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ive years ago, the adoption of the Millennium Declaration by the UN General Assembly was a defining moment for global co-operation in the 21st Century. The Declaration sets out, within a single framework, the key challenges facing humanity at the threshold of the new millennium; outlines the response the world community should provide to these challenges; and establishes concrete measures for judging performance, which aim to mobilise national and international partners into action and help to forge new alliances for development. It also provides a means for benchmarking and for assessing progress in the process of achieving the set development.

The 2000 Summit, and the most recent one held in September of 2005, both of which I had the privilege to attend as the IMO representative, agreed and re-affirmed the eight Goals enshrined in the Millennium Declaration. They are specific in nature and visionary in their intent. But what is perhaps most important and significant is that all the United Nations Member States have pledged to meet them by the Year 2015.

These Goals provide the world with time-bound and quantified targets for addressing extreme poverty in all its many dimensions – income poverty, hunger, disease, lack of adequate shelter and exclusion – while promoting gender equality, education and environmental sustainability and access for all to education, shelter and security.

Maritime activity has a key role to play in helping these objectives to be achieved, in particular that of reducing poverty – from which many of the others will undoubtedly flow. It already provides an important source of income to many developing countries, through such activities as the registration of ships, the supply of sea-going manpower and ship recycling, as well as shipowning and operating, shipbuilding and repair and port services, among others.

Moreover, seen in a wider context, shipping has an even more important role to play, in underpinning the new global economy. Sea transport remains by far the most cost-effective way to move goods and raw materials in quantity around the world and the vast majority of global trade – on which global prosperity is dependent – is carried in ships.

As far as the environment is concerned, shipping and IMO are also making a notable contribution thanks to the comprehensive array of measures developed and adopted by IMO and put in place by its Members and by the maritime industry to improve ship safety and thereby reduce accidents. Moreover, within its mandate, IMO has developed and adopted a wide range of international measures designed to reduce the negative impact of shipping’s everyday operations on the environment and, thereby, help promote environmental sustainability in that way.

There is no doubt that, overall, the world is making progress towards achieving many of the Millennium Development Goals, although, as several Heads of State or Government disconcertingly acknowledged at last September’s World Summit, not currently at the desirable rate that would ensure the achievement of the Goals by the 2015 deadline.

But we can draw inspiration from In Larger Freedom – Towards development, security and human rights for all, the comprehensive, all-embracing report prepared by UN Secretary-General Mr. Kofi Annan in March of this year, in preparation of the World Summit. In it, he said:

“Today’s is the first generation with the resources and the technology to make the right to development a reality for everyone and to free the entire human race from want. There is a shared vision of development. The Millennium Development Goals, which range from halving extreme poverty to putting all children into primary school and stemming infectious diseases such as HIV/AIDS, all by 2015, have become globally accepted benchmarks of broader progress, embraced by donors, developing countries, civil society and major development institutions alike.”

And then, most tellingly, he added, “These goals can be met by 2015 – but only if we break from ‘business as usual’ and dramatically accelerate and scale up action now.” Let us all follow that wise counsel and try to ensure that, in this respect at least, it is no longer ‘business as usual.’

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Revised treaties to address unlawful acts at sea adopted at international conference

Amendments to the Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts (SUA) Against the Safety of Maritime Navigation, 1988 and its related Protocol, which provide the legal basis for action to be taken against persons committing unlawful acts against the safety of navigation (and against fixed platforms located on the continental shelf), have been adopted by the Diplomatic Conference on the Revision of the SUA Treaties.

The Conference, which met from 10 to 14 October 2005 at IMO’s London Headquarters adopted the amendments in the form of Protocols to the SUA treaties (the 2005 Protocols).

The principal purpose of the SUA treaties is to ensure that anyone committing unlawful acts against the safety of navigation will not be given shelter in any country but will either be prosecuted or extradited to a State where they will stand trial. The 2005 Protocols broaden the list of offences made unlawful under the treaties, such as to include the offence of using a ship itself in a manner that causes death or serious injury or damage and the transport of weapons or equipment that could be used for weapons of mass destruction. The 2005 SUA Protocol introduces provisions for the boarding of ships where there are reasonable grounds to suspect that the ship or a person on board the ship is, has been, or is about to be involved in, the commission of an offence under the Convention.

Speaking at the close of the Conference, IMO Secretary-General Efthimios E. Mitropoulos said, “The adoption of these Protocols marks the completion of the tasks set by the IMO Assembly in resolution A.934(22), aimed at ensuring that the international maritime community is properly equipped to counteract the gravest menace it has ever faced.” He added, “The usual request for States to become Parties to any new IMO treaty is, in the case of the two Protocols adopted today, an urgent plea, the importance of which, beyond any doubt, is clearly understood by all. We are running a race against time in our efforts to prevent and suppress unlawful acts against the safety of maritime navigation and to bring to justice those responsible for such acts. The Protocols provide what is needed to ensure that the maritime community is properly equipped to counter the gravest menace it has ever faced.”

How difficult was it for the Legal Committee to come up with the draft Protocols and what were the key sensitivities that had to be addressed?

It was an unusually challenging process for a number of reasons, but in particular because of the references in the new SUA Protocol to the transport of nuclear materials. The Protocol specifically refers, inter alia, to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, and the difficulties were centred around the fact that not all States Party to the original SUA Convention are also signatories to the Non-Proliferation Treaty. As a result, some States were of the view that the Protocol should not cover the carriage of nuclear materials, while others were of the view that such coverage was essential, given the threat to world peace posed by such materials.

Why is it important to have provisions in the new SUA protocol regarding the boarding of ships at sea?

