carriage of dangerous goods, and nuclear ships. The same conference also adopted a new set of International Regulations for the Prevention of Collisions at Sea, to replace earlier regulations of 1948, and adopted 56 resolutions, many of them calling for action by IMO and, in effect, providing the work programme of the Organization for more than a decade.

The intention was to keep the SOLAS Convention up-to-date by periodic amendments but, in practice, the amendments procedure proved to be very slow. It became clear that it would be impossible to secure the entry into force of amendments within a reasonable period of time.

As a result, a completely new Convention was adopted in 1974 which included not only the amendments agreed up to that date but a new amendment procedure – the tacit acceptance procedure – designed to ensure that changes could be made within a specified (and acceptably short) period of time.

Instead of requiring that an amendment shall enter into force after being accepted by, for example, two thirds of the Parties, the tacit acceptance procedure provides that an amendment shall enter into force on a specified date unless, before that date, objections to it are received from an agreed number of Parties.

As a result, the 1974 Convention has been updated and amended on numerous occasions and the Convention in force today is



IMCO's first home was in Chancery Lane, London. The second was in 22 Berners Street, London (shown here), a building shared with the International Coffee Organization from the early 1960s to 1970

sometimes referred to as 'SOLAS, 1974, as amended'. Several new chapters have subsequently been added, for example, on Management for the Safe Operation of Ships; Safety Measures for High-speed Craft; Special measures to enhance maritime safety; special measures to enhance maritime security; and additional safety measures for bulk carriers.



The 1960 Safety of Life at Sea Conference also recommended that Governments should adopt a uniform international code for the transport of dangerous goods by sea, to supplement the regulations contained in the SOLAS Convention. In this context, "dangerous goods" includes, among others, explosive, flammable, toxic, infectious, radioactive and corrosive substances. It was agreed that the proposed code should cover such matters as packing, container traffic and stowage, with particular reference to the segregation of incompatible substances.

A working group of IMO's Maritime Safety Committee began preparing the Code in 1961, in close co operation with the United Nations Committee of Experts on the Transport of Dangerous Goods, which had established minimum requirements for the transport of such goods by all modes of transport. The resultant International Maritime Dangerous Goods Code was adopted by IMO in 1965. Since then, it has undergone many changes, both in appearance and content, to keep pace with the ever changing needs of industry.

Although the IMDG Code was originally recommendatory, it quickly became the accepted standard for the shipping industry.

Eventually, amendments to SOLAS, adopted in May 2002, made the IMDG Code mandatory from 1 January 2004.



Anyone familiar with ships will be familiar with the markings painted on the side of ships' hulls to indicate how deeply a ship has been loaded. It has long been recognized that limits on the draught to which a ship may be loaded make a significant contribution to its safety. The first International Convention on Load Lines was adopted in 1930. In 1966, IMO adopted a new Load Lines Convention, in which provisions are made to determine the freeboard of ships by subdivision and damage stability calculations.

It also takes into account the potential hazards present in different geographical zones and different seasons and contains several additional safety measures concerning doors, freeing ports, hatchways and other items. The main purpose of these measures is to ensure the watertight integrity of ships' hulls below the freeboard deck. And, it requires the familiar marking of all assigned load lines and the deck line on each side of the ship.

The International Convention on Load Lines entered into force in 1968 and has subsequently been amended on several occasions.

In a similar vein, at the time of IMO's formation, several systems of tonnage measurement for ships had been developed over the years, but none had become universally recognized. IMO began work on this subject soon after coming into being and, in 1969, the first ever International Convention on Tonnage was adopted.



IMCO then moved to 101 Piccadilly, London in 1970. This photograph shows limousines outside the building, waiting to collect Mr. U. Thant (Secretary-General of the United Nations, 1961-1971) who was on an official visit. 101 Piccadilly now houses the Japanese Embassy

It is an indication of the complexity of this subject that the Convention, which had a very high requirement for entry into force (25 States with not less than 65 per cent of the world's gross tonnage of merchant shipping) did not receive the required number of acceptances until mid-1980. It entered into force in 1982.



When IMO was formed, the now-familiar bulk carrier, often described as the “workhorse” of the world fleet, was a relatively new ship type. These ubiquitous vessels can carry a variety of different cargoes but commodities such as coal, grains and mineral ores account for the largest proportion of bulk carrier cargoes. Although relatively unsophisticated, these are nevertheless highly efficient ships which also embody inherent risks and dangers if not designed, built and operated to the highest standards.

In 1965, therefore, IMO adopted the international Code of Safe Practice for Solid Bulk Cargoes (BC Code) and this has been updated at regular intervals ever since.

In the early 1990s, there was a spate of bulk carrier casualties which, because of the often dense nature of the cargoes carried by such vessels, were frequently characterized by rapid sinking and a high mortality rate among the crews involved in such incidents. In November 1997, therefore, IMO adopted a special chapter of the SOLAS Convention on bulk carrier safety (chapter XII), covering such topics as damage stability, structural strength, surveys and loading. At the same time, a Code of Practice for the safe unloading and loading of bulk

carriers (the BLU Code) was also adopted.

Following the 1998 publication of the report into the sinking of the bulk carrier **Derbyshire**, IMO initiated a further review of bulk carrier safety. In 2002, amendments to SOLAS and the 1988 Load Lines Protocol were adopted and a number of further recommendations to improve bulk carrier safety were agreed. In December 2004, IMO adopted a new text for SOLAS chapter XII, incorporating revisions to some regulations and new requirements relating to double-side-skin bulk carriers. These amendments entered into force on 1 July 2006.



In 1971 IMO adopted the first of several measures designed to address specifically the question of safety aboard passenger vessels. In this case the Special Trade Passenger Ships Agreement was adopted to safeguard ships and passengers engaged in “pilgrim” trade, and this came into force three years later. A Protocol to this agreement, adopted in 1973, came into force in 1977.

Passenger ships in operation today are subject to a vast array of regulations and standards covering every aspect of ship construction and operation. Indeed, passenger ships – usually defined as a ship carrying more than 12 passengers – on international voyages must comply with all relevant IMO regulations, including those in the SOLAS and Load Lines Conventions.

In addition, a number of incidents over the years have led to improvements in safety requirements, including those relating to fire safety measures – such as escape routes and fire



IMO moved to new Headquarters (opened in 1982) built on the site of this warehouse, formerly owned by the newspaper and magazine retail chain WH Smith

protection systems for the large atrium typical of cruise ships – and life-saving appliances and arrangements.

The partial capsizing of the roll-on, roll-off (ro-ro) ferry **Herald of Free Enterprise** in 1987, for example, led to a series of amendments to SOLAS designed to prevent such an accident recurring. These included requirements for open-door indicators, and monitors to detect the presence of water, vehicle movement, fire and unauthorized passenger access. Subsequent amendments, adopted in the late 1980s and early 1990s, dealt with a variety of aspects, such as emergency lighting, damaged and intact stability, locking of cargo loading doors, surveys, openings in watertight bulkheads, fire safety and a number of other important considerations.

