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The 24th IMO Assembly came to some key decisions on a wide range of issues. It was attended by a total 817 delegates representing 153 Member States and three Associate Members; the United Nations and specialized agencies, one non-Member State, five intergovernmental organizations and 27 non-governmental organizations.

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New Convention heralds better conditions for seafarers

To the approximately 1.2 million seafarers in the world today, the new, consolidated International Maritime Labour Convention adopted by the International Labour Organization represents formal confirmation of what we all recognize are certain basic human rights, rights that so many of us are able to take for granted.

Everyone should have a right to decent working conditions. But, for seafarers, the negative impact of conditions that fail to meet acceptable standards can be more than usually damaging. For most seafarers, their place of work is also, for long periods, their home. If conditions are poor, there is often no respite, no comforting family to return home to, for months on end.

The new ILO Convention has frequently been referred to as the “fourth pillar” of the international regulatory regime for quality shipping, being bracketed in this respect with three of the most important IMO Conventions, namely the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea; the International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Seafarers; and the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships.

Collectively, these Conventions address the technical aspects of ship design, construction, equipment and operation from the points of view of safety, security and the protection of the marine environment, as well as the education and training of seafarers and the competencies that they should be required to demonstrate before they are taken on the various shipboard positions.

The new ILO Convention will complement these key IMO technical conventions perfectly, by introducing the social element necessary to ensuring decent working conditions for seafarers and catering for such things as prevention of accidents; health protection and medical care; seafarers’ hours of work and the manning of ships; and the repatriation of seafarers.

Of course, the links between ILO and IMO, in this respect, go much, much further and deeper than simply having the good fortune to have developed complementary maritime conventions. Indeed, our Organizations both have a mandate in the shipping sector and have collaborated most effectively over the years and there are a number of joint IMO/ILO bodies that bear witness to this.

Currently, for example, IMO and ILO have two Joint Working Groups in the legal field: the Joint IMO/ILO Ad Hoc Expert Working Group on Liability and Compensation regarding Claims for Death, Personal Injury and Abandonment of Seafarers; and the Joint IMO/ILO Ad Hoc Expert Working Group on the Fair Treatment of Seafarers in the Event of a Maritime Accident.

The second session of the latter, which met from 13 to 17 March 2006, approved a draft resolution for adoption by the Legal Committee to promulgate guidelines on fair treatment of seafarers in the event of a maritime accident.

The major achievement of the former group so far has been the development of two resolutions and related guidelines, one on Provision of financial security in case of abandonment of seafarers, the other on Shipowners’ responsibilities in respect of contractual claims for personal injury to, or death of, seafarers, which have been adopted by both IMO’s Assembly and the Governing Body of ILO. Both the resolutions and associated Guidelines, the aim of which is to provide seafarers and their families with a level of protection that has hitherto been lacking in respect of two fundamental areas of seafarer welfare, took effect on 1 January 2002. It is, regrettably, a matter of fact that, while the vast majority of seafarers work under fair conditions and have the support of their employers when things go wrong on board ship, some are still subject to harsh treatment and unreasonable conditions. It is, therefore, for organizations such as ILO and IMO to look for appropriate standards to safeguard their legitimate interests.

It was in this spirit that, having identified some ten long-standing cases of seafarer abandonment in various parts of the world, ILO Director-General Juan Somavia and I have signed joint letters to the flag States concerned appraising them of the situation and urging them to do the utmost, as a matter of urgency, to facilitate the resolution of each case, including the repatriation of the seafarers concerned and the payment to them of all outstanding remuneration and contractual entitlements. We both look forward to receiving good news soon.
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International rules on dumping of wastes at sea to be strengthened with entry into force of 1996 Protocol

A significant milestone for the protection of the marine environment was reached on 24 March 2006 with the entry into force of the 1996 Protocol to the Convention on the Prevention of Marine Pollution by Dumping of Wastes and Other Matter, 1972, following its ratification by Mexico, the 26th country to do so.

The 1996 Protocol 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 prohibited, except for materials on an approved list. This contrasts with the 1972 Convention which permitted dumping of wastes at sea, except for those materials on a banned list.

The Ambassador of Mexico to the United Kingdom, His Excellency Señor Juan José Bremer de Martino CVO, deposited his country’s instrument of ratification at IMO Headquarters in London on 22 February 2006.

IMO Secretary-General Efthimios E. Mitropoulos welcomed the ratification.

“Now that the requisite number of ratifications has been received, the 1996 Protocol will enter into force, thus achieving another major milestone for the marine environment. The application of the Protocol’s precautionary approach will have a significant impact on the protection of the marine environment from dumping at sea,” Mr. Mitropoulos said.

The 1996 Protocol enters into force 30 days after ratification by 26 countries, 15 of which must be Contracting Parties to the original 1972 treaty. The 1996 Protocol was adopted in November 1996 and will supersede the 1972 Convention “as between Contracting Parties to this Protocol which are also Parties to the Convention”. This means, in practice, that both instruments will be in force in parallel for some time, but the momentum will gradually shift to the Protocol as more and more parties ratify it.

The Parties to the 1996 Protocol will be invited to attend their first Meeting under the Protocol from 30 October to 3 November 2006, in conjunction with the 28th Consultative Meeting of the Parties to the London Convention, planned in the same week.

One of the first key issues for discussion under the 1996 Protocol is likely to be a review of the compatibility of CO2 capture and storage in sub-seabed geological structures, as part of a suite of measures to tackle the challenge of climate change and ocean acidification. In preparation for the discussion on how best to facilitate and/or regulate such activities under the Protocol (and the London Convention), a number of options will be developed – to clarify and, if appropriate, amend the Protocol – at an intersessional meeting on the related legal and administrative aspects to be held at IMO in April 2006.

Key features and advantages of the 1996 Protocol

The 1996 Protocol reflects a more modern and comprehensive agreement on protecting the marine environment from dumping activities than the original 1972 Convention and reflects the broader aims to protect the environment in general, emanating from Agenda 21, the global plan of action for sustainable development adopted by the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and
Development (UNCED), in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, also known as the 1992 Earth Summit.

Precautionary approach
The 1996 Protocol introduces (in Article 3) what is known as the “precautionary approach” as a general obligation. This requires that “appropriate preventative measures are taken when there is reason to believe that wastes or other matter introduced into the marine environment are likely to cause harm even when there is no conclusive evidence to prove a causal relation between inputs and their effects.” The article also states that “the polluter should, in principle, bear the cost of pollution” and it emphasizes that Contracting Parties should ensure that the Protocol should not simply result in pollution being transferred from one part of the environment to another.

The 1972 Convention permits dumping to be carried out provided certain conditions are met, according to the hazards to the marine environment presented by the materials themselves. The 1972 Convention includes a “black list” of materials which may not be dumped at all.

The 1996 Protocol is more restrictive. It states (in Article 4) that Contracting Parties “shall prohibit the dumping of any wastes or other matter with the exception of those listed” (in Annex 1 to the Protocol). These materials include:
- Dredged material
- Sewage sludge
- Fish waste, or material resulting from industrial fish processing operations
- Vessels and platforms or other man-made structures at sea
- Inert, inorganic geological material
- Organic material of natural origin
- Bulky items primarily comprising iron, steel, concrete and similar harmless materials, for which the concern is physical impact, and limited to those circumstances where such wastes are generated at locations, such as small islands with isolated communities, having no practicable access to disposal options other than dumping.

Geographical coverage
The 1996 Protocol’s geographical coverage is wider, as it also governs storage of wastes in the seabed, as well as the abandonment, or toppling, of offshore installations (Article 1).

The internal waters of a State are excluded from the dumping provisions under both the Convention and Protocol, Parties to the Protocol have the option to apply its rules to their internal waters if they wish (Article 7).

Linkages with other international agreements
The Protocol contains better linkages with other international environmental agreements which have been developed since 1972, for instance, through its ban on export of wastes for dumping purposes (Article 6) in relation to the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal.

Assessment of wastes
The 1996 Protocol is more pragmatic in its orientation towards commonly generated wastes rather than contaminants. It is, therefore, more clear in what is and what is not permitted for dumping at sea, making it easier for Administrations to apply. Key provisions of the step-wise assessment procedure are included in Annex 2 to the Protocol. All permits and permit conditions have to comply with these provisions. The Convention only referred to consideration of comparable factors listed in its Annex III, without showing how these fit together.