There is clearly a growing desire on the part of some States, in the interests of their own national security, to board and search ships of other States before such ships enter coastal waters, in order to keep any potential threat as far away from their territory as possible. Without a proper legal framework providing a sound legal basis for such boardings, and setting out what must be done before a boarding occurs, there is huge potential for a serious diplomatic incident or even a more severe reaction to follow such a boarding incident. The new SUA Protocol does establish the legal right to board along with a clear set of procedures that ensure the flag state of the ship that has been boarded has been fully consulted and has given its permission, in accordance with established principles of international law.

When do we expect the new protocols to reach their entry-into-force criteria?

The amended Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts Against the Safety of Maritime Navigation will enter into force ninety days after the date on which twelve States have either signed it without reservation as an instrument of ratification, acceptance or approval, or have deposited an instrument of ratification, acceptance, approval or accession with the Secretary-General.

The amended Protocol requires ratification from three States which are also party to the SUA Convention but it cannot come into force unless the 2005 SUA Convention is already in force.

How long this process will take is, of course, in the hands of the States themselves. But we are hopeful that because this instrument deals with such important issues, States will be eager and willing to protect the industry against acts of terrorism, on the other hand, any delays in so doing will send a wrong message that the maritime community is not properly equipped to counteract the gravest menace it has ever faced. The 2005 SUA Protocols will send a strong signal to all those who, at this time, are profiting from the present legal vacuum which the Protocols aim to fill.”
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The two protocols were developed by IMO’s Legal Committee and are aimed at ensuring that the legal framework put in place by IMO continues to provide an adequate basis for the arrest, detention, extradition and punishment of terrorists acting against shipping or fixed platforms or when using ships to perpetrate acts of terrorism.

The amended Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts Against the Safety of Maritime Navigation will enter into force ninety days after the date on which twelve States have either signed it without reservation as to ratification, acceptance or approval, or have deposited an instrument of ratification, acceptance, approval or accession with the Secretary-General. The amended Protocol requires ratification from three States which are also party to the SUA Convention but it cannot come into force unless the 2005 SUA Convention is already in force.

The Diplomatic Conference on the Revision of the SUA Treaties was attended by representatives of 74 States Parties to the Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts against the Safety of Maritime Navigation, 70 States Parties to the Protocol for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts against the Safety of Fixed Platforms located on the Continental Shelf, one Associate Member of IMO; and observers from four intergovernmental organizations and nine non-governmental international organizations.

IMO/Interferry launch joint programme

A programme designed to reduce dramatically the number of deaths in developing world ferries has been launched by IMO in co-operation with Interferry, the trade association for the worldwide ferry industry.

The two Organizations are to work together on a joint 10-year project which aims to reduce ferry fatalities by 90 per cent. Currently more than 1,000 people lose their lives in third world ferry accidents every year.

The project will involve the formation of special working groups to provide practical input in countries such as Bangladesh, Indonesia, Somalia and Senegal and plans are now being finalised with the IMO technical co-operation division for a workshop in Bangladesh early in 2006 to launch a pilot scheme in co-operation with the government.

Overcrowding, weather and collisions are recognised as primary causes of most fatal accidents, compounded by a lack of regulations or enforcement on such matters as vessel design, maintenance and crew training. Under the proposals national working groups will be established with Interferry and IMO experts joining government agencies, operators, unions, trade groups and other parties to identify and implement solutions and lines of responsibility.

The initiatives have been fully supported by IMO secretary general Efthimios Mitropoulos even though many of these ferry accidents involve non-convention domestic craft that fall outside the mandate of the international body.

Speaking at Interferry’s 30th anniversary conference in Greece earlier this year, he said, “IMO has already promoted the development, adoption and implementation of safety codes for non-convention vessels in Asia and the Pacific, Africa, the Caribbean and the Mediterranean, and will continue to explore initiatives to assist countries in avoiding future tragedies.”

Marine Electronic Highway demonstration project agreed in Jakarta

A n important milestone for the Marine Electronic Highway (MEH) has been achieved with the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding by the Governments of Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore and IMO to implement an MEH Demonstration Project. The PoU was signed 8 September 2005 during the Jakarta Meeting on the Safety, Security and Environmental Protection of the Straits of Malacca and Singapore.

The MEH Project, funded by the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and the World Bank, aims to develop a regional MEH in the Straits of Malacca and Singapore. The MEH is envisaged as a marine information and infrastructure mechanism that integrates marine environment protection and management systems with state-of-the art maritime safety technologies for enhanced maritime services, improved navigational safety, integrated marine environment protection and sustainable development of the coastal and marine resources.

This latest MoU provides a framework for participation, collaboration, commitment and co-operation in the implementation of a demonstration project in the Straits. A complementary Memorandum on arrangements to implement specific activities covered under Article IV of the MoU to support, promote and collaborate to implement the project was also signed by the three littoral States, IMO, IHO, INTERTANKO and ICS.

The signing of the two agreements is envisaged to usher in concrete action towards responding to the new challenges in maritime safety, security and environmental protection in the Straits of Malacca and Singapore.

The total cost of the MEH Demonstration Project will be some US$17 million, with the GEF/World Bank providing a grant of US$8.3 million to implement various activities to develop and establish a pilot MEH system in the Straits including the recruitment of staff and consultants, acquisition of maritime facilities for Indonesia, conduct of hydrographic survey, financial feasibility and institutional assessment.