Towards the end of the 20th century, a new breed of giant passenger vessel was beginning to find its way from naval architects' drawing boards and into service with many of the leading operators. These massive ships were the size of small villages, often with several thousand passengers, crew and hotel staff on board. While there was no doubt that such ships were being built, designed and operated in compliance with applicable IMO standards, the time had come for IMO to undertake a holistic consideration of safety issues pertaining to passenger ships. As a result, a comprehensive review of passenger ship safety was initiated in 2000, with the aim of assessing whether the existing regulations were still adequate.

It was agreed that future large passenger ships should be designed for improved survivability based on the time-honoured principle that "a ship is its own best lifeboat". This approach envisages that passengers and crew should normally be able to evacuate to a safe haven on board and stay there. In addition, it

envisages that a ship should always be able to proceed to port at a minimum safe speed.

In 2006, IMO adopted a package of amendments to SOLAS, based on a guiding philosophy that the regulatory framework should place more emphasis on the prevention of a casualty from occurring in the first place. The amendments include new concepts such as the incorporation of criteria for the amount of damage a ship is able to withstand, according to the design basis, and still safely return to port. They also provide regulatory flexibility, so that ship designers can meet any safety challenges the future may bring.



A convention adopted by IMO in 1972 dealt with the subject of containers. These had, by then, become an important feature of international maritime trade, and the Convention was designed not only to facilitate this trade, by providing uniform international regulations, but also to maintain a high level of safety in the carriage of containers by setting out generally acceptable test procedures and related strength requirements. The Convention entered into force in 1977.



The safety of fishing vessels has been a matter of concern to IMO since the Organization's inception, but the differences in design and operation between fishing vessels and other types of ship have proved to be an obstacle to their inclusion in many of the conventions adopted by IMO, which cannot be made applicable to fishing vessels. Besides, the technical



Mr. Ove Nielsen (Denmark), the first Secretary-General from 1959 to 1961

specifications of fishing vessels depend on the areas in which they operate and many other local factors, making the adoption of international regulations relating to their safety extremely complex.

Thus, despite fishing being one of the world's oldest industries, it was not until 1977 that the first international convention dealing with the safety of fishing vessels – the Torremolinos Convention – was finally adopted.

For various reasons, the Torremolinos Convention did not secure sufficient acceptances to enter into force and, by the early 1990s, it was clear that, even if it did, it would be technically out of date. As a result, in 1993, IMO adopted a Protocol to the Convention which removed some of the provisions that had caused difficulties in the parent treaty and also brought it up to date technically.

Nevertheless, even this Protocol has yet to enter into force, as has the 1995 International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Fishing Vessel Personnel. The fact remains that the fishing sector, which reportedly suffers around 24,000 human losses annually, is still lacking the international mandatory safety regime that these measures would provide.

To try and address the issue, IMO has engaged in a variety of technical co-operation activities on fishing vessel safety – including regional seminars to raise awareness of the problems. Moreover, in collaboration with the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the International Labour Organization

(ILO), IMO developed the revised Code of Safety for Fishermen and Fishing Vessels, 2005, and Voluntary Guidelines for the Design, Construction and Equipment of Small Fishing Vessels, 2005, while the SLF Sub-Committee is developing guidance on the safety of fishing vessels under 12 metres and the Standards of Training and Watchkeeping (STW) Sub-Committee is working on guidance for the training of personnel serving aboard small fishing vessels – but none of these voluntary measures would have the impact of a mandatory convention.



By the 1970s, the conventional radio spectrum used by ships to communicate with each other and with the shore was becoming increasingly congested and it was physically impossible to increase the number of wavelengths available. But these difficulties could be overcome by using satellites, in space. In 1976, therefore, IMO adopted an international convention to establish the International Mobile Satellite Organization (IMSO)¹, which came into force in 1979.

Quite apart from addressing the problem of congestion, satellites have been of great benefit in commercial and other aspects of ship operation, but their greatest advantage is in safety, for improved communications enable distress messages to be transmitted and received much more effectively than terrestrial methods.

Ship distress and safety communication entered a new era on 1 February 1999 with the full implementation of the Global Maritime Distress and Safety System (GMDSS) - an integrated communication system using both satellite and terrestrial radio-communication to ensure that, no matter where a ship may be in distress, its distress call can be received by the appropriate authorities and help can be dispatched.

¹ The original body established by the Convention was the International Maritime Satellite Organization (INMARSAT), which later split into the private sector company, Inmarsat, and the International Mobile Satellite Organization (IMSO), the intergovernmental organization that oversees certain public satellite safety and security communication services provided via the Inmarsat satellites (and by any other future providers of satellite services).



Mr. William Graham (United Kingdom) served as Secretary-General from 1961 to 1963 (seen here with the IMCO Librarian, Miss Armstrong)

The GMDSS was developed by IMO in close co-operation with the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) and other international organizations, notably the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), the International Hydrographic Organization (IHO) and the COSPAS-SARSAT partners.

Under the GMDSS, ships have to carry specified satellite and radio-communication equipment for sending and receiving distress alerts and maritime safety information, and for general communication. The GMDSS requirements are contained in Chapter IV of SOLAS and were adopted in 1988. They entered into force on 1 February 1992 but provided for a phase-in period before the final implementation date of 1 February 1999.

Closely linked to the development of the GMDSS was the adoption, in April 1979, of the International Convention on Maritime Search and Rescue. As its name implies, this Convention was designed to improve arrangements for carrying out search and rescue operations following accidents at sea. Although many countries had established their own plans for such emergencies, this was the first time that international procedures were adopted. It entered into force in 1985, was revised in 1988 and again in 2004.

Concurrently with the revision of the SAR Convention, the IMO and the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) jointly developed the International Aeronautical and Maritime Search and Rescue (IAMSAR) Manual, which revised and replaced the IMO Merchant Ship Search and Rescue Manual (MERSAR), first published in 1971, and the IMO Search and Rescue Manual (IMOSAR), first published in 1978. It is designed primarily to aid the master of any vessel who might be called upon to conduct SAR operations at sea for persons in distress, and has been

revised and updated on a number of occasions.



IMO has always paid great attention to the improvement of navigational safety and, since 1959, a whole series of measures have been introduced, in the form of conventions, recommendations and other instruments. There are two conventions that are particularly relevant to navigation. These are the SOLAS Convention, which has an entire chapter (chapter V) devoted to navigational safety, and the Convention on the International Regulations for Preventing Collisions at Sea, 1972 (COLREGs).

In its many regulations, chapter V of SOLAS includes carriage requirements for shipboard navigational equipment, such as compasses (magnetic and gyro), radar, automatic radar plotting aids, echo sounders, devices to indicate speed and distance, devices to indicate rudder angle, propeller revolutions, rate-of-turn indicators and radio-direction finders. It also identifies certain navigation safety services which should be provided by Contracting Governments such as the maintenance of meteorological services for ships; the ice patrol service; routing of ships; and the maintenance of search and rescue services. Such equipment must comply with the performance standards set out in various IMO Assembly resolutions.

