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**Adopted on 25 November 2015
(Agenda item 8)**

**STRATEGIC PLAN FOR THE ORGANIZATION
(FOR THE SIX-YEAR PERIOD 2016 to 2021)**

THE ASSEMBLY,

RECALLING part I of the Convention on the International Maritime Organization, in particular Article 1(a) thereof,

RECALLING ALSO part II of the Convention, in particular Articles 2(a) and (c) thereof,

RECALLING FURTHER resolutions:

- A.900(21) on *Objectives of the Organization in the 2000s*;
- A.901(21) on *IMO and technical co-operation in the 2000s*; and
- A.909(22) on *Policy making in IMO – setting the Organization's policies and objectives*,

RECALLING IN PARTICULAR the directions given, at its twenty-second session, to the Council to prepare the Organization's strategic plan outlining the Organization's broad direction and strategic objectives; and the adoption, at its twenty-eighth session, of resolution A.1060(28) on *Strategic Plan for the Organization (for the six-year period 2014 to 2019)*, including the direction given to the Council therein to review the Plan every biennium,

BEING COMMITTED to ensuring the fulfilment of the Organization's aims and objectives in a uniform manner on a global basis and to setting clear priorities for the purpose of achieving them,

BEING AWARE of the Council's decision to develop a new Strategic Framework for the Organization for implementation in the 2018-2019 biennium,

HAVING CONSIDERED the recommendations of the Council at its twenty-eighth extraordinary session,

1 APPROVES the Strategic Plan for the Organization for the six-year period 2016 to 2021, as set out in the attached annex, comprising:

- (a) a mission statement;

- (b) the trends, developments and challenges in the shipping and maritime world that the Organization is anticipated to face over the aforementioned period; and
- (c) the strategic directions for the Organization, based on emerging trends, developments and challenges;

2 REQUESTS the Council and the Secretary-General, as appropriate, to monitor progress and analyse, as necessary, any mechanisms required to review and update progress made under the Strategic Plan, taking into account the High-level Action Plan developed by the Organization and the document on *Application of the Strategic Plan and the High-level Action Plan of the Organization*;

3 REQUESTS the Council to develop a new strategic framework to replace the current Plan by the 2018-2019 biennium;

4 DECIDES to review, at its thirtieth regular session, the Organization's progress against the Plan on the basis of a Council report;

5 REITERATES ITS REQUEST to the Council and all the committees, when making recommendations for their biennial agendas during the Strategic Plan period, to bear in mind the desirability of not scheduling more than one diplomatic conference in each year, save in exceptional circumstances;

6 REVOKES resolution A.1060(28).

Annex

STRATEGIC PLAN FOR THE ORGANIZATION (FOR THE SIX-YEAR PERIOD 2016 TO 2021)

This, the Organization's Strategic Plan, covers the six-year period 2016 to 2021. It comprises three sections:

- .1 a mission statement;
- .2 trends and developments in the shipping and maritime world and the related challenges for the Organization; and
- .3 the strategic directions that the Organization wishes to take over the period.

1 MISSION STATEMENT

1.1 The mission of the International Maritime Organization (IMO), as a United Nations specialized agency, is to promote safe, secure, environmentally sound, efficient and sustainable shipping through cooperation. This will be accomplished by adopting the highest practicable standards of maritime safety and security, efficiency of navigation and prevention and control of pollution from ships, as well as through consideration of the related legal matters and effective implementation of IMO instruments, with a view to their universal and uniform application.

2 TRENDS, DEVELOPMENTS AND CHALLENGES

2.1 In its work to achieve its mission in an ever-changing world, the Organization faces many challenges. The Organization's strategic directions have been developed in the context of trends and developments in today's shipping industry, as enumerated below.

Globalization and sustainable development

2.2 Today's globalized world is characterized by freer movement of people, goods, services and information. It is a more interconnected world, in which the actions taken in one place have implications elsewhere. Globalization has also given rise to new players in the maritime arena. For instance, through a process of consolidation shipping conglomerates and alliances, as well as global terminal operators, wield increasing influence on global trade, the maritime transport sector and shipping matters at large. At the same time, there has also been increased interaction between IMO and other intergovernmental organizations, as well as non-State actors such as industry and special interest groups, in response to the need for a more comprehensive and inclusive approach to shipping matters.

2.3 The United Nations has adopted a new development agenda, "Transforming our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development". Seventeen (17) Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) have also been adopted as part of this new agenda. Maritime transportation is fundamental to world trade and access to global markets and therefore maritime transportation is a key component in achieving sustainable development and in balancing the three dimensions of sustainable development: economic, environmental and social.