Ferries that normally fall outside the scope of IMO Conventions will be targeted in the recently-launched joint IMO/Interferry project
SLF begins work to develop standards for safety of small fishing vessels

The development of safety standards for small fishing vessels was initiated at the Sub-Committee on Stability and Load Lines and on Fishing Vessels Safety when it met for its 48th session. The proposed safety standards would complement the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)/International Labour Organization (ILO)/IMO Code of Safety for Fishermen and Fishing Vessels, 2005, and the Voluntary Guidelines for the Design, Construction and Equipment of Small Fishing Vessels, 2005 which were approved by the Maritime Safety Committee (MSC) at its 79th session in December 2004 and subsequently approved by the FAO and ILO. Part B of the Code of Safety for Fishermen and Fishing Vessels applies to vessels of 24 metres in length and over while the Voluntary Guidelines apply to decked fishing vessels of 12 m in length and over but less than 24 m in length.

Commercial fishing is one of the most hazardous occupations in the world and it has been estimated by ILO, and reported by FAO, that the fishing industry suffers in excess of 24,000 fatalities per year and that the large majority of them occur on small fishing vessels. Currently, there are no international safety standards in place for decked fishing vessels of less than 12 m in length and undecked fishing vessels of any size and in many countries, national regulations, guidelines or standards for small fishing vessels are either non-existent or inappropriate.

The proposed standards for fishing vessels below 12 m in length and undecked fishing vessels of any size would address the safety concerns specific to these vessels. It is anticipated that the standards would primarily be used by the relevant competent authorities to upgrade their national laws and regulations.

The Sub-Committee noted that, in some countries, the safety of small fishing vessels is delegated to bodies other than the maritime authority, such as the ministries of fisheries or agriculture, and recommended that Member States ensure the involvement of all appropriate bodies concerned with fishing vessel safety in the development of the new standards.

The work will be continued at the next session of the SLF Sub-Committee. Meanwhile, a correspondence group has been tasked with examining existing regional and national safety standards for small fishing vessels and developing a consolidated draft text of the safety standards for small fishing vessels covering decked fishing vessels of less than 12 m in length and undecked fishing vessels of any length, for consideration at the next session.

Development of explanatory notes for the revised SOLAS chapter II-1

The Sub-Committee progressed the development of explanatory notes on the application of the provisions in the revised SOLAS chapter II-1 (which was adopted by the MSC in May 2005). The revision of SOLAS chapter II-1 harmonizes the provisions on subdivision and damage stability for passenger and cargo ships. The revised provisions in parts A, B and B-1 will be applicable to new ships built after the expected entry into force date of 1 January 2009.

The amendments, which have been intensively developed over the past decade, are based on the “probabilistic” method of determining damage stability, which is itself based on the detailed study of data collected by IMO relating to collisions. Because it is based on statistical evidence concerning what actually happens when ships collide, the probabilistic concept is believed to be far more realistic than the previously-used “deterministic” method.

The development of the explanatory notes will be further advanced intersessionally by a correspondence group with a view to finalizing Interim Explanatory Notes at SLF 49.

Review of the Intact Stability Code

The Sub-Committee continued its comprehensive review of the Code on Intact Stability for all Types of Ships covered by IMO Instruments. The Code was adopted in 1993 by resolution A.749 and later amended by the MSC in 1998. The review will, in the short term, allow for the development of amendments to the Code to bring it up to date and, in the long term, allow for the preparation of performance-based stability criteria to replace the existing prescriptive provisions.

The Intact Stability Correspondence Group was reinstated to review the text of the draft revised Code and to report to SLF 49. The Correspondence Group is also tasked with preparing a draft revised text of MSC/Circ.707 on Guidance to the master for avoiding dangerous situations in following and quartering seas.

Review of the OSV guidelines

The Sub-Committee finalised the revised Guidelines for the Design and Construction of Offshore Supply Vessels (originally adopted by resolution A.469(XII)) and forwarded the proposed text to the Dangerous Goods, Solid Cargoes and Containers (DSC) Sub-Committee for finalization and submission to the MSC for adoption.

Review of the LHNS Guidelines

The review of the Guidelines for the transport and handling of limited amounts of hazardous and noxious liquid substances in bulk on offshore support vessels (previously (resolution A.673(16)) was also finalized and forwarded to the DSC Sub-Committee for finalization and submission to the MSC and Marine Environment Protection Committee (MEPC) for adoption, taking into account the comments by the BLG Sub-Committee.

Passenger ship safety

Issues relating to the holistic overview of passenger ship safety were reviewed by the
working group on subdivision and damage stability. The guiding philosophy for the work on passenger ship safety is based on the premise that the regulatory framework should place more emphasis on the prevention of a casualty from occurring in the first place and that future passenger ships should be designed for improved survivability so that, in the event of a casualty, persons can stay safely on board as the ship proceeds to port.

In relation to the work on Casualty threshold for return to port and casualty scenario for the time for orderly evacuation and abandonment, the Sub-Committee endorsed the group’s recommendation to develop mandatory requirements for water ingress detection and continuous flooding level monitoring systems, taking into account best industry practice, with a view to providing the master with real time information on the progression of flooding.

The Sub-Committee agreed modifications to the draft amendments to SOLAS chapter II-2 on the functional requirements for safe areas, to include flooding issues. It was also agreed that references to flooding detection systems, if installed, as well as bilge systems, should be included in the draft performance standards for essential systems and equipment on passenger ships for safe return to port after a casualty, which were developed by the Sub-Committee on Ship Design and Equipment (DE).

The work on reviewing passenger ship safety was initiated by the MSC in 2000 with various tasks assigned to the different Sub-Committees. A correspondence group was established to develop criteria for safe return to port, either under own power or under tow, and to prepare mandatory requirements for water ingress detection and flooding level monitoring systems, ahead of the next SLF Sub-Committee session.