Chapter V has been amended and updated many times, and in December 2000, a fully revised version was adopted, incorporating several new requirements, which entered into force in 2002. Among other things, this latest version made mandatory the carriage of voyage data recorders (VDRs) and



Mr. Jean Roullier (France), Secretary-General from 1964 to 1967



Mr. Colin Goad (United Kingdom), Secretary-General from 1968 to 1973

automatic ship identification systems (AIS) aboard certain ships. Further amendments have been adopted since then, including the introduction of Long Range Identification and Tracking (LRIT) systems for ships, adopted in 2006.

Besides Conventions, IMO has also issued a series of resolutions and codes, including guidelines on navigation issues and performance standards for shipborne navigational and radio-communication equipment. Some are simply recommendations - though such is their wide acceptance that they effectively mark international policy - while others are referred to by relevant Regulations of specific Conventions, thereby giving them the same weight as the Convention regulations themselves.



The human element in shipping is a complex, multi-dimensional issue that affects maritime safety, security and marine environmental protection, involving the entire spectrum of human activities performed by ships' crews, shore based management, regulatory bodies and others. IMO's concern with the human element is long established and has been intensified in recent years.

In 1978, IMO adopted the first Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Seafarers (STCW). This Convention entered into force in 1984. The 1978 STCW Convention was the first to establish basic requirements on training, certification and watchkeeping for seafarers on an international level. Previously, standards for officers and ratings were established by individual Governments, usually without

reference to practices in other countries. As a result, standards and procedures varied widely.

The STCW Convention was revised in 1995 to bring it fully up to date. The revised Convention placed the emphasis firmly on demonstrating competence, rather than simply undertaking training. Its most radical feature was that it gave IMO some responsibility for ensuring that its requirements were met. Parties to the Convention were required to submit information to IMO concerning their training, certification and other procedures so that their ability to implement the Convention could be assessed. The so called "White List" of Parties deemed to be giving full and complete effect to the Convention was first published in 2000 and is regularly updated. This was the first time that IMO had ever been given such authority over Governments and was seen, not only as recognition of the importance of enforcing standards internationally, but also of IMO's own ability to ensure that this is done.

The STCW Convention and Code is currently undergoing another major review, considering what amendments or new regulations are needed in order to ensure that ensure that the Convention meets the new challenges facing the shipping industry including, but not limited to, rapid technological advances today and in years to come. It is intended to hold a conference in 2010 to consider the revised STCW Convention and Code for adoption.

In 1994 a new chapter added to the SOLAS Convention made mandatory the International Safety Management (ISM) Code, designed to make safety a first priority for shipping company management. It became obligatory for passenger ships, tankers, bulk carriers and some other ships on 1 July 1998 and for all



Mr. Chandrika Prasad Srivastava (India), Secretary-General from 1974 to 1989. During this period, in 1982, IMCO became the International Maritime Organization (IMO)

ships in 2002.

In 1997, IMO adopted a resolution setting out its vision, principles and goals for the human element (revised and updated in 2003) and, in 1999, an Assembly resolution agreed to “switch the emphasis onto people” in the work of the Organization.

Moving on to other human element aspects of IMO’s work, fatigue has been increasingly identified as a key factor in many shipping accidents. A resolution on fatigue factors in manning and safety was adopted by IMO in 1993, drawing the attention of all parties involved in ship operations to the factors which can contribute to fatigue and encouraging them to take them into account when making decisions on ship operations. IMO has also developed practical guidance to promote better understanding and management of fatigue.

In 1999, IMO adopted a resolution on principles of safe manning. This noted, among other things, that the ability of seafarers to maintain observance of the requirements is also dependent upon conditions relating to training, hours of work and rest, occupational safety, health and hygiene and the proper provision of food.

IMO has also combined with the International Labour Organization to develop guidelines on Seafarers’ Hours of Work or Rest, designed to help Administrations, shipowners and seafarers meet their obligations under the ILO Convention on Seafarers’ Hours of Work and the Manning of Ships and the STCW Convention.



Mr. William A. O’Neil (Canada), Secretary-General from 1990 to 2003

Maritime security issues first came to prominence on the IMO agenda following the hijacking of the Italian cruise ship **Achille Lauro**, in October 1985. The following year, the Organization issued guidance on measures to prevent unlawful acts against passengers and crew on board ships.

In March 1988, the Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts against the Safety of Maritime Navigation (the SUA Convention) was adopted, with a protocol extending its requirements to unlawful acts against fixed platforms located on the continental shelf. Both were updated and revised in 2005.

Recently, in the light of terrorist atrocities around the world, several of which have been aimed at transport infrastructures, IMO adopted a comprehensive set of maritime security measures in 2002, which came into force in July 2004.

The most important and far reaching of these is the International Ship and Port Facility (ISPS) Code. Among its requirements are that Governments should undertake risk assessments to establish the level of security threat in their ports, that both ships and ports should appoint dedicated security officers and have formal security plans drawn up and approved by their Governments.

IMO has adopted other maritime security instruments, including guidelines for administrations and the shipping industry on combating acts of piracy and armed robbery against ships; recommendations on security measures for passenger ferries on international voyages shorter than 24 hours, and on security measures for ports; guidelines on the allocation of responsibilities to seek the successful resolution of stowaway cases; and guidelines for the prevention and suppression of the smuggling of drugs, psychotropic substances and precursor





Mr. Efthimios E. Mitropoulos (Greece), Secretary-General from 2004 to present

chemicals on ships engaged in international maritime traffic.

In 2005, the number of reported attacks on ships off the coast of Somalia prompted IMO to adopt a resolution bringing the matter to the attention of the UN Security Council. This action resulted in a UN Security Council Presidential Statement, issued on 15 March 2006, encouraging UN Member States with naval vessels and military aircraft operating in international waters and airspace adjacent to the coast of Somalia to be vigilant for piracy incidents and to take appropriate action to protect merchant shipping. In 2007 IMO adopted a new resolution on the same subject, which appealed directly to the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) of Somalia, requesting it, among other things, to advise the UN Security Council that it consents to warships or military aircraft entering its territorial sea when engaging in operations against pirates or suspected pirates and armed robbers.

In June 2008, the United Nations Security Council adopted resolution 1816 (2008), under which the Security Council decided that, following receipt of a letter from Somalia to the President of the UN Security Council giving the consent of Somalia's Transitional Federal Government (TFG), States cooperating with the TFG would be allowed, for a period of six months, to enter the country's territorial waters and use "all necessary means" to repress acts of piracy and armed robbery at sea, in a manner consistent with relevant provisions of international law.

Protecting the marine environment

When the IMO Convention was adopted in 1948, marine pollution was regarded as little more than a local problem.