Compliance promotion
The protocol places more emphasis on compliance than the Convention. Article 11 requires the Meeting of Contracting Parties, no less than two years after the Protocol’s entry into force, to establish those procedures and mechanisms necessary to assess and promote compliance with the Protocol. The Meeting may then offer advice, assistance or co-operation to Contracting Parties and non-Contracting Parties. Initial work has already begun to develop these procedures and mechanisms.

The 1996 Protocol includes a transitional period provision (Article 26) assisting new Parties towards gradually achieving full compliance over a maximum period of five years (certain conditions apply).

Technical co-operation and assistance
Article 13 on technical co-operation and assistance requires Contracting Parties, through collaboration with the Organization and in co-ordination with other competent international organizations, to promote bilateral and multilateral support for the prevention, reduction and, where practicable, elimination of pollution caused by dumping as provided for in the Protocol, to those Contracting Parties that request it.

Administrative arrangements
The tasks of the Meeting of Contracting Parties (Article 18) and duties of IMO are better described than in the Convention. Unlike the original treaty, the Protocol establishes clearly the depositary duties of the IMO Secretary-General and spells out the Secretariat duties necessary for the administration of the Protocol.

The Protocol includes arrangements for the settlement of disputes between Parties in its Annex 3, whereas the 1978 amendments to the Convention on the same issue never entered into force.

Amendments to the Articles to the Protocol shall enter into force “on the 60th day after two-thirds of Contracting Parties shall have deposited an instrument of acceptance of the amendment with the Organization” (IMO). Amendments to the annexes are adopted through a tacit acceptance procedure under which they will enter into force not later than 100 days after being adopted. The amendments will bind all Contracting Parties except those which have explicitly expressed their non-acceptance.

Incineration of wastes at sea
Incineration of wastes at sea was initially permitted under the 1972 Convention, but this practice was ended in 1991 and is specifically prohibited by article 5 of the 1996 Protocol. Incineration at sea of industrial waste and sewage sludge had already been prohibited under the 1993 amendments to the 1972 Convention.
Tokyo Ministerial Conference on International Transport Security pays tribute to IMO measures

IMO measures adopted to enhance maritime security have greatly contributed to strengthening international maritime security, transport Ministers and officials from 14 countries have agreed.

The Ministerial Statement on Security in the International Maritime Transport Sector, adopted by the Ministerial Conference on International Transport Security (held in Tokyo from 12 to 13 January 2006), welcomed and supported the vigorous maritime security activities undertaken by relevant international organizations, particularly, the International Maritime Organization (IMO) and the World Customs Organization (WCO).

The statement stressed the importance of ensuring continued compliance with the provisions of chapter XI-2 of the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea, 1974, as amended (1974 SOLAS Convention) and the International Ship and Port Facility Security Code (ISPS Code), which were adopted under the auspices of IMO in December 2002 and entered into force in July 2004.


A continuing high priority must be given to addressing vulnerabilities in international maritime transport by promoting further enhancement of international maritime security, bearing in mind the significance of ensuring the efficient and legitimate flow of people and goods, the statement said.

The Ministers noted, with satisfaction, the adoption in September 2005 of the Jakarta Statement on Enhancement of Safety, Security and Environmental Protection in the Straits of Malacca and Singapore (the Jakarta Statement), and in particular the agreement that a mechanism be established by the three littoral States to meet on a regular basis with user States, the shipping industry and others with an interest in keeping the Straits of Malacca and Singapore open for navigation.

The Ministerial Conference invited IMO to undertake further work in relation to enhancing maritime security, including:

- the consideration, in cooperation with WCO, of the development and adoption, as necessary, of appropriate measures to enhance the security of the maritime transport of containers in the international supply chain, while respecting efficiency and international harmonization; and
- undertaking a study and making, as necessary, recommendations to enhance the security of ships other than those already covered by SOLAS chapter XI-2 and the ISPS Code, in an effort to protect them from becoming targets of acts of terrorism, piracy, or armed robbery and to prevent them from being exploited or used as means for committing such acts.

The Ministers:

- resolved to share, to the extent possible, in an effort to promote effective implementation, best practices on the implementation of SOLAS chapter XI-2 and the ISPS Code in relation to security in port facilities;
- resolved to continue, in cooperation with IMO and other appropriate fora, to provide necessary assistance and support to Contracting Governments to the 1974 SOLAS Convention in enhancing their ability and capacity to implement appropriate security measures at their port facilities through further international and regional efforts; and
- agreed to further promote international co-operation in the education and training of Port State Control (PSC) officers, through relevant regional Memoranda of Understanding for PSC, and other officers specifically designated to exercise control and compliance measures, in order to promote effective implementation of SOLAS chapter XI-2 and the ISPS Code.

IMO Secretary-General Mr. Efthimios E. Mitropoulos participated in the Conference and delivered a keynote speech.

Transport Ministers from Australia, Canada, China, Germany, Indonesia, Republic of Korea, Russian Federation, Singapore, United Kingdom and United States of America participated in the Conference.
IMO Assembly calls for action on piracy off Somalia

The problem of piracy and armed robbery against ships in waters off the coast of Somalia should be brought to the attention of the United Nations Security Council, the 24th session of the Assembly of the International Maritime Organization agreed on 23 November 2005 when it adopted a resolution on Piracy and armed robbery against ships in waters off the coast of Somalia.

The resolution was submitted to the Assembly at the recommendation of IMO Secretary-General Efthimios E. Mitropoulos following its approval, in principle, at the meeting of the IMO Council which preceded the Assembly. The resolution condemns and deplores all acts of piracy and armed robbery against ships and appeals to all parties, which may be able to assist, to take action, within the provisions of international law, to ensure that all acts or attempted acts of piracy and armed robbery against ships are terminated forthwith; any plans for committing such acts are abandoned; and any hijacked ships are immediately and unconditionally released and that no harm is caused to seafarers serving in them.

The resolution authorized the IMO Secretary-General to submit the resolution to the Secretary-General of the United Nations for consideration and any further action he deemed appropriate, including bringing the matter to the attention of the Security Council, taking into account regional co-ordination efforts.

The IMO Secretary-General was also requested to continue monitoring the situation and to report to the IMO Council on developments; to establish and maintain cooperation with the United Nations Monitoring Group on Somalia; and to consult with interested Governments and organizations to discuss providing technical assistance to Somalia and nearby coastal States to address the problem. This includes taking into account the outcome of the sub-regional seminar on piracy and armed robbery against ships and maritime security held in Sana’a, Yemen from 9 to 13 April 2005. A follow-up to this seminar was held in Oman in January 2006.

The resolution respects fully the sovereignty, sovereign rights, jurisdiction and territorial integrity of Somalia and the relevant provisions of international law, in particular the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea.

Governments are strongly urged to increase their efforts to prevent and suppress acts of piracy and armed robbery against ships and, in particular, to co-operate with other Governments and international organizations in relation to acts occurring or likely to occur in the waters off the coast of Somalia.

Governments are also strongly urged to:

- issue advice and guidance on any measures or actions they may need to take when they are under attack, or threat of attack, whilst sailing in waters off the coast of Somalia;
- encourage ships to ensure that information on attempted attacks or on committed acts of piracy or armed robbery whilst sailing in waters off the coast of Somalia is promptly conveyed to the nearest most appropriate Rescue Co-ordination Centre;
- coordinate their strategies and action plans to face this common challenge in close collaboration with the international community.

The Council further urges cooperation among all States, particularly regional states, and the International Maritime Organization biennial Assembly, concerning the increasing incidents of piracy and armed robbery against ships in waters off the coast of Somalia. The Council encourages Member States whose naval vessels and military aircraft operate in international waters and airspace adjacent to the coast of Somalia to be vigilant to any incident of piracy therein and to take appropriate action to protect merchant shipping, in particular the transportation of humanitarian aid, against any such act, in line with relevant international law. 

Soon after resolution A.979(24) was adopted by the IMO Assembly (see main story), Secretary-General Efthimios E. Mitropoulos submitted it to United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan for consideration and any further action he might deem appropriate, including bringing the matter to the attention of the Security Council.

Mr Mitropoulos expressed his satisfaction at this latest development, adding that he hoped the action requested by the Security Council of all UN Member States would help to bring about a significant reduction in attacks on innocent merchant shipping in the area and lead eventually to the eradication of the problem of piracy off the coast of Somalia.

The Presidential statement was made at the 5387th meeting of the Security Council held on 15 March 2006, in connection with the Council’s consideration of the item entitled “The situation in Somalia”.