**Revision of the technical regulations of the 1966 LL Convention**

The Sub-Committee agreed draft amendments to Annex B to the 1988 LL Protocol, relating to regulations 22(4), to correct a paragraph reference, and 39(1) relating to the depth in the bow height formula, for submission to MSC 81 in mid-2006 for approval, with a view to adoption at MSC 82.

**Review of the 2000 HSC Code**

The Sub-Committee agreed proposed amendments to the 2000 International Code of Safety for High-Speed Craft (2000 HSC Code), relating to buoyancy, stability and subdivision; remote control, alarm and safety systems; stability of multihull craft; and stability of monohull craft. It forwarded them to the DE Sub-Committee which is co-ordinating the HSC Code review.

**Tonnage measurement of open-top containerships**

The Sub-Committee agreed to amend the provisional formulae for reduced gross tonnage (GT) for open-top containerships prescribed in TM.5/Circ.4, which was issued in 1993, to give a preliminary IMO formula to be used for the calculation of gross tonnage for open-top containerships of up to 30,000 gross tonnage, under the International Convention on Tonnage Measurement of Ships, 1969. The Sub-Committee noted submissions stating the formula needed amending to allow for open-top containerships without defining a limitation in size. It was agreed that a Correspondence Group should prepare a revised TM.5 circular to include amended formulae.

**Safety aspects of ballast water management**

The Sub-Committee agreed to recommend to the MSC that no transitory deviation from safety standards should be permitted during ballast water exchange and invited the MEPC to note the Sub-Committee’s recommendation.

The recommendation followed a request by the MEPC to confirm the acceptability (or otherwise) of transitory non-compliance with safety regulations when conducting ballast water exchange.
DSC agrees revised MARPOL Annex III

The draft revised text of MARPOL Annex III Prevention of pollution by packaged harmful substances was agreed by the Sub-Committee on Dangerous Goods at its 10th session, for submission to the Marine Environment Protection Committee (MEPC 54) in spring 2006 for approval and subsequent adoption at MEPC 55.

The aim of the revision of Annex III is to harmonize the regulations alongside those in the IMDG Code with the criteria for defining marine pollutants which have been adopted by the UN Transport of Dangerous Goods (TDG) Sub-Committee based on the Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals (GHS). The criteria are deemed to be appropriate for the transport of packaged goods.

Consequential amendments to the International Maritime Dangerous Goods (IMDG) Code were also developed and agreed. The proposed timetable for adoption, acceptance and entry into force would see the new Annex III and related IMDG Code amendments enter into force on 1 January 2010.

Amendment 33-06 to IMDG Code approved

The Sub-Committee approved draft amendments to the IMDG Code (Amendment 33-06), for submission to the Maritime Safety Committee (MSC 81) for adoption.

• The amendments include those intended to reflect the decisions of the UN Sub-Committee on Experts on the Transport of Dangerous Goods (UN SCOE), which held its twenty-seventh session in July 2005.

The Sub-Committee also approved errata and corrigenda to the IMDG Code, amendment 32-04, to be issued before they take effect on 1 January 2006.

Mandatory BC Code – progress made

Progress was made on the preparation of the mandatory Code of Safe Practice for Solid Bulk Cargo (BC Code), as well as the development of draft amendments to SOLAS chapters VI and VII on making the Code mandatory. A correspondence group was established to work intersessionally. The proposed timetable would see the mandatory BC Code and SOLAS amendments adopted in 2008, with entry into force in 2011.

The Sub-Committee agreed to include a schedule for direct reduced iron (DRF) fines in the revised BC Code and in the meantime approved a DSC circular on Accidents involving transport of direct reduced iron fines. The circular alerts Administrations and other parties concerned about the dangers involved in loading, unloading and transporting this product.

Review of the OSV and LHNS guidelines

The Sub-Committee continued the revision of the Guidelines for the Design and Construction of Offshore Supply Vessels (resolution A.469(XII)) and the Guidelines for the transport and handling of limited amounts of hazardous and noxious liquid substances in bulk on offshore support vessels (LHNS guidelines, resolution A.673(16)). A Correspondence Group was established to prepare the final draft text of the revised OSV Guidelines; to prepare a consolidated set of amendments to the LHNS Guidelines; and to consider including a reference to Guidelines for vessels with dynamic positioning systems (MSC/Circ.645) in the Code of Safe Practice for the Carriage of Cargoes and Persons by Offshore Supply Vessels (OSV Code).

Extension of the BLU Code to include grain

Work commenced on revising the Code of Practice for the safe unloading and loading of bulk carriers (resolution A.862(20) - the BLU Code) to extend its provisions to ships carrying grains. A correspondence group was established to continue the work intersessionally, including developing consequential amendments to the Manual on loading and unloading of solid bulk cargoes for terminal representatives and SOLAS chapter VI.

Preventing accidents during securing of containers – guidance in development

A correspondence group was established to develop guidance on providing safe working conditions for securing of containers, to prevent accidents while undertaking lashing and securing tasks.

The correspondence group has been tasked with identifying best design practice and criteria for existing and new container ships to ensure suitable and safe cargo securing access; considering how cargo securing procedures can be improved; identify improvements to be made to containerships’ cargo securing manuals and cargo lashing plans; establishing any additional requirements needed for conventional bulk and general cargo ships used to carry containers; considering new criteria and standards to be included in the Code of Safe Practice for Cargo Securing; and reviewing the Recommendations on safety of personnel during container securing operations (MSC/Circ.886).