Some areas, notably those near ports and on major shipping routes, had experienced occasional oil pollution, but it was not regarded as a matter of international concern. But, by the 1950s, world trade was growing and oil pollution was increasing. The International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution of the Sea by Oil, 1954 (OILPOL 1954) was one positive outcome of such concern.

IMO became operational in 1959, just before the big boom in international oil trade. Within less than two decades, the world tanker fleet had increased in tonnage by ten times and tankers themselves had grown in size by the same amount: in the late 1950s, tankers averaged around 30,000 dwt; by the late 1970s, several had been built of over 500,000 dwt.

One result of this was an alarming increase in pollution of the seas, especially oil pollution, which was caused not simply by tanker accidents but as a result of routine shipping operations, such as the cleaning of cargo tanks. It was a normal practice at the time simply to wash the tanks out with water and then pump the resulting mixture of oil and water into the sea.

The 1954 OILPOL Convention attempted to curb the effects of this by prohibiting the dumping of oily wastes within a certain distance from land and in "special areas" where the danger to the environment was especially acute. In 1962 the limits were extended by means of an amendment to the treaty.

But it was the **Torrey Canyon** disaster of 1967 that focused the attention of the world on the real danger to the environment posed by the growth in tanker traffic. The **Torrey Canyon** ran aground while entering the English Channel and spilled her entire cargo of 120,000 tons of crude oil into the sea. This resulted in the biggest oil pollution incident ever recorded up to



Contemporary artist's impression showing front elevation of the new Headquarters building

that time. The incident raised questions about measures to prevent oil pollution from ships and also exposed a number of deficiencies in the existing system for providing compensation following accidents at sea.

IMO's response was swift. A plan of action was drawn up which resulted in the adoption of a series of conventions on the legal questions that were raised by the incident.

It was recognized, however, that, although accidental pollution might be spectacular, operational pollution was the bigger threat. In 1969, therefore, the 1954 OILPOL Convention was again amended, this time to introduce a procedure known as 'load on top' which had been developed by the oil industry and had the double advantage of saving oil and reducing pollution. Under the system, the washings resulting from tank cleaning are pumped into a special tank. During the voyage back to the loading terminal the oil and water separate. The water at the bottom of the tank is pumped overboard and, at the terminal, oil is pumped on to the oil left in the tank. The amendment entered into force in 1978.

In 1973, a much more ambitious convention was adopted - the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships (MARPOL). This Convention attempted to counter pollution by oil, chemicals, sewage, garbage and other harmful substances and represented the most determined attempt so far to deal with vessel-source pollution.

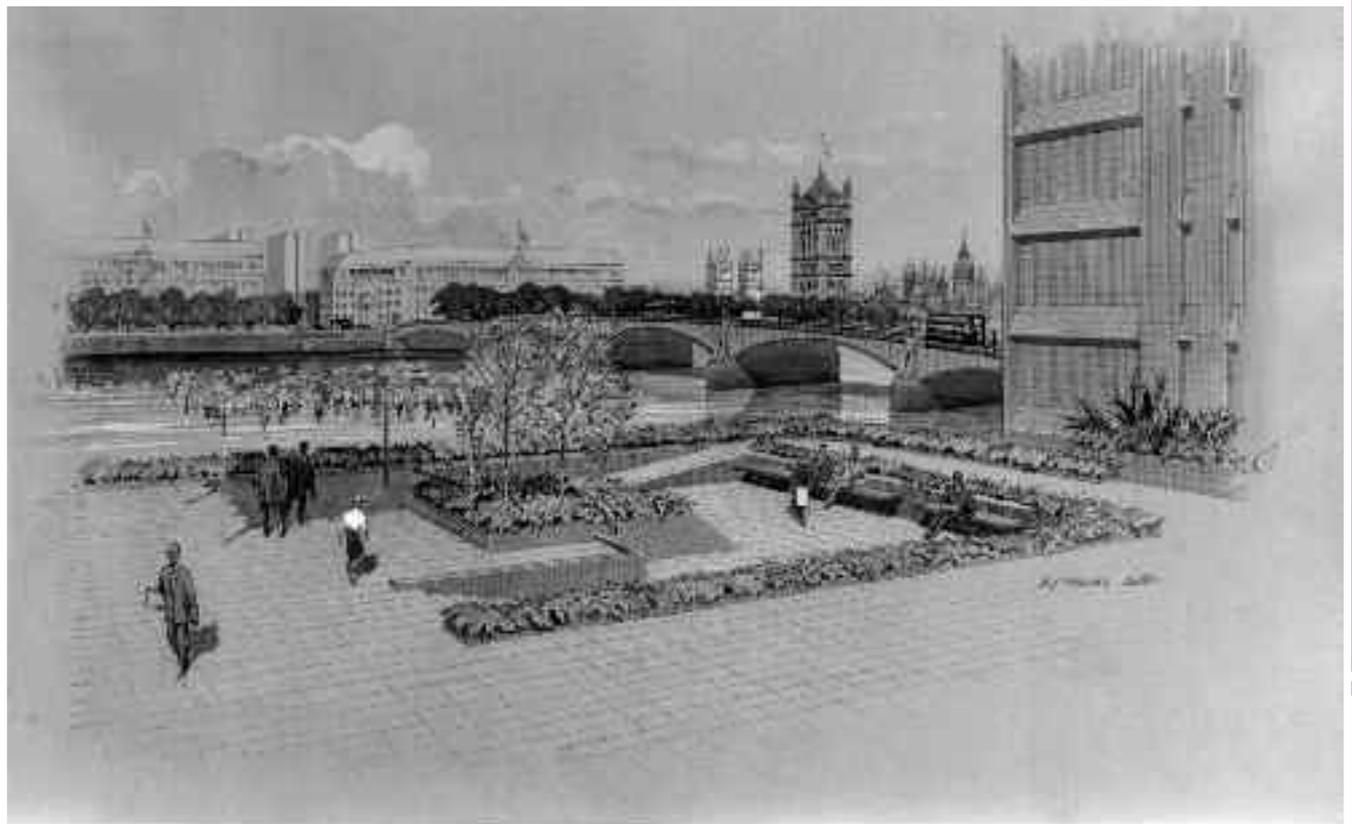
In practice, certain technical problems meant that progress towards ratifying this Convention was very slow, and a series of tanker accidents that occurred in the winter of 1976-1977 led to demands for further action. The result was the convening of the Conference on Tanker Safety and Pollution Prevention in

February 1978. The measures adopted led to great changes in tanker design and operations.

The most important of the new measures were incorporated in the Protocol of 1978 relating to the 1974 Convention on the Safety of Life at Sea (1978 SOLAS Protocol) and the Protocol of 1978 relating to the 1973 International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships (1978 MARPOL Protocol). The 1978 SOLAS Protocol entered into force in May 1981 and the 1978 MARPOL Protocol, which in effect absorbed the parent Convention, entered into force in October 1983, with the combined instrument now being referred to as the 1973 International Convention for the Prevention of Marine Pollution from Ships, as modified by the Protocol of 1978 relating thereto, or MARPOL 73/78.