The full text of the paragraph concerning piracy and armed robbery is as follows:

“The Security Council takes note of Resolution A.979 (24) adopted on 23 November 2005 at

the twenty-fourth session of the International Maritime Organization biennial Assembly, concerning the increasing incidents of piracy and armed robbery against ships in waters off the coast of Somalia. The Council encourages Member States whose naval vessels and military aircraft operate in international waters and airspace adjacent to the coast of Somalia to be vigilant to any incident of piracy therein and to take appropriate action to protect merchant shipping, in particular the transportation of humanitarian aid, against any such act, in line with relevant international law. In this regard, the Council welcomes the communiqué of the IGAD Council of Ministers’ meeting in Jawhar on 29 November 2005, which decided to coordinate its strategies and action plans to face this common challenge in close collaboration with the international community. The Council further urges cooperation among all States, particularly regional states, and active prosecution of piracy offenses.”

Late news...

Security Council urges action over piracy off the coast of Somalia in line with IMO Assembly resolution

As this issue of IMO News went to press news came that the United Nations Security Council had, as a result of its consideration of IMO Assembly resolution A.979(24), urged Member States to use naval vessels and military aircraft in the fight against piracy and armed robbery off the coast of Somalia.

In a wide ranging Presidential statement on the situation in Somalia, issued on 15 March 2006, the Council “encourages Member States whose naval vessels and military aircraft operate in international waters and airspace adjacent to the coast of Somalia to be vigilant to any incident of piracy therein and to take appropriate action to protect merchant shipping, in particular the transportation of humanitarian aid, against any such act, in line with relevant international law.”

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The Seabourn Spirit successfully beat off a pirate attack off Somalia last year in an incident that drew worldwide attention to the situation there (pic: Edwards ship photos)
Red Sea ferry disaster: IMO provides assistance to casualty investigators

In the aftermath of the tragic loss of the ferry Al-Salam Boccaccio 98, IMO was able to respond to a request for assistance in the investigation of the casualty from both the Governments of Egypt and Panama, initially by making available two independent consultants to provide technical advice to the casualty investigation board established jointly by the two Governments.

M. Jean-Charles Leclair, of France, was appointed to provide advice on procedures for casualty investigation under SOLAS regulation 1/21 (Casualties) and IMO Resolutions A.849(20) and A.884(21) (respectively the Code for the Investigation of Marine Casualties and Incidents and amendments thereto), as well as on safety of navigation, radiocommunications and search and rescue, as appropriate. A first phase of this task was completed in February and a second is being carried out in March 2006.

Mr Mike Travis, of the United Kingdom’s Marine Accident Investigation Branch, was appointed to advise on the location and recovery of evidence from the wreck, specifically the voyage data recorder, a task which has been successfully completed.

Following the two missions, and again in response to a request from the Government of Egypt, IMO also provided another independent consultant, Mr Tom Allan (until recently the Chairman of IMO’s Maritime Safety Committee), to provide technical advice and support to the Egyptian Ministry of Transport on the safety standards related to passenger ships, in particular on the resources and procedures in place for the conduct of inspections of safety-related systems and equipment for stability, fire protection, life-saving appliances and safety of navigation; survey and certification under the relevant provisions of SOLAS Chapter I; and verification and compliance with requirements related to the STCW Convention and the ISM Code. Mr Allan also advised on existing crisis management systems and procedures, particularly those that should be put in place immediately following a maritime accident. Mr Allan’s mission was entirely distinct and separate from the investigation into the casualty.

The actual conduct of the investigation into the cause of the loss of the al-Salam Boccaccio 98 was being carried out by the casualty investigation board set up jointly by the Egyptian and Panamanian authorities. Mr. Leclair’s and Mr Travis’s role was to provide independent technical advice. The report of the board is expected to be submitted to IMO in due course, complete with conclusions and recommendations. All the three consultancies have been provided through IMO’s technical co-operation programme.

Speaking after the accident, IMO Secretary-General Efthimios E. Mitropoulos said he looked forward to a speedy completion of the investigation and to receiving its report, including its conclusions and recommendations, in good time, so that any remedial action which may need to be taken from IMO’s perspective is taken without delay to the benefit of the international maritime community. He added, “We owe this to the memory of the innocent victims of the ill-fated ship and their families, who have the right to know what caused the accident which deprived them of their loved ones.”

On a one-day visit to Cairo in the days after the accident, Secretary General Mitropoulos conveyed the solidarity and compassion of the IMO membership to the people and Government of Egypt and those of other nations affected and in particular to the families, friends and colleagues of the victims. During the visit, Mr Mitropoulos met, among others, the Prime Minister of Egypt, Mr Ahmed Nazif, and the Egyptian Transport Minister, Mr Mohamed Mansour, and other officials as well as the Panamanian Ambassador to Egypt, Dr Jorge Ramón Valdés Charris and the Panamanian experts nominated to assist in the investigation.

Mr Mitropoulos praised the efforts of search and rescue authorities. He said, “The efforts of those authorities involved in the search and rescue operation are greatly appreciated, in particular because it had to be conducted under adverse weather conditions.”
IMO Assembly elects new Council for 2006-2007 biennium

The 24th Assembly of the International Maritime Organization has elected the following States to be members of its Council for the 2006-2007 biennium:

(See table right)

The new Council met on Thursday 1 December and elected Mr. Johan Franson (Sweden) as Chairman and Mr. Dumisani Ntuli (South Africa) as Vice Chairman.

The Council is the Executive Organ of IMO and is responsible, under the Assembly, for supervising the work of the Organization. Between sessions of the Assembly the Council performs all the functions of the Assembly, except that of making recommendations to Governments on maritime safety and pollution prevention.

### Category A
10 States with the largest interest in providing international shipping services;
- China, Greece, Italy, Japan, Norway, Panama, Republic of Korea, Russian Federation, United Kingdom, United States.

### Category B
10 other States with the largest interest in international seaborne trade;
- Argentina, Bangladesh, Brazil, Canada, France, Germany, India, Netherlands, Spain, Sweden.

### Category C
20 States not elected under categories A or B which have special interest in maritime transport or navigation, and whose election to the Council will ensure the representation of all major geographic areas of the world.
- Algeria, Australia, Bahamas, Belgium, Chile, Cyprus, Denmark, Egypt, Indonesia, Kenya, Malaysia, Malta, Mexico, the Philippines, Portugal, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, South Africa, Thailand, Turkey

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Former SG wins high honour in India

Former IMO Secretary-General Dr CP Srivastava has received the Lal Bahadur National Award for Excellence in Public Administration, Academics and Management in his native India. The award was bestowed by His Excellency the President of India, Dr APJ Abdul Kalam at a special ceremony in the Presidential Palace in the presence of the Prime Minister of India, Dr Manmohan Singh, and other leading Indian personalities.
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Goal-based standards - a new approach to the international regulation of ship construction

H. Hoppe, Maritime Safety Division, International Maritime Organization

The development of goal-based new ship construction standards is of high importance for IMO. It has been included in the Organization’s strategic and long-term work plans and also in the work programme of its Maritime Safety Committee.

There is an increasing tendency to adopt a goal-based approach to regulation in general and there are good technical and commercial reasons for believing this approach is preferable to more prescriptive regulation. “Goal-based regulation” does not specify the means of achieving compliance but sets goals that allow alternative ways of achieving compliance. For instance, “People shall be prevented from falling over the edge of a cliff” is goal-based. In prescriptive regulation the specific means of achieving compliance is mandated, e.g. “You shall install a 1m high rail at the edge of the cliff”.

There are acknowledged shortcomings of prescriptive regulation. The parties applying such regulations are only required to carry out the mandated actions to discharge their legal responsibilities. If these actions then prove to be insufficient to prevent a subsequent accident, it is the regulations and those that set them that are seen to be deficient, not the parties applying them, whose responsibility, in law, it actually is.

Prescriptive regulations tend to be a distillation of past experience and, as such, may become less and less relevant over time and at worst create unnecessary dangers in industries that are technically innovative. It is the innovator that is best placed to ensure the safety of their design, not the regulator. Clearly, prescriptive regulations are unable to cope with a diversity of design solutions. Also, prescriptive regulations encode the best engineering practice at the time they were written and rapidly become deficient where best practice is changing with evolving technologies.