Carriage of dangerous goods on HSC - amendments to HSC Code agreed

Draft amendments to the 2000 HSC Code relevant to the carriage of dangerous goods on high-speed craft were reviewed and approved, for referral to the Sub-Committee.
From the meetings

- Sub-Committee on Dangerous Goods, Solid Cargoes and Containers (DSC)

- 10th session:
- 26-30 October 2005

Courses on the implementation of the IMDG Code

The Sub-Committee noted that many people had benefited from training in implementation of the IMDG Code worldwide, under the Organization’s programme on enhancement of maritime safety. Since April 2002, ten regional and seven national courses on the implementation of the IMDG Code have been delivered and one regional course, in the Caribbean, was scheduled for November 2005. Overall, some 632 participants from 122 countries will have benefited from these programmes.

Container inspections - concern over high rate of deficiencies

The Sub-Committee expressed its concern about the high rate of deficiencies found during container inspections and lack of adherence to the provisions of the IMDG Code - especially in the areas of placarding and marking, and documentation. Reports from Member Governments on container inspections showed that of 7,301 cargo transport units inspected, 1,928 were found deficient with 2,975 deficiencies, giving a high ratio of 26.4% of cargo transport units inspected having deficiencies.

The Sub-Committee noted that inspections of outbound cargo transport units contributed towards the safety of the ship, and endorsed the need for improved training of shore-based personnel involved in the handling of dangerous goods.

Disposal of fumigants - draft circular agreed

The Sub-Committee agreed a draft MSC/MEPC circular on Disposal of fumigants which recommends that Member Governments issue regulations to oblige ships that carry solid cargoes requiring fumigation to ensure that all waste and residues of fumigants are disposed of in an appropriate manner, either by incineration or by disposal on shore, as recommended by the manufacturer. The draft circular follows a report into the discharge of active packages of the cargo fumigant magnesium phosphide in New Zealand’s marine waters. While there appeared to be no prohibition on the discharge of such material pursuant under existing marine pollution prevention conventions, the discharge of active packages producing phosphine gas represented a significant risk to the public who may encounter them at sea.

Work commenced on revising the Code of Practice for the safe unloading and loading of bulk carriers (the BLU Code) to cover ships carrying grain the hazards associated with the chemicals being transported.
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Tanker safety record at all-time high

New research shows a dramatic reduction in the number of maritime casualties over the past 25 years. But how much can this be attributed to the plethora of new regulations introduced over the period? Project co-ordinator Dr Nikos Mikelis* discusses the work.

For some time the shipping industry has felt a burden of over-regulation. Operators of ships struggle to keep up with what they see as a relentless stream of new requirements which invariably necessitate the procurement of new and sometimes untested equipment, the incremental training of seagoing personnel with all the difficulties this entails, the introduction of new operational procedures, and new shipboard manuals.

In some less frequent but very significant cases new requirements call for changes in the ships’ structural design. And, while ship operators can only hope that the pace of new regulations will one day slow down, senior regulators often complain that the industry complies with new regulations but without embracing their spirit.

At the same time there is widespread agreement that what is needed is firmer implementation of existing regulations. Nevertheless, the occurrence of a major accident in the waters of a developed country often leads to the commencement of new regulatory initiatives, the most demanding of these initiatives imposing expenditures of magnitudes that can bankrupt otherwise solvent shipping companies.

In a mature society such low tolerance should necessitate the adoption of rational and generally trusted mechanisms for testing the veracity of the claims of added value for each of the contemplated new regulations.

A further perception has been that the safety record of shipping has progressively improved over at least the last two decades. This perception, however, appears to be restricted to industry circles and does not seem to have reached the mind of the wider consuming public, which is the ultimate beneficiary of inexpensive and arguably safe maritime transport. And, of course, if the public does not value a service, neither does the average politician.

The above discussion, points to two distinct fundamental questions. Firstly, how safe does society want shipping to be, and what is the acceptable cost for the safety of maritime transport?

Addressing the first question explicitly could be the core subject of some influential research. The second question, which is closer to the focus of this article, is whether regulating against the apparent causes of single accidents should remain the way forward for much longer.

Basic commonsense suggests that regulations should be proactive and should address trends in accidents rather than single events.

The above issues are long-term challenges for members of IMO, who have already turned some of their common efforts towards the “holistic approach”. A major example of this new thinking is the Formal Safety Assessment methodology that has been tried in recent occasions and which is still evolving. A further major example is the current development of Goal-Based New Ship Construction Standards.

With this general background, a three-year collaborative project was initiated in January 2004 to research the development of a rational methodology for the assessment of pollution risk from oil tankers.

The European Commission provided funding under Framework Programme 6 for the project, which is entitled Pollution Prevention and Control — Safe Transportation of Hazardous Goods by Tankers. The project brought together 15 organisations from the European maritime sector with expertise in maritime safety covering design, construction, classification, and operational aspects. IMO participates as an observer.

The methodology being developed by the POP&C partners is a probabilistic framework for the assessment of the likelihood and quantity of spillage following any potential incident leading to loss of watertight integrity. The Aframax class of tanker (80,000 to 120,000 dwt tonnes) was used to develop and demonstrate the methodology, as this is the most populous class of internationally trading large oil tankers.

Six casualty categories were identified as the key hazards leading to loss of watertight integrity, namely: collision, contact, grounding, non-
accidental structural failure, fire and explosion. Operational pollution and pollution resulting from failures of hull fittings were left outside the scope of the project.

In the first instance an historic analysis for the period 1978 to 2003 was performed using accident and incident data obtained from Lloyd's Marine Information Service and from Lloyd's Register-Fairplay. This data was re-analysed by a team of POP&C project partners into a database, structured so as to allow the population of Fault Trees and Event Trees and which eventually would provide values of relative risk for each basic event that can cause an accident. The historic records also provided a variety of parameters relevant to the analysis, such as hull type, age of ship, severity of accident, geographic location and weather.

As part of the historic analysis a comparison was drawn between the pollution performance of the main four hull configurations (single hull, double hull, double bottom and double sided tankers). It is planned to publish these results.