The challenge for IMO is to:

- .1 *be proactive in identifying trends and developments affecting shipping;*
- .2 *uphold a comprehensive and inclusive approach to shipping matters;*

- .3 *provide an effective and efficient response to shipping trends, developments and incidents and, in so doing, stave off regional or unilateral tendencies that conflict with the Organization's regulatory framework; and*
- .4 *involve the whole of the IMO membership in the development, formulation, adoption and implementation of policy.*

Heightened maritime safety concerns

2.4 Enhancing maritime safety by ensuring that each link in the chain of responsibility fully meets its obligations is a priority for the maritime community as a whole. IMO builds upon a system of shared responsibilities, where flag, port and coastal States, shipowners, recognized organizations and other stakeholders all have an important role to play to ensure implementation and enforcement of global rules and raising the standards of shipping. Access to information, transparency and an inclusive approach in developing measures for the uniform and effective implementation of IMO instruments are also critical success factors in enhancing maritime safety.

The challenge for IMO is to continue to enhance technical, operational and safety management standards and to eliminate shipping that fails to meet and maintain these standards at all times. A further challenge is to identify and evaluate factors influencing safety culture and to turn them into practical and effective mechanisms for further developing a quality and safety culture throughout the maritime community.

Heightened maritime security concerns

2.5 IMO Member States and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations have collectively introduced measures in the maritime transport sector designed to enhance maritime and port security, prevent and suppress unlawful acts against the safety of maritime navigation and protect against disruptions to global trade, including those to vital shipping lanes. Following the adoption of amendments to SOLAS introducing the International Ship and Port Facility Security Code, the measures must be implemented effectively in order to enhance global maritime security. At the same time, security measures must not unduly affect the efficiency of shipping and port operations, the more so in an interconnected world which is so highly dependent on seaborne trade.

The challenge for IMO is to continue to promote the effective implementation of security measures and to instil security consciousness in ship and port facility operations, at the same time ensuring that the right balance is struck in trade facilitation and that the flow of seaborne trade continues to be smooth and efficient.

Heightened concerns about piracy and armed robbery against ships

2.5 Piracy and armed robbery against ships remain a real and ever-present danger to those who use the seas for peaceful purposes. The increase in the number, ferocity and geographical scope of incidents of piracy and armed robbery against ships, too often resulting in death, injury or the kidnapping of seafarers, has compelled the United Nations, regional bodies, Governments acting collectively or individually, military forces, shipping companies, ship operators and ships' crew to work together in order to rid the world of the threat posed by piracy. IMO has continued to develop guidance to Member States and the shipping industry on measures to deter or prevent piracy attacks from being successful, and to investigate offences. Recognizing that, although piracy manifests itself at sea, the roots of the problem are to be found ashore, IMO has also promoted the development of regional initiatives to develop States' capacity to address piracy collectively.

The challenge for IMO is to continue to develop and promote implementation of IMO guidance; encourage adherence to industry-developed Best Management Practices so that, when venturing into piracy-infested areas, ships take all the recommended self-protection measures which are applicable; ensure that such measures are kept current, appropriate and proportionate to the actual threat; and promote the effective orchestration and coordination of global efforts to address piracy and armed robbery against ships.

Heightened environmental consciousness

2.7 The enhancement of a sustainable environmental policy for the shipping industry remains a high-profile matter. The heightened concern about the impact of global shipping activities on the environment has given further impetus to efforts by the Organization to increase awareness, promote corporate social responsibility by the shipping industry and develop sustainable and environmentally conscious means of minimizing the negative impacts from shipping, such as those aimed at reducing atmospheric pollution; addressing climate change through enhanced energy efficiency for ships and other measures; ensuring the preservation of ecosystems and biodiversity; and preventing the introduction of polluting substances from ships into the marine environment. Concern for the environment has also extended to concerns over the safest and most effective measures for the recycling of ships, which IMO is also addressing.

The challenge for IMO, in line with the global emphasis on sustainable development, is to continue to:

- .1 be proactive in identifying shipping activities and incidents that could have an adverse impact on the environment, and therefore in developing corresponding preventive measures;*
- .2 contribute to international efforts to reduce atmospheric pollution and address climate change;*
- .3 develop effective preparedness and response strategies for shipping incidents in order to mitigate their impact on the environment; and*
- .4 make new ships more environmentally friendly by implementing the "cradle to grave" concept for new ships, while further facilitating practicable solutions for the recycling of existing ships.*

Promoting the efficiency of shipping

2.8 With the increase in regulatory measures for safety, security and environmental protection, there is a need to achieve an appropriate balance between the multiple objectives of the Organization – namely, safe, secure and efficient shipping on clean oceans – lest such measures unduly impact on the efficiency of shipping. The development and implementation of measures to promote the efficiency of shipping, through better regulation including the elimination of unnecessary, disproportionate or obsolete administrative requirements, is essential in order for the shipping industry to continue to serve international maritime transportation and world trade.