In fact, it is quite probable that prescriptive regulations eventually prevent industry from adopting current best practice. It follows that there are clear benefits in adopting a goal-based approach as it gives greater freedom in developing technical solutions and accommodating different standards.

Consequently, goal-based standards for new ship construction should form the foundation for the future advance of international regulatory standards in shipping. They need to be broad, overarching goals against which ship safety can be verified at design and construction stages and during ship operation. They are not intended to set prescriptive requirements or to give specific solutions. In order to have a level playing field for the whole of the international maritime industry, the functional requirements of goal-based standards should be sufficient for classification societies to develop definitive prescriptive standards that can be applied and implemented consistently on a worldwide basis.

At each stage of construction, maintenance and operation, it should be possible to demonstrate and, more importantly, to verify that the ship structure and design comply with the goal-based standards. The standards set by IMO need to be readily and universally understood, unambiguous and capable of being assessed as being achieved by the prescriptive standards to be set. While it needs to be recognized that the intention is to set goals for a long time, it should, however, also be accepted that the actual acceptable limits will change as technology progresses and public/political perception changes.

Goal-based standards (GBS) are not a completely new concept in the work of IMO. Over the last few years, the Organization has started to introduce goal-based standards for certain special subjects, albeit not in a systematic manner. Examples are the revised SOLAS chapter II-2 on Construction - Fire protection, fire detection and fire extinguition, which was completed in 2000, and the on-going work with regard to large passenger ship safety.

The notion of “goal-based ship construction standards” was introduced in IMO at the 89th session of the Council in November 2002 through a proposal by the Bahamas and Greece, suggesting that IMO should play a larger role in determining the standards to which new ships are built, traditionally the responsibility of classification societies and shipyards.

Over the next two years the matter was extensively discussed in the MSC, the Council and finally the IMO Assembly which, at its twenty-third session in 2003, included the item “Goal-based new ship construction standards” in the strategic plan and the long-term work plan of the Organization.

Some IMO Members advocated the application of a holistic approach which would define a procedure for the risk-based evaluation of the current safety level of existing mandatory regulations related to ship safety and consider ways forward to establish future risk acceptance criteria using Formal Safety Assessment (FSA). Others supported a more deterministic approach, based on the vast practical experience gained with oil tankers and bulk carriers over the years and stressed the need for clearly quantified functional requirements.
After extensive and wide ranging discussions on this issue, it was agreed that the use of the risk-based methodology should be further explored over the next few sessions of the Committee, while, at the same time, proceeding with the development of GBS using the deterministic approach. But this also means that, if it were decided to adopt the risk-based approach at some point in the future, a revisit of the goal-based standards developed under the deterministic methodology would be required to verify consistency and make changes where necessary.

The Maritime Safety Committee commenced detailed technical work on the development of goal-based ship construction standards at MSC 78, in May 2004, where a comprehensive general debate of the issues involved took place. The Committee agreed to establish a working group on GBS at its next meeting (MSC 79 in December 2004), keeping the subject, for the time being, under its own auspices, on the understanding that IMO's Marine Environment Protection Committee (MEPC) would consider the issue from the environmental protection point of view and provide its contribution for discussion at the MSC and its working group.

There was general agreement with a five-tier system proposed by the Bahamas, Greece and IACS which is explained in more detail below. Discussions in plenary and in the working group continued during MSC 79 and MSC 80, resulting in agreement in principle on the basic tenets of IMO goal-based standards as follows:

**IMO goal-based standards are:**

1. broad, over-arching safety, environmental and/or security standards that ships are required to meet during their lifecycle;
2. the required level to be achieved by the requirements applied by class societies and other recognized organizations, Administrations and IMO;
3. clear, demonstrable, verifiable, long standing, implementable and achievable, irrespective of ship design and technology; and
4. specific enough in order not to be open to differing interpretations.

It is understood that these basic principles were developed to be applicable to all goal-based standards adopted by IMO and not only goal-based new ship construction standards, in recognition that, in the future, IMO may develop goal-based standards for other areas, e.g. machinery, equipment, fire-protection, etc. and that all goal-based standards developed by the Organization should follow the same basic principles.

The Committee agreed, in principle, a five-tier system (see below), following a proposal by the Bahamas, Greece and IACS at MSC 78. The Committee also agreed that the first three tiers constitute the goal-based standards to be developed by IMO, whereas Tiers IV and V contain provisions developed to be developed by classification societies, other recognized organizations and industry organizations.

**Tier I: Goals**

A set of goals to be met in order to build and operate safe and environmentally friendly ships.

**Tier II: Functional requirements**

A set of requirements relevant to the functions of the ship structures to be complied with in order to meet the above-mentioned goals.

**Tier III: Verification of compliance criteria**

Provides the instruments necessary for demonstrating that the detailed requirements in Tier IV comply with the Tier I goals and Tier II functional requirements.

**Tier IV: Technical procedures and guidelines, classification rules and industry standards**

The detailed requirements developed by IMO, national Administrations and/or classification societies and applied by national Administrations and/or classification societies acting as Recognized Organizations to the design and construction of a ship in order to meet the Tier I goals and Tier II functional requirements.

**Tier V: Codes of practice and safety and quality systems for shipbuilding, ship operation, maintenance, training, manning, etc.**

Industry standards and shipbuilding design and building practices that are applied during the design and construction of a ship.

MSC 80 agreed in principle the following Tier I goals, applicable to all types of new ships:

“Ships are to be designed and constructed for a specified design life to be safe and environmentally friendly, when properly operated and maintained under the specified operating and environmental conditions, in intact and specified damage conditions, throughout their life.

1. Safe and environmentally friendly means the ship shall have adequate strength, integrity and stability to minimize the risk of loss of the ship or pollution to the marine environment due to structural failure, including collapse, resulting in flooding or loss of watertight integrity.
2. Environmentally friendly also includes the ship being constructed of materials for environmentally acceptable dismantling and recycling.
3. Safety also includes the ship's structure being arranged to provide for safe access, escape, inspection and proper maintenance.
4. Specified operating and environmental conditions are defined by the operating area for the ship throughout its life and cover the conditions, including intermediate conditions, arising from cargo and ballast operations in port, waterways and at sea.
5. Specified design life is the nominal period that the ship is assumed to be exposed to operating and/or environmental conditions and/or the corrosive environment and is used for selecting appropriate ship design parameters. However, the ship's actual service life may be longer or shorter
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A ship’s lifetime is a fundamental goal and the suggested standard in this respect is “not less than 25 years” (pic: Geest)

depending on the actual operating conditions and maintenance of the ship throughout its life cycle.”

MSC 80 noted the following Tier II functional requirements, applicable to new oil tankers and bulk carriers in unrestricted navigation, as prepared by its GBS working group. The functional requirements have been structured to form three groups: design, construction and in-service considerations. They are preliminary at this point in time and will be subject to further consideration at future meetings of the MSC.

Group 1: Design
1. Ship design: the specified design life is not to be less than 25 years.
2. Environmental conditions: ships should be designed in accordance with North Atlantic environmental conditions and relevant long-term sea state scatter diagrams.
3. Structural strength: ships should be designed with suitable safety margins, specifically 1) to withstand, at net scantlings, in the intact condition, the environmental conditions anticipated for the ship’s design life and the loading conditions appropriate for them, which should include full homogeneous and alternate loads, partial loads, multi-port and ballast voyage, and ballast management condition loads and occasional overloads during loading/unloading operations, as applicable to the class designation; and 2) appropriate for all design parameters whose calculation involves a degree of uncertainty, including loads, structural modelling, fatigue, corrosion, material imperfections, construction workmanship errors, buckling and residual strength.

The structural strength should be assessed against excess deformation and failure modes, including but not limited to buckling, yielding and fatigue. Ultimate strength calculations should include ultimate hull girder capacity and ultimate strength of plates and stiffeners. The ship’s structural members should be of a design that is compatible with the purpose of the space and ensures a degree of structural continuity. The structural members of ships should be designed to facilitate load/discharge for all contemplated cargoes to avoid damage by loading/discharging equipment which may compromise the safety of the structure.

4. Fatigue life: The design fatigue life should not be less than the ship’s design life and should be based on the environmental conditions above.
5. Residual strength: Ships should be designed to have sufficient strength to withstand the wave and internal loads in specified damaged conditions such as collision, grounding or flooding. Residual strength calculations should take into account the ultimate reserve capacity of the hull girder, including permanent deformation and post-buckling behaviour. Actual foreseeable scenarios should be investigated in this regard as far as is reasonably practicable.