Ongoing work will aim to develop a probabilistic analysis of the pollution outcome from all relevant potential incidents on tankers of any given configuration. It is hoped that correlation and calibration of the probabilistic methodology against the results of the historic analysis will provide a tool for realistic predictions of the pollution potential of different designs.

A most notable result from the historic analysis of casualties is the striking decline in the frequency of all casualty categories. By dividing the number of annual casualties in each category by the fleet at risk in each year, the accompanying graphs show the annual frequencies of occurrence. Whereas the curves depicting the annual frequencies show some oscillatory behaviour, which reflects the relatively random nature of casualties, and the herein selected yearly time increment, nevertheless there is an unmistakable, consistent and sharp improvement of the casualty frequencies over the period examined.

The curves show that the averaged frequency rates for all categories of accidents for the period 1978-1990 were reduced to about one eighth in the last five-year period 1999-2003. In other words, the frequency of casualties has reduced in the period examined by nearly an order of magnitude.

It is relevant to note that similar trends have been demonstrated for the Suezmax tanker fleet in an analysis conducted by the Ship Design Laboratory of the National Technical University of Athens. And, whereas it can be argued that the frequency of casualties was too high in the 1970s and 1980s, the improvement that has taken place since then must be recognised as remarkable.

While initially the POP&C project did not plan to identify any underlying causes responsible for changes in the historic safety record, three of the research partners looked for these causes among new regulations and industry initiatives introduced during the period of the analysis. For the sake of space, the presentation of the six casualty categories have been combined into three groups: navigational casualties (collisions, groundings and contacts), fire and explosions, and structural failures (non-accidental structural failures). A fuller version of this analysis can be found at www.pop-c.org/news/documents/TheInfluenceofRegulations.doc.

The resulting three graphs identify the introduction of key regulations that could be responsible for the declining trends of accident/incident rates. It should be noted that the focus here is on regulations that prevent accidents, and not on regulations which mitigate consequences. Also, the interpretation as to which accident categories are
affected by each regulation is to some degree subjective.

Finally it is noted that the research has not as yet considered the effect of the changing age profile of the fleet, particularly in the various hull types. It is well known that middle-aged ships suffer higher casualty rates, and it is a fact that the average age of the Aframax fleet has been reducing for some time.

On the face of the evidence shown in the graphs, it may be concluded that it is impossible to correlate with any certainty, individual regulatory actions with decreases in the frequency of casualties. In fact, some of the regulatory actions coincide with accident peaks, whereas others do so with troughs.

Of course any particular regulatory action must lead the change in the frequency of casualties attributed to the action by a certain period, which may in turn be a function of many different factors.

If we look at the results collectively, we can safely conclude that the downward trend in all categories of casualties is due to a combination of factors, including regulatory actions and perhaps due to an increase in the number of safety conscious operators. But then again, attributing some of the improvement to an increased safety culture is the same as recognizing that the industry has been embracing the spirit of new regulations.

The improvement in the safety record of the tanker fleet examined could be interpreted as justification for what has been described as a relentless barrage of new requirements. However, the authors would instead suggest that not all regulations are cost-effective.

Without a rational methodology with which to evaluate areas in need for improvement and areas where improvement is marginal and therefore not justified, the simple danger is that maritime transport will become less efficient and more expensive than it needs to be.

The ideal of risk-based regulation is that the cost being introduced is weighed against the reduction in consequences, and by “consequences” we need to consider a vector sum of lives saved, pollution averted and property not damaged. And this is not too different from the intent of proper Formal Safety Assessment.

The final graph compares measures of earnings and safety. Earnings are expressed in terms of Worldscale for five representative Aframax routes and have been obtained from Clarkson’s Shipping Intelligence Network 2005. The graph indicates a trend of overall improvements in both earnings and safety. However, on closer examination it appears in the short cycles, increases in earnings are quite consistently accompanied by increases in incident rates (i.e. accompanied by reductions in safety).

This is consistent with the generally held understanding that higher markets lead to higher incident rates (because ships are being “driven harder”). We can therefore conclude that the safety record improvement achieved by the tanker industry is even more remarkable when considering that it has taken place in a period of overall improved earnings.

Research for this article was carried out by Severine Delautre of the Research Department of Bureau Veritas, by Eleftheria Eliopoulou of the Ship Design Laboratory, National Technical University of Athens and by Nikos Mikelis.

* Mikelis Consulting
Every year, the International Maritime Organization and its Member States and Associate Members celebrate World Maritime Day, taking the opportunity to bring the objectives and achievements of the Organization to the attention of a wider audience and, at the same time, increase overall public awareness of the vital role that the shipping industry plays in all our lives.

This year, as usual, IMO headquarters in London was the venue for a World Maritime Day reception for dignitaries from the shipping and diplomatic communities.
The Mayor of Lambeth, Councillor Mrs. Daphne Marchant, Mr. E.E. Mitropoulos and family

Mr. Nick Cutmore, Secretary General of IMPA, Mr. E.E. Mitropoulos and family, Mrs. Cutmore

Dr. Stephen Ladyman, UK Minister for Transport, Mr. E.E. Mitropoulos and family

Mr. W.A. O’Neil, CM, CMG, Secretary-General Emeritus of IMO, Mr. E.E. Mitropoulos and family

Captain Len Holder, Chairman, Videotel Marine International Ltd, Mr. E.E. Mitropoulos and family
Mr. Chris Horrocks, Secretary-General of ICS, Mr. E.E. Mitropoulos and family, Mrs. Peter Swift, Mr. Peter Swift, Managing Director, INTERTANKO