The challenge for IMO is to further promote and develop measures to facilitate shipping, such as through the reduction of obstacles and formalities and the creation of enhanced systems to facilitate seaborne trade, thereby ensuring that the appropriate balance is achieved between safety, security and environmental protection and efficiency of shipping so that the flow of seaborne trade continues to be smooth and efficient.

Shifting emphasis onto people

2.9 Shortcomings in human performance at all levels in the chain of responsibility are a major cause of incidents. IMO will continue its efforts to address this problem. As IMO strives for full compliance with its instruments, their effectiveness will come under scrutiny with each incident resulting from human error. On the other hand, advances in technology and training provisions will offer new opportunities, which IMO can harness in order to enhance the contribution of the human element to safety, security and environmental protection.

The challenge for IMO is to continue to place increased emphasis on the contribution of the human element to safer, more secure and environmentally friendly shipping and continuously to improve measures aimed at enhancing human performance in the maritime industry.

People at sea

2.10 In the context of IMO's fundamental mission to protect the lives of all those at sea, the advent of passenger ships with capacities of several thousands, the increased use of ferries and high-speed craft on international and domestic services to provide essential national, regional and archipelagic links, the growing number of migrants and the situation concerning unsafe mixed migration by sea, the continuing incidence of stowaway cases and of piracy and armed robbery and the continuing loss of seafarers' and fishers' lives at sea have all heightened concerns relating to the safety of human life at sea and the success of search and rescue operations in cases of distress. The safe and secure operation of ships and whether current response capabilities are adequate to deal with emergencies are of particular concern.

The challenge for IMO is to continue to ensure the adequacy of all systems used in ensuring the safety of life at sea, including those concerned with large concentrations of people, and the implementation of effective measures to address the issues of migrants transported by sea, stowaways, and humanitarian aspects of piracy and armed robbery against ships.

The importance of capacity building in ensuring universal and uniform application of IMO instruments

2.11 The Integrated Technical Cooperation Programme (ITCP) is crucial for assisting developing countries to implement IMO instruments for safer and more secure shipping, enhanced environmental protection and facilitation of international maritime traffic. In addition, the ITCP has made a contribution to assisting developing countries to achieve relevant Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and will further play a pivotal role in IMO's activities to support the achievement of the recently adopted development agenda, including the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). By doing so, the ITCP contributes actively, in accordance with resolution A.901(21), towards the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development. The importance of the ITCP thus increases further with amendments to existing instruments and the development of new instruments by IMO, in which the particular needs of, and impact on, small island developing States and least developed countries should be taken into account. The Organization therefore needs to maintain and strengthen its capacity to meet the historical and growing needs of developing countries for technical assistance, in particular by working towards the long-term financial sustainability, efficiency and effectiveness of the ITCP.

The challenge for IMO is to continue to ensure an equitable and sustainable means of funding for the ITCP, and to improve its delivery, efficiency and effectiveness.

Technology as a major driving force for change in the maritime transport sector

2.12 Technological developments have created new opportunities, but may include adverse impacts. New opportunities therefore exist that may encourage development of various IMO initiatives, from safety and security to environmental protection and the facilitation of international maritime traffic. Developments in communications and information technology may provide opportunities to develop knowledge management so as to increase transparency and accessibility to information.

The challenge for IMO is to continue to:

- .1 ensure that the technological developments adopted are conducive, as applicable, to enhancing maritime safety, security, protection of the environment and facilitation of international maritime traffic, and take into account the need for their global application;*
- .2 ensure the proper application of information technology within the Organization and provide enhanced access to that information for the shipping industry and others; and*
- .3 ensure that new equipment for use on board ships is designed and manufactured with the needs, skills and abilities of all users in mind.*

3 STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

Introduction

3.1 The strategic directions (SDs) for enabling IMO to achieve its mission objectives in the years ahead can be considered under three broad categories:

- .1 enhancing the status and effectiveness of the Organization (SDs 1, 2, 3 and 4);
- .2 developing and maintaining a comprehensive framework for safe, secure, efficient and environmentally sound shipping (SDs 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 and 14); and
- .3 enhancing the profile of shipping and instilling a quality culture and environmental conscience within the shipping community (SDs 11, 12 and 13).