6. Protection against corrosion: Measures to protect against corrosion are to be applied to ensure that net scantlings required to meet structural strength provisions are maintained throughout the specified design life. Additional measures include, but are not limited to, coatings, cathodic protection, impressed current systems, etc.
7. Coating life: Coatings should be applied and maintained in accordance with manufacturers’ specifications concerning surface preparation, coating selection, application and maintenance. Where coating is required to be applied, the design coating life is to be specified. The actual coating life may be longer or shorter than the design coating life, depending on the actual conditions and maintenance of the ship.

8. Corrosion addition: the corrosion addition should be added to the net scantling and should be adequate for the specified design life. The corrosion addition should be determined on the basis of exposure to corrosive agents such as water, cargo or corrosive atmosphere, and whether the structure is protected by corrosion prevention systems, e.g. coating, cathodic protection or by alternative means. The design corrosion rates (mm/yr) should be evaluated in accordance with statistical information established from service experience and/or accelerated model tests. The actual corrosion rate may be greater or smaller than the design corrosion rate, depending on the actual conditions and maintenance of the ship.

9. Structural redundancy: ships should be of a design that is compatible with the purpose of the space and ensures a degree of structural continuity. The structural members of ships should be designed with suitable safety margins, specifically 1) to withstand, at net scantlings, in the intact condition, the environmental conditions anticipated for the ship’s design life and the loading conditions appropriate for them, which should include full homogeneous and alternate loads, partial loads, multi-port and ballast voyage, and ballast management condition loads and occasional overloads during loading/unloading operations, as applicable to the class designation; and 2) appropriate for all design parameters whose calculation involves a degree of uncertainty, including loads, structural modelling, fatigue, corrosion, material imperfections, construction workmanship errors, buckling and residual strength.

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9. Structural redundancy: ships should be of a design that is compatible with the purpose of the space and ensures a degree of structural continuity.
2. Survey: a survey plan should be developed for the construction phase of the ship, taking into account the type and design. The survey plan should contain a set of requirements to ensure compliance of construction with classification rules and goal-based standards. The survey plan should also identify areas that need special attention during surveys throughout the ship’s life.

Group 3: In-service considerations

1. Maintenance: ships should be designed and constructed to facilitate ease of maintenance, in particular avoiding the creation of spaces too confined to allow for adequate maintenance activities.

2. Structural accessibility: the ship should be designed, constructed and equipped to provide adequate means of access to all internal structures to facilitate overall and close-up inspections and thickness measurements.

3. Verification of compliance (Tier III): although there is general agreement among the IMO membership that a credible, transparent and auditable verification system is necessary, so far the issue of how exactly to verify compliance with the functional requirements has not been discussed in any detail and is one of the tasks of the Committee and its working group for the future. Preliminary views by IMO Member States differ widely.

The GBS working group at MSC 79 had a brief and preliminary discussion on Tier III and noted that, in general, verification should consist of the following four steps:

1. verification that prescriptive rules by classification societies are in accordance with the goal-based standards;
2. verification that the design of individual ships meets classification societies’ rules;
3. verification that the construction of ships meets classification societies’ rules; and
4. verification that the ship throughout its life meets applicable rules.

Of these four steps, the new item is the verification that classification societies’ rules meet the goal-based standards. However, it was also pointed out that, in developing Tier III, it would be necessary to look closely at “who” would be required to show that Tiers I and II have been met. Tier II, for instance, includes functional requirements on quality of construction and transparency of design (see above) which relate to shipyards and designers, two entities that IMO has not previously included in the regulatory scheme.

Further, likewise preliminary, discussions in the working group at MSC 80 clarified that the general purpose of Tier III is the verification that the detailed requirements in Tiers IV and V meet the Tier II functional requirements, i.e. “rules for rules” – it is not the purpose to verify that the ship meets the detailed requirements. For goal-based standards for new ship construction, Tier III will have the purpose of verifying that the detailed requirements of the classification societies meet the Tier II functional requirements. As such, Tier III should provide a process for classification societies to follow when providing information to the verification authority (still to be determined) in order to establish that their detailed rules meet the functional requirements.

In order to progress the work on this issue, MSC 80 established a correspondence group and instructed it to develop draft Tier III criteria for the verification of compliance for the consideration of the Committee at MSC 81 in May 2006. Although first steps, e.g. agreement (in principle) on basic principles and goals, have been covered, it is clear to everyone involved in the work that there is still a long way to go in order to arrive at agreed goal-based standards for new ship construction.

The matter of risk-based and/or deterministic approach has not been brought to a conclusion. The issue of verification of compliance has so far only been discussed preliminarily. Likewise, the question of how the GBS could be incorporated into the existing regulatory framework has only been touched upon and initial views expressed varied widely.

MSC 80 agreed on a plan for the future work on goal-based standards, which will be regularly reviewed and updated, as follows:

- consideration of the probabilistic risk-based methodology in the framework of GBS;
- completion of Tier II functional requirements;
- development of Tier III verification of compliance criteria;
- implementation of GBS;
- incorporation of GBS into IMO instruments;
- development of a ship construction file and consideration of the need for the development of a ship inspection and maintenance file; and
- consideration of the need to review consistency and adequacy of scope across the tiers.

The development of goal-based standards is currently focussed on ship construction, however, in the long term, it should also cover all other aspects relevant to new buildings, including safety, environmental protection and quality assurance. Structural safety cannot be looked at in isolation but should form part of an overall framework.
Voluntary audit scheme adopted at IMO’s 24th Assembly

The auditing of IMO Member States to enhance the implementation and enforcement of international maritime standards has been set in motion, following the adoption of the Framework and Procedures for the voluntary scheme by the International Maritime Organization (IMO), at its 24th Assembly, which met at the Organization’s London Headquarters from 21 November to 2 December 2005.

The adoption of the framework and procedures for the scheme heralds a new era for IMO, in which the Organization has at its disposal 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 it is a Party; the administration and enforcement of the applicable laws and regulations of the Member State; the delegation of authority in terms of the implementation of convention requirements; and the control and monitoring mechanism of the Member State’s survey and certification processes and of its recognized organizations.

It will help to identify where capacity-building activities would have the greatest effect and it will also enable appropriate action to be taken more precisely focused. Individual Member States which volunteer to be audited will receive valuable feedback and, on a wider scale, generic lessons learnt from audits could be provided to all Member States so that the benefits may be shared. The regulatory process at IMO may also benefit from the results of this learning experience.

Alongside the audit scheme framework and procedures, the Assembly adopted a Code for the Implementation of Mandatory IMO Instruments, which will provide the audit standard.

A further resolution, on Future development of the Voluntary IMO Member State Audit Scheme, requests the Maritime Safety Committee (MSC) and the Marine Environment Protection Committee (MEPC) to review the future feasibility of including, within the scope of the audit scheme, maritime security-related matters and other functions not presently covered and also to identify any implications of broadening the scope of the audit scheme. The IMO Council is requested to develop suitable provisions for the possible future inclusion of other issues (relating to safety, environmental protection and security) in the audit scheme, taking into account the experience gained from the implementation of the scheme.

To ensure that Member States’ audits can commence in 2006, an adequate pool of trained auditors is to be established by mid-2006, based on nominations by Member States of qualified auditors for training under the provisions of the scheme. It is expected that between 20 to 30 audits will be conducted during the 2006-2007 biennium. The technical co-operation global programme for the scheme will have a key role to play in supporting the training programme.

Upon receiving a request for audit from a Member State, the IMO Secretary-General will appoint an audit team leader who will discuss and agree the scope of the audit with the Member State. The audit will commence after the signing of a Memorandum of Co-operation by the Secretary-General and by the Member State. The Memorandum will set out the scope of the audit to be carried out and time frame.

Piracy off the coast of Somalia

The Assembly adopted a resolution on Piracy and armed robbery against ships in waters off the coast of Somalia, calling for the issue to be brought to the attention of the United Nations Security Council (see page 9). The resolution was submitted to the Assembly at the recommendation of IMO Secretary-General Efthimios E. Mitropoulos following its approval, in principle, at the meeting of the IMO Council which preceded the Assembly.