Mr. Lorenzo Mayol, IMO staff, Mrs. Jenny Rafat de Mayol, Alternate Permanent Representative of Honduras to IMO, Mr. E.E. Mitropoulos and family

Mr. Michael Grey, MBE, Ms. Sandra Speares, Lloyd’s List, Mr. E.E. Mitropoulos and family

H.E. Mr. António Gumende, High Commissioner of the Republic of Mozambique, Mr. E.E. Mitropoulos and family

Greek group, Mr. E.E. Mitropoulos and family

Commander Carlos Ríos, Permanent Representative of Chile to IMO, Captain Juan Heusser, former Permanent Representative of Chile to IMO, Mr. E.E. Mitropoulos and family
H.E. Mr. Khaled Al-Duwaisan, GCVO, Ambassador of the State of Kuwait, Mr. E.E. Mitropoulos and family

H.E. Dr. Alyaksei Mazhukhou, Ambassador of Belarus, Mrs. Mazhukhou, Mr. E.E. Mitropoulos and family

H.E. Dr. Mohammad Hossein Adeli, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran to IMO, Mr. E.E. Mitropoulos and family, Mr. Hosseinali Ali Gholizadeh, Deputy Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran to IMO, members of the delegation of the Islamic Republic of Iran

The Rev. Canon Bill Christianson, Secretary General of The Mission to Seafarers, Mr. E.E. Mitropoulos and family

Mr. Christopher Hayman, Managing Director, The Seatrade Organisation, Mr. E.E. Mitropoulos and family
Mr. Fikret Hakgüden, Expert Counsellor, Alternate Permanent Representative of Turkey to IMO, Mr. E.E. Mitropoulos

H.E. Dr. Carl B.W. Roberts, High Commissioner of Antigua and Barbuda, Mrs. Roberts, Mr. E.E. Mitropoulos and family

H.E. Mr. L.C. Vassallo, Permanent Representative of Malta to IMO, Mr. E.E. Mitropoulos and family

Captain Eduardo Castro Rivas, Alternate Permanent Representative of Argentina to IMO, Mrs. Castro, Mr. E.E. Mitropoulos and family

Mr. M. Jacobsson, Director, IOPCFS, Mrs. Jacobsson, Mr. E.E. Mitropoulos and family
Mr. E.E. Embiricos, Chairman, Greek Shipping Co-operation Committee, Mr. E.E. Mitropoulos and family

H.E. Mr. Mel Cappe, High Commissioner of Canada, Mr. E.E. Mitropoulos and family

H.E. Mr. Gehad Madi, Ambassador of the Arab Republic of Egypt, Mr. E.E. Mitropoulos and family

H.E. Mr. Basil G. O’Brien, CMG, High Commissioner and Permanent Representative of the Commonwealth of The Bahamas to IMO, Mrs. O’Brien, Mr. E.E. Mitropoulos and family

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IMO External Relations Office, Mr. E.E. Mitropoulos and family

Mr. E.E. Embiricos, Chairman, Greek Shipping Co-operation Committee, Mr. E.E. Mitropoulos and family, Commodore Ioannis Koutoyannis, Director, Greek Shipping Co-operation Committee

H.E. Mr. Basil G. O’Brien, CMG, High Commissioner and Permanent Representative of the Commonwealth of The Bahamas to IMO, Mrs. O’Brien, Mr. E.E. Mitropoulos and family
Towards a Maritime Knowledge Centre

The future IMO Knowledge Centre will have the IMO Library at its root

When the (then) IMCO Library was originally set up for the Secretariat in 1959, its function was to build and maintain a Library for the Organization that would contain a small, authoritative collection of books, periodicals and documents relating to maritime safety and prevention of pollution from ships. Since then, this quiet but extremely busy section of the Secretariat has grown to become a dynamic, technology-based information centre serving a wide customer base, both internal and external.

Along with other sections of the IMO secretariat, the Library, part of the External Relations Office, is currently exploring issues surrounding the transformation of IMO from a rule-based Organization to a “knowledge-sharing” one. The intention is to make knowledge management an operational reality by capturing currently available expertise and combining such factors as databases, web site interfaces and documents and existing knowledge infrastructure with a view to enhancing the visibility of knowledge, sharing knowledge in-house and with external stakeholders and capturing “tacit” knowledge and staff experience.

With its expert knowledge of information sources and resources the Library has laid the foundations for “InfoGate”, a virtual gateway to sources and resources. The final design and structure of InfoGate has yet to be finalised but the first phase - “How and where to find IMO Information” is established and helps the user to navigate through the often complex world of IMO information.

The core source for various products available on the Information Resources Section of the IMO website is an online catalogue, SeaLibrary. Since June 1991, all bibliographic records for books, conference proceedings, articles and videos (altogether more than 70,000 records) are searchable electronically on SeaLibrary. Many significant IMO documents are also catalogued and it is intended that the second phase of development will see the hyper-linking of the reference to the document itself.

The Library is also participating in Pharos, a project to develop a Union Catalogue of Maritime Libraries. Pharos will constitute a haven for researchers, delegates, staff members and visitors from many sectors.

IMO audit scheme receives financial boost

The practical implementation of the Voluntary IMO Member State Audit Scheme has received a significant boost in the form of a financial pledge from the Government of the United Kingdom.

The UK has offered a donation of £55,000 in the form of a financial pledge from the UK Government for its staunch support for the scheme, which is due to be formally adopted by the IMO Assembly when it meets for its 24th session in November this year. Mr Mitropoulos welcomed the UK’s intention to offer its maritime administration for audit as soon as practicable and would publish the results, adding that Member States that were able to show fund the cost of their own audit.