MARPOL 73/78 greatly limits the amount of oil which may be discharged into the sea during routine operations and bans it completely in some areas. It requires Governments to provide reception facilities for oily wastes (from all ships, not just tankers) and the Organization has developed guidelines on how these should be provided and has held seminars and workshops around the world to provide further technical guidance on installing them.

The 1978 MARPOL Protocol introduced the concept known as protective location of segregated ballast tanks. It means that the ballast tanks (which are empty on the cargo carrying leg of the voyage and only loaded with water ballast for the return leg) are positioned where the impact of a collision or grounding is likely to be greatest. In this way the amount of cargo spilled after such an accident will be greatly reduced. The subsequent MARPOL amendments of 1983 ban the carriage of oil in the



Sketch view over river from offices

Architects: Douglas Marriott, Worby and Robinson

An architect's sketch of the terrace on the 4th floor of the building

forepeak tank – the ship's most vulnerable point in the event of a collision. Operational techniques such as load-on-top, crude-oil washing and inert gas systems are also enshrined in MARPOL or SOLAS.

In 1989, the tanker **Exxon Valdez** went aground on the coast of Alaska. In terms of oil lost, the resulting oil spill was relatively small, but it led to demands for action from politicians, press and the public. In the United States, legislation was introduced making it mandatory for tankers to be fitted with double hulls and, in 1992, IMO amended MARPOL 73/78 to make mandatory double hulls or an approved alternative. A phase-in programme was approved for existing tankers. Amendments to Annex I of MARPOL, adopted in 2001 following the sinking of the tanker **Erika** off the Brittany coast, introduced a new global timetable for accelerating the phase-out of single-hull oil tankers. This was subsequently revised again by further amendments, adopted in 2003, after the sinking of the **Prestige**.



In 1990, IMO adopted the International Convention on Oil Pollution Preparedness, Response and Co-operation (OPRC), which was designed to introduce a global system for responding to major oil spills. It entered into force in 1995.

The Convention helps to facilitate international co-operation and mutual assistance in preparing for and responding to major oil pollution incidents and encourages States to develop and maintain adequate capability to deal with oil pollution emergencies.

In 2000, IMO adopted the Protocol on Preparedness, Response

and Co-operation to Pollution Incidents by Hazardous and Noxious Substances (the OPRC-HNS Protocol) which follows the principles of the OPRC Convention for hazardous and noxious substances other than oil. It entered into force in 2007.

The underlying principle in both the Convention and its Protocol is that of co-operation and mutual assistance. IMO has recognized for a long time that pollution arising from maritime accidents is best mitigated by co-operative action between neighbouring countries.

In 1976, in co-operation with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), IMO established the Regional Marine Pollution Emergency Response Centre for the Mediterranean Sea (REMPEC), located in Malta, to co-ordinate anti-pollution activities among the Mediterranean States. Similarly, the Regional Marine Pollution Emergency, Information and Training Centre for the Wider Caribbean (REMPEITC-Carib) was established in 1995 and is based Curaçao, Netherlands Antilles. Both centres are supported by IMO, through its technical co-operation programme, and by partner Governments, industry and organizations and donors.

Formally launched in 1996, the Global Initiative (GI) is another co-operative programme under which IMO and the oil industry (through IPIECA), together with other partners, are working to encourage and facilitate the development and implementation of oil spill contingency plans and increase the ratification of oil spill-related international conventions.

A flagship of this initiative is the two-year rolling programme for the West and Central Africa region (GI-WACAF), to complement the preparedness and response activities being undertaken in the region by IMO under its technical co-operation programme



Sketch view from Lambeth High Street

Architects: Douglas Marriott, Worby and Robinson

This contemporary artist's impression shows the proposed conference hall, the low structure in the centre of the building

in conjunction with the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) under the Global Environment Facility (GEF/UNEP) funded project "Combating living marine resources depletion and coastal areas degradation in the Guinea Current Large Marine Ecosystem (GCLME) through ecosystem-based regional actions".



The carriage of chemicals in bulk is covered by regulations in both SOLAS and Annex II of MARPOL - Regulations for the Control of Pollution by Noxious Liquid Substances in Bulk. Both Conventions require chemical tankers built after 1 July 1986 to comply with the International Bulk Chemical Code (IBC Code), which gives international standards for the safe transport by sea in bulk of liquid dangerous chemicals, by prescribing the design and construction standards of ships involved in such transport and the equipment they should carry so as to minimize the risks to the ship, its crew and to the environment, having regard to the nature of the products carried. The basic philosophy is that designated ship types are directly related to the products covered by the Code, according to the nature of the hazard. Each of the products may have one or more hazard properties which include flammability, toxicity, corrosivity and reactivity.

The IBC Code lists chemicals and their hazards and gives both the ship type required to carry that product as well as the environmental hazard rating. A revised MARPOL Annex II was adopted in October 2004 and entered into force on 1 January 2007. It includes a new, four-category system, for categorizing noxious and liquid substances.



Regulations for the Prevention of Pollution by Harmful Substances Carried by Sea in Packaged Form are contained in Annex III of MARPOL 73/78, which came into force in 1992

Annex III contains general requirements for the issuing of detailed standards on packing, marking, labelling, documentation, stowage, quantity limitations, exceptions and notifications for preventing pollution by harmful substances. In October 2006, IMO adopted a revised MARPOL Annex III, in order to harmonize the regulations with the criteria for defining marine pollutants adopted by the UN Transport of Dangerous Goods (TDG) Sub-Committee, based on the United Nations Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals (GHS).

The regulations were developed to identify marine pollutants so that they could be packed and stowed on board ship in such a way as to minimize accidental pollution as well as to aid recovery by using clear marks to distinguish them from other (less harmful) cargoes.

The discharge of raw sewage into the sea can create a health hazard while, in coastal areas, sewage can also lead to oxygen depletion and an obvious visual pollution - a major problem for countries with large tourist industries. Annex IV of MARPOL 73/78 contains a set of regulations regarding the discharge of sewage into the sea; ships' equipment and systems for the control of sewage discharge; the provision of facilities at ports and terminals for the reception of sewage; and requirements for survey and certification. It also includes a model International



1979: the then Secretary-General, Mr. C.P. Strivastava, seen filling a time capsule cylinder which was put into the foundation stone of the new building



HRH The Duke of Edinburgh laying the foundation stone of the new Headquarters building (May 1979)

Sewage Pollution Prevention Certificate to be issued by national shipping administrations to ships under their jurisdiction. The Annex entered into force in 2003. A revised Annex was adopted in 2004, and this in turn entered into force on 1 August 2005.

Garbage from ships can be just as deadly to marine life as oil or chemicals. The greatest danger comes from plastic, which can float for years. Fish and marine mammals can, in some cases, mistake plastics for food and they can also become trapped in plastic ropes, nets, bags and other items.