The resolution condemns and deplores all acts of piracy and armed robbery against ships and appeals to all parties which may be able to assist to take action, within the provisions of international law, to ensure that all acts or attempted acts of piracy and armed robbery against ships are terminated forthwith; that any plans for committing such acts are abandoned; that any hijacked ships are terminated forthwith; and appeals to all parties which may be able to assist to take action, within the provisions of international law, to ensure that all acts or attempted acts of piracy and armed robbery against ships are terminated forthwith; that any plans for committing such acts are abandoned; that any hijacked ships are immediately and unconditionally released; and that no harm is caused to seafarers serving in them.

The resolution authorizes the IMO Secretary-General to submit the resolution to the Secretary-General of the United Nations for consideration and any further action he may deem appropriate, including bringing the matter to the attention of the Security Council, taking into account regional co-ordination efforts.

Support for the United Nations Millennium Declaration

The Assembly adopted a resolution on technical co-operation as a means to support the United Nations Millennium Declaration and Development Goals. The emphasis for the technical co-operation activities is placed on meeting the special assistance needs of Africa.
The resolution notes that one of the effects of the Voluntary IMO Member State Audit Scheme will be an increase in demand for technical co-operation, resulting from the specific needs of Member States that, either before or after a voluntary audit, may wish to apply for technical co-operation from IMO to improve their own performance.

The resolution sets out funding arrangements for the Technical Co-operation Fund and reaffirms that technical co-operation is an essential part of the Organization’s work to achieve the global ratification and implementation of IMO’s instruments and to implement successfully the Voluntary Audit Scheme.

The Assembly also approved the establishment of a correspondence group to identify the linkage between the Millennium Development Goals and the IMO’s Integrated Technical Co-operation Programme, which will report to the Technical Co-operation Committee at its 56th session in June 2006.

The IMO Council has agreed that the World Maritime Day theme for 2006 should be ‘Technical Co-operation: IMO’s response to the 2005 World Summit’.

Fair treatment of seafarers

The Assembly adopted a resolution requesting the Joint IMO/ILO Ad Hoc Expert Working Group on Fair Treatment of Seafarers to finalize guidelines on fair treatment of seafarers in the event of a maritime accident as a matter of priority. The resolution echoes the serious concern about the need to ensure the protection of the rights of seafarers in view of the growing use of criminal proceedings against them, in particular their prolonged detention, as a result of a maritime accident.

The resolution urges all States to respect the basic human rights of seafarers involved in maritime accidents; to investigate maritime accidents expeditiously to avoid any unfair treatment of seafarers; and to adopt procedures to allow the prompt repatriation or re-embarkation of seafarers following maritime accidents. It also invites Governments and non-governmental organizations to record instances of unfair treatment of seafarers in the event of maritime accidents and to provide data to IMO or ILO whenever requested.

Ship recycling

The Assembly agreed that IMO should develop a new legally-binding instrument on ship recycling. The relevant resolution requests the Marine Environment Protection Committee to develop a new instrument that would provide regulations for:

- the design, construction, operation and preparation of ships so as to facilitate safe and environmentally sound recycling, without compromising the safety and operational efficiency of ships;
- the operation of ship recycling facilities in a safe and environmentally sound manner; and
- the establishment of an appropriate enforcement mechanism for ship recycling, incorporating certification and reporting requirements.

The aim is to complete the instrument in time for its consideration and adoption in the 2008-2009 biennium. The resolution refers to the urgent need for IMO to contribute to the development of an effective solution to the issue of ship recycling, which will minimize, in the most effective, efficient and sustainable way, the environmental, occupational health and safety risks related to ship recycling, taking into account the particular characteristics of world maritime transport and the need for securing the smooth withdrawal of ships that have reached the end of their operating lives.

The Assembly also adopted amendments to the existing Guidelines on Ship Recycling, relating to the inventory of potentially hazardous materials present in a ship’s structure and equipment and the Green Passport for ships.

Particularly Sensitive Sea Areas

The Assembly adopted revised Guidelines for the Identification and Designation of Particularly Sensitive Sea Areas (PSSAs). A PSSA is an area that needs special protection through action by IMO because of its significance for recognized ecological, socio-economic, or scientific attributes where such attributes may be vulnerable to damage by international shipping activities. An application for PSSA designation should contain a proposal for an associated protective measure or measures aimed at preventing, reducing or eliminating the threat or identified vulnerability. Associated protective measures for PSSAs are limited to...
actions that are to be, or have been, approved and adopted by IMO, for example, a routing system such as an area to be avoided.

The guidelines provide advice to IMO Member Governments in the formulation and submission of applications for the designation of PSSAs to ensure that in the process, all interests - those of the coastal State, flag State, and the environmental and shipping communities - are thoroughly considered on the basis of relevant scientific, technical, economic, and environmental information regarding the area at risk of damage from international shipping activities.

**Wreck Removal Convention - Conference to be held**

The Assembly approved, subject to progress made by the Legal Committee, the holding of a Conference during 2007 in Nairobi, Kenya, to adopt a new Wreck Removal Convention. The proposed new convention is intended to provide international rules on the rights and obligations of States and shipowners in dealing with wrecks and drifting or sunken cargo which may pose a hazard to navigation or pose a threat to the marine environment of coastal states. The draft Convention currently being considered by the Legal Committee is intended to clarify rights and obligations regarding the identification, reporting, locating and removal of hazardous wrecks, in particular those located in the exclusive economic zone.

**Attendance**

The Assembly was attended by 817 delegates representing 153 Member States and three Associate Members; the United Nations and specialized agencies, one non-Member State, five intergovernmental organizations and 27 non-governmental organizations.

The Assembly normally meets once every two years. All 166 Member States and three Associate Members are entitled to attend as are the intergovernmental organizations with which agreements of co-operation have been concluded and non-governmental organizations which have consultative status with IMO.

**Election of Officers**

**President of the Assembly**
His Excellency Mr. Zha Peixin, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the People’s Republic of China to the United Kingdom as President of the Assembly.

**1st Vice-President**
His Excellency Dr. Federico Mirvé, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Argentina to the United Kingdom; and

**2nd Vice-President:**
Her Excellency Mrs. Christiane Jeanne-Marie Tabele Omichessan, Minister of Transport and Public Works of Benin.

**Resolved**

The 24th IMO Assembly adopted the following 22 resolutions:

A.966(24) Relations with non-governmental organizations
A.967(24) Arrears of contributions
A.968(24) Presentation of accounts and audit reports
A.970(24) Strategic plan for the Organization (for the six-year period 2006 to 2011)
A.971(24) High-level action plan of the Organization and priorities for the 2006-2007 biennium
A.972(24) Adoption of amendments to the International Convention on Load Lines, 1966
A.973(24) Code for the implementation of mandatory IMO instruments
A.974(24) Framework and Procedures for the Voluntary IMO Member State Audit Scheme
A.975(24) Future development of the Voluntary IMO Member State Audit Scheme
A.976(24) Ships’ routing – establishment of an Area to be Avoided in the Galapagos Archipelago
A.977(24) Ships’ routing
A.978(24) Amendments to the existing mandatory ship reporting system “In the Great Belt Traffic area”
A.979(24) Piracy and armed robbery against ships in waters off the coast of Somalia
A.980(24) Amendments to the IMO Guidelines on Ship Recycling (Resolution A.962(23))
A.981(24) New legally-binding instrument on Ship Recycling
A.982(24) Revised guidelines for the identification and designation of Particularly Sensitive Sea Areas (PSSAs)
A.983(24) Guidelines for facilitation of response to a pollution incident
A.984(24) Facilitation of the carriage of the IMDG Code Class 7 radioactive materials including those in packaged form used in medical or public health applications
A.985(24) Revision of the Guidelines for the prevention and suppression of smuggling of drugs, psychotropic substances and precursor chemicals on ships engaged in international maritime traffic
A.986(24) The importance and funding of Technical Co-operation as a means to support the Millennium Declaration and Development Goals
A.987(24) Guidelines on fair treatment of seafarers in the event of a maritime accident
A.988(24) Protocol of 2002 to the Athens Convention: reservation concerning the issue and acceptance of insurance certificates with special exceptions and limitations
Fire safety amendments for passenger ship safety agreed

Amendments to SOLAS chapter II-2 and the International Fire Safety Systems (FSS) Code were agreed by the Sub-Committee on Fire Protection (FP) when it met for its 50th session, as part of its contribution to the comprehensive review on passenger ship safety, which began in 2000. The guiding philosophy for this work 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.