In thanking the UK Government for its staunch support for IMO’s efforts in developing the Voluntary IMO Member State Audit Scheme, Mr Mitropoulos welcomed the UK’s intention to offer its maritime administration for audit as soon as practicable and expressed the hope that the publishing of the audit results would be an example emulated by others.
2004 International Maritime Prize goes to all-rounder from Mexico

The prestigious International Maritime Prize for 2004 has been presented to Mr. Luis Martinez Wolf of Mexico.

Mr. Efthimios E. Mitropoulos, Secretary-General of the International Maritime Organization, presented the prize to Mr. Mr. Wolf during a special ceremony (on Thursday, 17 November) at IMO’s London Headquarters during the Organization’s 23rd Ordinary Council session, which preceded the Organization’s 24th Assembly.

Mr. Martinez Wolf has spent a lifetime in high profile positions contributing to private business and oceanographic research. A lecturer on marine and environmental matters, he is currently a shipowner in the fishing industry.

His professional career has been spent in various maritime pursuits: merchant seafarer, general adviser to the fishing industry, and valuation expert in the fishery industry and boatbuilding. He has also been an inspector for classification societies, including Bureau Veritas and Det Norske Veritas. Mr Martinez Wolf has worked as a private shipping agent in Mexico and Panama, as a customs agent and as an adviser on maritime safety and evaluation.

Over the years, his innovative mind has led to his registering patents on a number of inventions. He has a passion for technology and currenty he is designing a wastewater treatment plant known as the “homothalassic process”, in which the oceans are protected by the use of the seawater itself as reagent.

His involvement with the maritime industry began with his service as an officer and chief engineer on Mexican ships from 1952 to 1957. He then broadened his experience by becoming chief maintenance and service engineer at a chemical plant producing fertilizers, before becoming management consultant to the National Co-operative Development Bank, with responsibility for formulating and evaluating projects for submission to the President’s Office. Later he set up as a private businessman engaged in the design and construction of various industrial plants and over 200 fishing boats.

He has travelled extensively throughout Europe, America and Asia for work and study purposes relating to sea fishing, marketing and research. He has served as a lecturer or speaker at numerous meetings, drawing on his career as a merchant seafarer, ecology or other matters of a commercial or political nature. He has been a lecturer on marine and environmental matters at five universities and at primary and secondary schools, as well as serving as director of an oceanographic research programme in the Mexican Pacific concerned with the potential of bathypelagic and deep-sea species.

Five years ago, with Greenpeace and PROOAX (Oaxaca State Nature Conservation Board) he was co-organizer of a meeting on the theme “Let’s save the Papaloapan [Basin]”, which attracted speakers from all over the Mexico. He is Professor for postgraduate courses at the “Fernando Siliceo” Merchant Navy Academy in Veracruz port, and for courses concerned with classification society inspector qualifications, damage and assessment.

He is currently an advisor to the Mexican Senate on the maritime affairs, ecology and legislative research committees. He is a member, director and former president of the Veracruz College of Merchant Seafarers. He is President of the National Maritime Alliance and of the “Vida Plena, Ecologia Controlada” group standing for “Full life, controlled ecology”.

In his wide range of interests outside the maritime sphere he serves as chairman of the board of directors of the Union of Co-operative Societies for Diverse Occupations in the State of Veracruz and as a member of the supervisory board of the National Confederation of Co-operative Societies for Diverse Occupations.

He is a columnist for the “Excélsior” national daily newspaper and for the “Milenio El Portal” regional daily newspaper. He works closely with Greenpeace Mexico and is an advisor to the Indigenous Council of Uxpanapa.

The International Maritime Prize is awarded annually by IMO to the individual or organization judged to have made the most significant contribution to the work and objectives of IMO. The 94th session of the IMO Council in June took the decision to award the prize to Mr. Wolf in recognition of his long service to the cause of maritime safety and the protection of the marine environment.

IMO receives training resource

UK-based maritime training company Videotel has donated an installation of its new training system “Videotel on Demand” to the IMO Library. The system was recently installed and presented to the Secretary-General who was given a brief demonstration.

This new package provides hundreds of videos and several computer based training courses allowing the user – typically ships’ crews – to train to meet legislative requirements and to progress their professional development. This particular system is configured for an oil tanker but other configurations are available from Videotel.

A simple menu interface lets the user access the training they need, with just 4 clicks of the mouse. The menu is divided up according to STCW function areas and levels so users can find the video they want even without knowing its name. The user can rewind or fast-forward the video to review important parts.

Workbook and documentation are included on the system in PDF format and can be printed by exporting the data to the data stick supplied and then printed out at another computer.

Russia supports IMO maritime security trust fund

IMO’s International Maritime Security Trust Fund has received a significant boost in the form of a financial contribution of US$120,000 from the Government of the Russian Federation.

The International Maritime Security Trust Fund was established in June 2003 to enable IMO to respond to requests for technical assistance on maritime security issues. Other contributors to the fund have included the Governments of Denmark, Egypt, Germany, Republic of Korea, Sweden, United Kingdom, United States and a training institute (the USA-based Northeast Maritime Institute). All contributions greatly assist the delivery of activities under IMO’s Global Technical Co-operation Programme on Maritime Security.

The Programme has included many activities aimed at enhancing maritime security and in particular the implementation of the maritime security measures adopted by IMO - including SOLAS chapter XI-2 (Special measures to enhance maritime security) and the International Ship and Port Facility Security (ISPS) Code, which were adopted in 2002 and entered into force in July 2004.

By the end of 2005, 22 regional seminars/workshops and 87 national training courses/advisory missions will have been organized, resulting in some 4,000 people being trained globally. In addition, a total of 17 sub-regional maritime security “Train-the-Trainer” courses will have been successfully delivered.
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