The 1973 MARPOL Convention sought to eliminate and reduce the amount of garbage being dumped into the sea from ships. Under Annex V of the Convention, garbage includes all kinds of food, domestic and operational waste, excluding fresh fish, generated during the normal operation of the vessel and liable to be disposed of continuously or periodically. Annex V totally prohibits the disposal of plastics anywhere into the sea, and severely restricts discharges of other garbage from ships into coastal waters and “Special Areas”. The Annex also obliges Governments to ensure the provision of facilities at ports and terminals for the reception of garbage. It entered into force on 31 December 1988 and is currently under review.



Although the prevention of pollution of the sea from the land is not IMO’s responsibility, the Organization does carry out secretariat functions in respect of the Convention on the Prevention of Marine Pollution by Dumping of Wastes and Other Matter (London Convention). This Convention was adopted in 1972 at a conference held under the auspices of the United

Kingdom. As well as regulating the dumping of wastes into the sea, it also deals with incineration at sea.

Over the years, opinion has moved steadily against using the sea as a dumping site for waste materials and this attitude was reflected in amendments to the Convention that were adopted in a Protocol of 1996, which entered into force in 2006. This represents a major change of approach to the question of how to regulate the use of the sea as a depository for waste materials in that, in essence, dumping is now prohibited, except for materials on an approved list, and some practices, such as incineration at sea, have been totally banned.



For decades, maritime salvage operations had been carried out in accordance with a treaty adopted in 1910. This system had generally worked well and was based on the well-known principle of ‘no cure, no pay’. If a salvage operation is successful, the salvor is entitled to a reward based on the value of the ship and its cargo. However, this system did not take into account damage caused by pollution. This meant, for example, that salvors could expect no reward for an operation that failed to save the ship, even though in the process they prevented a major oil spill. To remedy this, in 1989 IMO adopted the International Convention on Salvage, which entered into force in 1996.



The spread of invasive species has been recognized as one of the greatest threats to the world’s oceans and a major problem



A view from the river of the celebrations to mark the opening of IMO's new Headquarters building, displaying the flags of all the Member States

for the ecological and the economic well being of the planet. The problem was first raised at IMO in 1988. Guidelines to address the problem were adopted in 1997. Subsequently, further technical advances were sought, leading eventually to the adoption, in February 2004, of the International Convention for the Control and Management of Ships' Ballast Water and Sediments - a new international instrument to prevent the potentially devastating effects of the spread of harmful aquatic organisms carried by ships' ballast water.

In recognition of another, equally important, vector for the transfer of invasive aquatic species by ships, IMO has recently initiated the development of measures to minimize the translocation of species through bio-fouling of ships – in other words, the adherence of sealife such as algae and molluscs to the ships' hulls.



The International Convention on the Control of Harmful Anti-Fouling Systems on Ships (AFS Convention) was adopted on 5 October 2001 to protect marine life from the negative effects of metallic compounds in paints used to coat the bottom of ships, and will enter into force on 17 September 2008.

When the Convention is in force, ships will no longer be permitted to apply or re-apply organotin compounds which act as biocides in their anti-fouling systems; ships either shall not bear such compounds on their hulls or external parts or surface or, for ships already carrying such compounds on their hulls, a coating that forms a barrier to such compounds will have to be applied to prevent them leaching from the underlying non-

compliant anti-fouling systems. The Convention also establishes a mechanism to evaluate and assess other anti-fouling systems and prevent the potential future use of other harmful substances in these systems.



The issue of ship recycling has also become a growing concern, not only from the environmental point of view but also with regard to the occupational health and safety of workers in the industry. In the process of recycling ships, virtually nothing goes to waste - materials and equipment are almost entirely reused, and recycling thus makes a positive contribution to the global conservation of energy and resources. Properly handled, ship recycling is, without question, a 'green' industry. However, concerns have been raised about the working and environmental conditions at many of the world's ship scrapping locations. Ships sold for scrapping may contain environmentally hazardous substances such as asbestos, heavy metals, hydrocarbons, ozone depleting substances and others.

IMO adopted Guidelines on Ship Recycling in December 2003. They recognize that, while ultimate responsibility for conditions in recycling facilities lies with the countries in which they are situated, other stakeholders, including administrations of ship building and maritime equipment supplying countries, flag, port and recycling States, as well as intergovernmental organizations and commercial bodies such as shipowners, ship builders, and repairers must be encouraged to contribute towards minimizing potential problems.

In 2005, it was agreed that IMO should to develop a new, legally-



Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth II, with Secretary-General Srivastava, comes to Albert Embankment to open the building officially in 1983

binding instrument on ship recycling for adoption during the 2008-2009 biennium and a special conference will be convened for this purpose in Hong Kong, China, in May 2009. Meanwhile, IMO continues to co-operate on this topic with the International Labour Organization and the relevant bodies of the Basel Convention on Transboundary Movement of Wastes, and a joint Working Group on the subject, embracing all three Organizations, has been established.



In 2007, IMO adopted a new Convention on the removal of wrecks that may present either a hazard to navigation or a threat to the marine and coastal environments, or both. Once in force, the Convention will fill a gap in the existing international legal framework by providing the first set of uniform international rules aimed at ensuring the prompt and effective removal of wrecks located beyond the territorial sea.

Protecting the atmosphere

Perhaps the most significant threat to our environment today concerns atmospheric pollution. Although the shipping industry is but a small contributor to the total volume of gas emissions – compared to road vehicles, aviation and public utilities, such as power stations – atmospheric pollution from ships has, nevertheless, been significantly reduced in the last decade and IMO continues to work towards further reductions as the evidence mounts and the world becomes more aware and more concerned about the damage that might be caused.

The issue of controlling air pollution from ships - in particular, noxious gases from ships' exhausts - was first discussed in the

lead-up to the adoption of the 1973 MARPOL Convention. However, it was decided not to include regulations concerning air pollution at that time.

Later, in the mid-1980s, IMO had been reviewing the quality of fuel oils in relation to discharge requirements in Annex I and the issue of air pollution was discussed. In 1988, it was agreed to include air pollution in the work programme following a submission from Norway on the scale of the problem. In addition, the Second International Conference on the Protection of the North Sea, held in November 1987, had issued a declaration in which the ministers of North Sea States agreed to initiate actions within appropriate bodies, such as IMO, "leading to improved quality standards of heavy fuels and to actively support this work aimed at reducing marine and atmospheric pollution."

In March 1989, various countries submitted papers to the MEPC referring to fuel oil quality and atmospheric pollution, and it was agreed to look at the prevention of air pollution from ships - as well as fuel oil quality - as part of the Marine Environment Protection Committee's long-term work programme, starting in March 1990. Discussions in the MEPC led to the adoption, in 1991, of a resolution calling on the Committee to develop an Annex VI to MARPOL 73/78 on the prevention of air pollution.