The Sub-Committee agreed draft amendments to SOLAS chapter II-2 and the FSS Code related to: safe areas and the essential systems to be maintained while a ship proceeds to port after a casualty; onboard safety centres, from where safety systems can be controlled, operated and monitored; fixed fire detection and alarm systems, including requirements for fire detectors and manually operated call points to be capable of being remotely and individually identified; and prevention, including amendments aimed at enhancing the fire safety for atriums, the means of evacuation and abandonment, which includes requirements for fire extinguishing systems, including requirements for fire extinguishing systems for machinery spaces and cargo pump-rooms (MSC/Circ.848); draft amendments to the Guidelines for the approval of fixed water-based local application fire-fighting systems for use in category A machinery spaces (MSC/Circ.913); and draft Guidelines for maintenance and inspections of fixed CO2 systems. However, the amendments will not be forwarded to the Committee for approval until the harmonization exercise has been completed.

A correspondence group was established to continue the work on harmonizing and developing performance testing and approval standards for fire safety systems.

Review of the Fire Test Procedures (FTP) Code

Another correspondence group was established to work on the comprehensive review of the FTP Code. The aims of the review are to enhance its user-friendliness and provide a more uniform application of the Code, with the inclusion of appropriate interpretations; to update the references to ISO fire test standards; and to accommodate developments in fire protection technology. In this regard, the Sub-Committee also agreed that the existing structure of the FTP Code and related fire test procedures should be reordered to directly incorporate the various resolutions into the appropriate, relevant parts of the Code rather than referring to the related fire test procedures, many of which are in separate resolutions and circulars.

Recommendation on evacuation analysis for new and existing passenger ships

The Sub-Committee established a correspondence group to further develop draft amendments to the Recommendation on evacuation analysis for new and existing passenger ships (MSC/Circ.1033).

Development of provisions for gas-fuelled ships

The Sub-Committee agreed to continue working on the development of provisions for gas-fuelled ships at FP 51, taking into account the outcomes of the Sub-Committees on Ship Design and Equipment (DE) and Bulk Liquids and Gases (BLG).

Measures to prevent fire in engine-rooms and cargo pump-rooms

The Sub-Committee established a correspondence group to develop draft guidelines on measures to prevent fire in engine-rooms and cargo pump-rooms and to consider, with a view towards consolidation and inclusion, any existing MSC circulars addressing fire safety and prevention measures for engine-rooms and cargo pump-rooms.
Unified interpretations agreed

The Sub-Committee agreed to a draft MSC circular on unified interpretations of SOLAS chapter II-2 and the FTP Code, for submission to MSC 81 for approval.

Life-saving appliances and arrangements

Various items related to life-saving appliances were transferred to the FP Sub-Committee due to the heavy workload of the Committee on Ship Design and Equipment (DE). Experts on DE matters attended the FP Sub-Committee.

Prevention of accidents involving lifeboats

The Sub-Committee agreed a draft amendment to SOLAS regulation III/19.3.3.4 concerning provisions for the launch of free-fall lifeboats during abandon ship drills, for submission to MSC 81 for approval and subsequent adoption. The amendment will allow, during the abandon-ship drill, for the lifeboat to either be free-fall launched with only the required operating crew on board, or lowered into the water by means of the secondary means of launching without the operating crew on board, and then manoeuvred in the water by the operating crew. The aim is to prevent accidents with lifeboats occurring during abandon-ship drills.

The Sub-Committee also agreed a draft MSC circular on Early implementation of draft SOLAS regulation III/19.3.3.4 to encourage early implementation of the regulation prior to its entry into force.

It also agreed a draft MSC circular on Guidelines for the development of operation and maintenance manuals for lifeboats and a draft MSC circular on Measures to prevent accidents with lifeboats consolidating previous circulars MSC/Circ.1049, MSC/Circ.1093, MSC/Circ.1136 and MSC/Circ.1137. The draft consolidated circular includes the Guidelines for periodic servicing and maintenance of lifeboats, launching appliances and on-load release gear; Guidance on safety during abandon ship drills using lifeboats; and Guidelines for simulated launching of free-fall lifeboats.

Other LSA amendments agreed

The Sub-Committee also agreed other draft amendments to SOLAS chapter III, the Life Saving Appliances (LSA) Code and the Recommendation for testing of life-saving appliances (LSA). They include:

SOLAS chapter III - draft amendments relating to:
- onboard communications and alarm systems
- survival craft muster and embarkation arrangements
- stowage of survival craft, rescue boats and marine evacuation systems
- survival craft launching and recovery arrangements
- operational readiness, maintenance and inspections
- servicing of inflatable liferafts, inflatable lifejackets, and marine evacuation systems, and maintenance and repair of inflated rescue boats
- periodic servicing of launching appliances and release gear
- survival craft and rescue boats
- immersion suits
- training manuals - which should be written in the working language or languages of the ship

LSA Code - draft amendments relating to:
- definitions
- life-jackets
- immersion suits
- requirements for liferafts
- requirements for lifeboats
- requirements for rescue boats
- additional requirements for fast rescue boats

Further work on LSA

The Sub-Committee agreed there was a need for further work by the Ship Design and Equipment Sub-Committee, in particular with regard to improvements to requirements for on-load release mechanisms; improvements to free-fall lifeboat launching and seating arrangements; and compatibility of life-saving appliances, specifically compatibility of immersion suits and lifejackets; compatibility of immersion suits and lifeboat access and capacity; and compatibility of lifejackets and marine evacuation systems. The DE Sub-Committee recognised at its last session that the real problem was not the relationship between lifeboat capacity and immersion suits, but...
rather the increased weight and size of seafarers and passengers. Further statistical data was needed to allow a thorough analysis of the issue.

**FP Sub-Committee celebrates golden jubilee session**

IMO Secretary-General Mr. Efthimios E. Mitropoulos paid tribute to the Sub-Committee’s work and in particular to its current and past Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen, as well as the past and current Secretaries of the Sub-Committee, as it held its 50th session.

The first session of the Sub-Committee was held at the old Headquarters of the then Inter-Governmental Maritime Consultative Organization (IMCO), in Chancery House, central London, from 14 to 18 December 1964, when there was a total of 42 participants only – compared to more than 270 at the 50th session.

Mr. Mitropoulos said that IMO Members should be pleased at the progress the Sub-Committee has since made, not only in the number of Member Governments and international organizations participating in its work, but also in the quantity and, more importantly, the quality of the output of the Sub-Committee, which has contributed significantly to the achievement of the objectives of the Organization.

Over the years, Mr. Mitropoulos said, there have been many advances in the field of fire protection engineering and in the regulations which incorporate fire safety technologies, drills and fire-fighting operations and practices on board ships. He highlighted, in particular, automatic sprinklers, inert gas systems, fire detection systems, machinery space fire-extinguishing systems, automated safety control systems, new non-combustible materials and enhanced personal protection for fire-fighters, as a few examples and noted that ships and the seafarers that sail them now have a host of new technologies, which their predecessors could only have dreamed of, to both prevent and quickly mitigate fires when they occur.

Thanks to the work of the Sub-Committee, Mr. Mitropoulos added, numerous fire test procedures and performance standards have been developed to ensure that emerging technologies are up to the task, which has significantly contributed to enhanced fire safety at sea.
A comprehensive review of the STCW Convention and STCW Code is needed, in order to 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, the Sub-Committee on Standards of Training and Watchkeeping agreed at its 37th session.

The Sub-Committee noted that there was a range of items already on its work programme which will likely result in amendments to the STCW Convention, including the development of standards relating to ratings; reviewing and amending the STCW Convention and resolution A.890(21) Principles of Safe Manning to include security related provisions; identifying areas in chapter VI (Guidance regarding emergency, occupational safety, medical care and survival functions) of the STCW Code where training cannot be conducted on board; and reviewing the implementation of STCW chapter VII. (Alternative certification).

It was also noted that MSC 81 will be discussing proposals for new work programme items which would affect the Convention and code, including development of ECDIS training and familiarization; development of standards of competence for seafarers serving on LNG tankers; and proposals for developing mandatory alcohol limits during watchkeeping in the STCW Convention.

In the light of this, the Sub-Committee agreed to the need for a comprehensive review of the STCW Convention and Code with a view to the resulting amendments entering into force on 1 July 2010.

The review would include the consolidation of the various changes, additions and modifications, including the removal of any anomalies that could arise. The Maritime Safety Committee (MSC) will be invited to consider the need for the review, with a proposed target completion date of 2008.

Competencies for ratings

The Sub-Committee continued its work on the development of standards for the inclusion of competencies for ratings in the STCW convention.