SD 1 IMO is the primary international forum for technical matters of all kinds affecting international shipping and legal matters related thereto. An inclusive and comprehensive approach to such matters will be a hallmark of IMO. IMO will actively promote its role as the primary international forum on matters within its competence and ensure and strengthen the linkage between safe, secure, efficient and environmentally friendly maritime transportation, the development of global trade, the world economy, and the realization of new United Nations development agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). In order to maintain that primacy, it will:

- .1 further develop its role in maritime affairs vis-à-vis other intergovernmental and international organizations, so as to be able to deal effectively and comprehensively with complex cross-agency issues;

- .2 actively engage the various stakeholders to ensure a more inclusive approach to decision making; and
 - .3 actively seek to reap synergies and avoid duplicating efforts made by other United Nations agencies in shipping matters.
- SD 2 IMO will foster global compliance with its instruments governing international shipping and will strive for their uniform implementation by Member States.
- SD 3 With a view to enhancing its contribution to sustainable development, IMO will strengthen its maritime capacity-building programmes and will focus on:
- .1 developing capacity-building partnerships with governments, organizations and industry;
 - .2 ensuring the long-term sustainability of the ITCP;
 - .3 contributing to the realization of the relevant Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), including through the development of major projects targeting emerging issues;
 - .4 meeting the needs of its developing Member States; and
 - .5 further improving the delivery, utilization, efficiency and effectiveness of its technical assistance and cooperation programmes.
- SD 4 Internally, IMO should be able to respond effectively and efficiently to emerging trends, developments and challenges. It will strive for excellence in governance and management. Besides the Strategic Plan, it will maintain a risk management framework. The Council will provide visionary leadership, committees will be optimally structured and will be supported by an effective and efficient Secretariat. Within approved biennial appropriations and in accordance with a detailed Business Plan, the Secretariat will be endowed with sufficient resources and expertise to realize the Organization's work plans, and the Organization will make effective use of information and communication technology in management and administration.
- SD 5 IMO's highest priority will be the safety of human life at sea. In particular, greater emphasis will be accorded to:
- .1 ensuring that all systems related to enhancing the safety of human life at sea are adequate, including those concerned with large concentrations of people;
 - .2 enhancing technical, operational and safety management standards;
 - .3 eliminating shipping that fails to meet and maintain these standards on a continuous basis; and
 - .4 increasing the emphasis on the role of the human element in safe shipping.

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- SD 6 IMO will seek to enhance the security of the maritime transport network, including vital shipping lanes, and to reduce piracy and armed robbery against ships as well as the frequency of stowaway incidents, by:
- .1 promoting a comprehensive and cooperative approach, both among Member States within the Organization and between IMO and other intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations;
 - .2 raising awareness of IMO security measures and promoting their effective implementation;
 - .3 raising awareness of IMO measures against piracy and armed robbery against ships and promoting their effective implementation;
 - .4 increasing the emphasis on the role of the human element and safeguarding the human rights of seafarers in secure shipping; and
 - .5 increasing the emphasis on safety and security of seafarers.
- SD 7 IMO will focus on reducing and eliminating adverse impacts from shipping on the environment by:
- .1 identifying and addressing possible adverse impacts;
 - .2 developing and facilitating the implementation of effective measures for mitigating and responding to the impact on the environment caused by shipping incidents and operational pollution from ships;
 - .3 contributing to international efforts to reduce atmospheric pollution and address climate change; and
 - .4 increasing the emphasis on the role of the human element in environmentally sound shipping.
- SD 8 IMO will seek to ensure that measures to promote safe, secure and environmentally sound shipping do not unduly affect the efficiency of shipping. It will also constantly review such measures to ensure their adequacy, effectiveness and relevance using the best available tools, thereby securing better regulation without unnecessary or disproportionate administrative requirements.
- SD 9 IMO will pay special attention to the shipping needs of Small Island Developing States (SIDS) and the least developed countries (LDCs).
- SD 10 IMO will apply goal-based standards for maritime safety and environmental protection.
- SD 11 IMO, in partnership with other stakeholders, will seek to raise the profile of the safety, security and environmental records of shipping in the eyes of civil society by:
- .1 actively publicizing the vital importance of shipping as a safe, secure and environmentally sound mode of transport for goods and people as well as being a promoter and enabler of sustainable development, and underlining the role of the Organization in that regard; and
 - .2 consequently further enhancing its public outreach programmes.

SD 12 IMO will take the lead in enhancing the quality culture of shipping by:

- .1 encouraging the utilization of the best available techniques not entailing excessive costs, in all aspects of shipping;
- .2 encouraging proper management of ships;
- .3 promoting and enhancing the availability of, and access to, information – including casualty information – relating to ship safety, security and the environment (i.e. transparency);
- .4 ensuring that all stakeholders understand and accept their responsibilities regarding safe, secure and environmentally sound shipping by developing a "chain of responsibility" concept among them; and
- .5 identifying, correlating and evaluating the factors, including human interaction on board ships, that influence safety, security and environmental culture, and developing practical and effective mechanisms to address them.

SD 13 IMO will seek to enhance environmental conscience within the shipping community.

SD 14 IMO will seek to ensure better regulation through a systematic approach and also that its instruments are free from administrative requirements that are disproportionate, obsolete or unnecessary. The Organization will continue its efforts to reduce administrative burdens in IMO instruments without compromising safety, security and the protection of the environment.