Annex VI was developed over the next six years and adopted at a Conference in 1997. With its entry into force in 2005, it set limits on sulphur oxide (SO_x) and nitrogen oxide (NO_x) emissions from ship exhausts. The annex includes a global cap on the sulphur content of fuel oil and calls on IMO to monitor the worldwide average sulphur content of fuel.

Annex VI also contains provisions allowing for special SO_x



The Queen unveils the plaque to commemorate her visit

Emission Control Areas (SECAS) to be established with more stringent controls on sulphur emissions; prohibits deliberate emissions of ozone depleting substances, which include halons and chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs), and the incineration onboard ship of certain products, such as contaminated packaging materials and polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs). It also sets limits on emissions of nitrogen oxides (NOx) from diesel engines. A mandatory NOx Technical Code, which defines how this shall be done, was also adopted.

In July 2005, two months after Annex VI of MARPOL 73/78 entered into force, IMO agreed on the need to review it and the NOx Technical Code with a view to revising the regulations to take account of current technology and the need to further reduce emissions from ships.

As a result of that review process, in April 2008 the MEPC approved proposed amendments to MARPOL Annex VI. The main changes would see a progressive reduction in SOx emissions from ships, a reduction of the limits applicable in SECAs, and progressive reductions in NOx emissions from marine engines. The revised Annex VI will also allow, in certain circumstances, for an Emission Control Area to be designated for SOx and particulate matter, or NOx, or all three types of emissions from ships.

The amendments to Annex VI are expected to be formally adopted in October 2008 by the MEPC and to enter into force 16 months thereafter.

Annex VI does not cover the emission of greenhouse gases (GHGs) from ships, but IMO has, nevertheless, given ample consideration to the matter. Indeed, IMO has a mandate, through the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate

Change (UNFCCC), to pursue the limitation or reduction of emissions of greenhouse gases from ships. The Organization developed an action plan to that end and is now working towards the establishment of a robust regime that will regulate shipping at the global level and protect the marine and atmospheric environment.

In the first years of the new millennium, IMO's work related to the reduction of GHG emissions from ships was focused on the development of a GHG Indexing Scheme for ships. *Interim Guidelines for Voluntary Ship CO₂ Emission Indexing for Use in Trials* were approved in July 2005, with the objective of establishing a common approach for trials on voluntary CO₂ emission indexing, which will enable shipowners to evaluate the performance of their fleet with regard to such emissions. As the amount of CO₂ emitted from a ship is directly related to the consumption of bunker fuel oil, CO₂ indexing will also provide useful information on a ship's performance with regard to fuel efficiency.

IMO's 2000 Study on Greenhouse Gas Emissions from Ships is now being updated to assist in the development of both short-term and long-term measures to address CO₂ emissions from ships. Short-term measures include a proposal to establish a global levy scheme on marine bunker fuel; improvement of specific fuel consumption; energy efficiency design of new-build ships; use of onshore power supply for ships in port; use of wind power; strict limitations on leakage rates of refrigerant gases; vessel speed reductions and measures to improve traffic control, fleet management, cargo handling operations and energy efficiency.

Longer-term measures identified include: technical measures for



The Queen signs the visitors' book

ship design; use of alternative fuels; a CO₂ Design Index for new ships; external verification scheme for CO₂ operational index; an Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS) and/or Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) and inclusion of a mandatory CO₂ element in port infrastructure charging.

It is expected that certain key elements of IMO's revised greenhouse gas study and other parts of the work programme would now be ready in sufficient time for the MEPC to make decisions on this topic at its 58th session, in the Autumn of 2008, with remaining elements being finalized and approved in July 2009, in accordance with the agreed action plan and timetable.

Facilitation

With the increase in international maritime traffic since the 1950s, the lack of internationally standardised documentation procedures was imposing a heavy burden upon both shipborne and shore-based personnel and causing considerable delays.

Traditionally, large numbers of documents are required by customs, immigration, health and other public authorities pertaining to a ship, its crew and passengers, baggage, cargo and mail. Unnecessary paperwork is a problem in most industries, but the potential for red tape is probably greater in shipping than in other industries, because of its international nature and the traditional acceptance of formalities and procedures on the arrival, stay and departure of ships.

IMO started working on these problems soon after coming into existence and, in 1965, adopted the Convention on Facilitation of International Maritime Traffic (FAL Convention). Its primary objectives are to prevent unnecessary delays in maritime traffic,

to aid co-operation between Governments and to secure the highest practicable degree of uniformity in formalities and procedures by simplifying and harmonizing documents and procedures. The Convention came into force in 1967.

IMO's Facilitation Committee, established in 1968, addresses issues relating to implementation of the FAL Convention

The Ship-Port Interface Working Group, which meets during the Facilitation Committee sessions and reports to the Facilitation, Maritime Safety and Marine Environment Protection Committees, works on specific issues such as the development of guidelines and manuals for terminal personnel. In 2002, amendments were adopted to the FAL Convention to address stowaways.

The Facilitation Committee will be formally institutionalized in December 2008, with the entry into force of amendments to the IMO convention adopted in 1991.

Liability and compensation

IMO is primarily concerned with the safety of shipping and the prevention of marine pollution, but the Organization has also introduced regulations covering liability and compensation for damage, such as pollution, caused by ships. The **Torrey Canyon** disaster of 1967, which led to an intensification of IMO's technical work in preventing pollution, was also the catalyst for work on liability and compensation.

In 1969, IMO adopted the International Convention on Civil Liability for Oil Pollution Damage (CLC Convention) which ensured that adequate compensation was paid to victims and the liability was placed on the shipowner. In 1971 the Convention establishing an International Fund for



View from inside IMO building of Seafarers' Memorial overlooking the Thames and the Houses of Parliament (unveiled in September 2001). Sculptor Michael Sandle was commissioned to create the memorial featuring a lone seafarer on the prow of a cargo ship

Compensation for Oil Pollution Damage (Fund Convention), which set higher limits than the CLC Convention, was adopted. This came into force in 1978 and the Fund has its own headquarters in London. Unlike the Civil Liability Convention, which puts the onus on the shipowner, the Fund is made up of contributions from oil importers. The idea is that, if an accident at sea results in pollution damage which exceeds the compensation available under the Civil Liability Convention, the Fund will be available to pay an additional amount, while the burden of compensation will be spread more evenly between shipowner and cargo interests. The limits of liability in the two conventions have subsequently been increased through amendments adopted 1992 and 2000.

An additional, third tier of compensation for oil pollution damage was established through the adoption of the 2003 Protocol on the Establishment of a Supplementary Fund for Oil Pollution Damage. Participation in the Supplementary Fund is optional and is open to all Contracting States to the 1992 Protocol to the Fund Convention.

In 1971 IMO, in association with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and the European Nuclear Energy Agency of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), adopted the Convention relating to Civil Liability in the field of Maritime Carriage of Nuclear Material.

Then, in 1974, IMO adopted the Athens Convention relating to the Carriage of Passengers and their Luggage by Sea, which declares the carrier liable for damage or loss suffered by passengers if the incident is due to the fault or the neglect of the carrier.



Front elevation of Seafarers' Memorial, situated next to the entrance of the IMO building, which had to be modified to accommodate the new sculpture

The International Convention on Liability and Compensation for Damage in Connection with the Carriage of Hazardous and Noxious Substances (HNS) by Sea was adopted in 1996; and, in 2001, IMO adopted a new International Convention on Civil Liability for Bunker Oil Pollution Damage, 2001, modelled on the 1969 CLC Convention, which establishes a liability and compensation regime for spills of oil carried as fuel in ships' bunkers.

Implementation

While IMO's first priority was to adopt international treaty instruments incorporating global standards for maritime safety, security, efficiency of navigation and pollution prevention, it quickly became apparent that, by themselves, these legal instruments were of little use unless they were properly put into effect. As more and more developing countries began building up their own fleets, it was considered necessary and useful to provide appropriate advice and technical co-operation to these countries.

Within a few years of coming into being, therefore, IMO formed a technical co-operation programme, the main purpose of which would be to help developing countries ratify IMO conventions and to reach the standards contained in those and other instruments. The first technical mission was made in 1966. In the 1970s, the programme assumed much greater importance and, in 1977, IMO became the first United Nations agency to institutionalize its Technical Co-operation Committee.

The emphasis of much of IMO's technical co-operation work is on training and perhaps the best examples of this are the World



The continents of the world feature in a new artwork chandelier commissioned for the 2008 refurbishment

Maritime University in Malmö, Sweden and the IMO International Maritime Law Institute, in Malta, which were established in 1983 and in 1988, respectively, and provide advanced training in maritime administration, maritime law, education and shipping management.

Implementation is a collective responsibility, which involves Governments, the maritime industry and seafarers themselves. Unless all of them play their part, implementation will not be effective. Financial support for IMO projects that provide assistance for global and uniform implementation and enforcement of standards is provided in various ways, for example, through the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the World Bank, the Global Environment Fund (GEF) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). In addition, individual Governments, non-governmental organizations, commercial companies and foundations provide generous support for IMO projects.

A number of other notable initiatives have been particularly important in this context. 1993, for example, saw the first meeting of the Sub-Committee on Flag State Implementation (FSI). Its purpose is to assist flag States to implement IMO conventions and other instruments. When flag States ratify an IMO convention, they undertake to make it part of their own national law and thereby agree to enforce it.

Many of IMO's more important technical conventions contain provisions for ships to be inspected when they visit foreign ports to ensure that they meet IMO requirements. These Port State Control inspections were originally intended to be a back up to flag State implementation, but experience has shown that they can be extremely effective in their own right, especially if

organized regionally. IMO has encouraged the establishment of regional port State control organizations in many parts of the world with a view to raising shipping standards and quality throughout the globe.

Of special importance, the Voluntary IMO Member State Audit Scheme is intended to provide an audited Member State with a comprehensive and objective assessment of how effectively it administers and implements those mandatory IMO instruments which are covered by the scheme.

The scheme, adopted in 2005, heralded a new era for IMO, in which the Organization has at its disposal, for the first time, a tool to achieve harmonized and consistent global implementation of IMO standards, which is key to realizing the IMO objectives of safe, secure and efficient shipping on clean oceans.

The scheme addresses issues such as conformance in enacting appropriate legislation for the IMO instruments to which a Member State is a Party; the administration and enforcement of the applicable laws and regulations by the Member State; the delegation of authority to recognized organizations; the related control and monitoring mechanism of the survey and certification processes by the Member States. The first audits were carried out in 2006.

Conclusion

There is no doubt that IMO has come a very long way since its inception all those years ago. The Organization was born into a world weary from war and in which the old colonial powers still held sway in terms of global prosperity and trade. As a consequence, these were also major powers in shipping and, as



The new-look delegates' lounge features comfortable, informal seating areas

the leading maritime nations, they tended to create their own standards with regard to vessel construction, safety, manning and so on. But, in 1948, the new spirit of global unity that was in the air and the first glimpses of a new world order on the horizon combined to cause a number of far-sighted nations to draw up the blueprint for an international organization that would develop standards for shipping – for adoption and universal implementation throughout the entire industry. For it was becoming generally accepted that a situation in which each shipping nation had its own maritime laws was counter-productive in ensuring safety in shipping operations worldwide. Not only were standards different, but some were far higher than others. Conscientious safety-minded shipowners were at an economic disadvantage vis-à-vis their competitors who spent relatively little money on safety, and this was a threat to any serious attempt to improve safety at sea and to international seaborne trade as a whole.

Now, of course, all this has changed. Globalization has transformed international trade, new powers have emerged in shipping and the plethora of measures established by IMO has provided the bedrock on which a safer and cleaner industry can continue to develop and flourish. Moreover, IMO's work has demonstrated beyond doubt that international standards – developed, agreed, implemented and enforced universally – are the only effective way to regulate such a diverse and truly international industry as shipping.

The Organization's standards are now firmly embedded in shipping's consciousness and practice and they shape the industry of today. Indeed, the comprehensive body of IMO conventions (some 50 in total), supported by literally hundreds of codes, guidelines and recommendations, govern just about

every facet of the industry – from the design, construction, equipment and operation of ships to the training of seafarers, or from the drawing board to the scrapyards.

Many of the main IMO treaties (including, for example, SOLAS, the Tonnage and Load Lines Conventions, the Collision Regulations, the STCW Convention and Annexes I and II of MARPOL), have all been ratified by States that are, collectively, responsible for more than 98 per cent of the world's fleet.

It is because of the extensive network of global regulations that IMO has developed and adopted over the years that, today, shipping is a safe and secure mode of transport; clean; environment-friendly; and very energy-efficient. There is no doubt that shipping's environmental consciousness continues to grow. This is illustrated not only by its wide acceptance of IMO's environmental standards and the initiatives that the industry itself has put in place to prevent its operations having a negative impact on the environment, but also by its eagerness to challenge and reverse shipping's unwarranted negative image and, through a variety of media, enhance its environmental credentials, highlighting its ever-improving record and contribution to sustainable development.

And so, IMO stands united, focussed on the challenges ahead and continuously relevant to the industry it has been serving for so long. Shipping is, *par excellence*, a significant contributor to, and facilitator of, economic growth on a worldwide basis. As such, the mission of IMO (that of promoting its safety and security, its efficiency and its environmental credentials) is one that reaches out far beyond the Organization's immediate constituency and touches the life of nearly everyone on the planet.



Business centres have been provided for delegates as part of the £62 million-plus refurbishment



The 764-seat main hall is equipped with interpretation equipment for all seats, providing simultaneous interpretation for up to nine languages, power and data outlets at desktops for 644 delegates, audio-visual cameras and screens with full video-conferencing capability and a paging system