It was agreed in principle to adopt a two-stage grading structure while developing competences for ratings, as follows:
- entry point as trainee;
- deck and engine-room watchkeeping rating;
- able seafarer and motorman.

It was agreed that the actual seagoing service required for certification as an able seafarer should be not less than 12 months or not less that 12 months with completion of approved training, while the actual seagoing service required for certification as a motorman should be not less than 12 months or not less than 6 months with completion of approved training. The Sub-Committee prepared preliminary tables of competence for an able seafarer and motorman.

The Sub-Committee agreed to review the STCW Convention and Code with a view to ensuring that they adequately reflected the inclusion of security into SOLAS. A preliminary list was agreed, identifying the provisions of the Convention which needed to be closely examined with a view to determining whether they need to be amended so as to include appropriate security-related provisions in the light of the requirements of SOLAS chapter XI-2 and the ISPS Code.

The Sub-Committee agreed that it was necessary to include, eventually, appropriate provisions in the STCW Convention and in the Code to address the security-related training and familiarization of shipboard personnel other than the Ship Security Officers, as a result of the provisions of SOLAS chapter XI-2 and the ISPS Code.

However, there was a divergence of opinion on the approach to be taken in relation to the development of the specific provisions and the Sub-Committee agreed to request the Maritime Safety Committee to consider the matter and to instruct the Sub-Committee on the approach to be taken and on the nature, extent and level of training required.

Training and certification for port facility security officers

The Sub-Committee endorsed a draft MSC circular on Guidelines on training and certification for port facility security officers for approval by the Maritime Safety Committee.

Measures to prevent accidents with lifeboats

The Sub-Committee agreed draft amendments to section B-I/14 of the STCW Code (Guidance regarding responsibilities of companies and recommended responsibilities of masters and crew members) providing guidance on familiarization and training for seafarers.
serving on board ships fitted with free-fall lifeboats. The aim is to help prevent accidents during drills involving such lifeboats.

Skills problem with GMDSS operators

The Sub-Committee discussed the need for improved training or familiarization for GMDSS radio operators. In one country, radio surveys had revealed that navigators holding GMDSS radio operators’ certificates were not sufficiently familiar with the technical and operational distress and safety procedures for the radio equipment on board the ships they were serving. The surveys also indicated that the maintenance of a reserve source of energy had frequently not been conducted properly which resulted in inadequate performance of the radio installation. Furthermore, many operators did not know how to avoid transmitting false distress alerts.

The Sub-Committee agreed that there was a real skills problem associated with GMDSS operators and that the long-term solution could be addressed through standardization of equipment and operating procedures. The Sub-Committee agreed to invite the Sub-Committee on Radiocommunications, Search and Rescue to include this in the IMO liaison statement to the World Radiocommunication Conference (WRC 2007). As an immediate solution, the Sub-Committee prepared an MSC circular on Promoting and verifying continued familiarization of GMDSS operators on board ships, for approval by the MSC.

Model courses

The Sub-Committee validated the new model course on training in Automatic Identification Systems (AIS).

The Sub-Committee noted that four OPRC model courses had been developed and revised: OPRC Introductory Course; Level 1 – First Responder; Level 2 – Supervisor / On-Scene Commander; and Level 3 – Administrators and Senior Managers.

There are currently 47 model courses printed and available for use with one being revised and being prepared for printing and five currently out of print pending revision: A total of 28 model courses have been translated into French and 32 into Spanish.

The delegation of China informed the Sub-Committee that, recognizing the importance of the model courses, they had themselves translated 40 model courses into Chinese.

Information on simulators available for use in maritime training

The Sub-Committee agreed that there was a need for Member Governments to provide the Secretariat with updated information on the availability of simulators for training and endorsed a draft MSC circular on Information on simulators available for use in maritime training, which requests Governments to provide information to update the previous list, issued in 1998.
A draft Performance standard for protective coatings of dedicated seawater tanks and of double side-skinned spaces of bulk carriers was agreed by the Sub-Committee on Ship Design and Equipment (DE) when it met for its 49th session. The draft standard will be submitted to the Maritime Safety Committee (MSC 81) for consideration.

SOLAS regulation XII/6.3, which requires double side-skinned spaces and dedicated seawater ballast tanks in bulk carriers of 150 m in length and upwards to be coated, is due to enter into force on 1 July 2006 as part of revised Chapter XII of SOLAS.

The draft performance standard is based on specifications and requirements which intend to provide a useful coating life of 15 years. The draft standard would require specification of the coating system, a record of the shipyard’s and ship owner’s coating work, detailed criteria for coating selection, job specifications, inspection, maintenance and repair to be documented in the “Coating Technical File”, which would be reviewed by the Administration or an organization recognized by the Administration.

To encourage the early implementation of the performance standard, the Sub-Committee agreed a proposed draft MSC Circular on Application of SOLAS regulation XII/6.3 on corrosion prevention of double side-skinned spaces and dedicated seawater ballast tanks of bulk carriers and application of the performance standard for protective coatings for dedicated seawater ballast tanks and double side-skinned spaces of bulk carriers.

Meanwhile, the Sub-Committee agreed, for consideration by the MSC, proposed amendments to SOLAS regulation XII/6.3 and SOLAS II-1/3-2 to require the performance standard to be mandatory and to be applied to all dedicated seawater ballast tanks constructed of steel on all new ships of 500 gross tonnage and over and double side-skinned spaces of new bulk carriers of 150 m in length and upwards. The current regulation II-1/3-2 Corrosion prevention of seawater ballast tanks applies to new oil tankers and bulk carriers and requires all dedicated seawater ballast tanks to have an efficient corrosion prevention system, such as hard protective coatings or equivalent. A correspondence group was established to develop a draft performance standard for protective coatings of void spaces of all types of ships.

Amendments to the CAS agreed

The Sub-Committee agreed draft amendments to the Condition Assessment Scheme (CAS) for oil tankers, concerning cases where a change of flag, recognized organization, ship ownership or ISM Code company occurs during the course of a CAS survey or after the issue of a Statement of Compliance to an oil tanker; as well as draft amendments to the CAS and related draft Guidelines on assessment of the residual fillet weld between deck plating and longitudinals.

Amendments to the Enhanced Survey Programme for bulk carriers and oil tankers

The Sub-Committee reviewed the work in developing proposed draft amendments to the enhanced survey programme (ESP) for oil tankers (resolution A.744(18)), based on the relevant IACS Unified Requirement, concerning:

- procedural requirements for surveyor monitoring of thickness measurements;
- procedures for hull surveys of double-skin bulk carriers; and
- requirements for provision and maintenance of as-built drawings covering items such as machinery installations, electrical installations and control systems.

Passenger ship safety

Following discussion in the Working Group on Passenger Ship Safety, the Sub-Committee agreed a number of draft amendments to SOLAS, to contribute to the major MSC work programme on passenger ship safety. The work bases its guiding philosophy 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.

The proposed amendments include:

- Draft amendments to SOLAS chapters II-1 and III on alternative designs and arrangements. Related guidelines were also agreed. The overall objective is to develop measures to assess alternative designs and arrangements so as to ease the approval of new concepts and technologies, in particular in the design of new passenger ships, provided that an equivalent level of safety is achieved.

- Draft amendment to SOLAS regulation II-1, to add a new paragraph to Regulation 41 Main source of electrical power and lighting systems: “In passenger ships, auxiliary lighting shall be provided in all cabins to clearly indicate the exits so that occupants will be able to find their way to the door. Such lighting shall automatically illuminate when power to the normal cabin lighting is lost and remain on for a minimum of 30 min.”

- Draft amendment to SOLAS regulation III/21.1.4 relevant to the time for abandonment, so that paragraph 1.4 would read: “All survival craft required to provide for abandonment by the total number of persons on board shall be capable of being launched with their full complement of persons and equipment within a period of 30 min from the time the abandon ship signal is given after all persons have been assembled, with lifejackets donned.” The amendment is intended to clarify the existing time requirement for the boarding and launching of survival craft.

The Sub-Committee also agreed draft Performance standards for the systems and
The Sub-Committee discussed proposals for a draft new SOLAS regulation on gangways and accommodation ladders.

Emergency towing - draft SOLAS amendments agreed

The Sub-Committee agreed in principle to draft SOLAS amendments to revise the existing regulation II-1/3-4 Emergency towing arrangements on tankers and replace it with a regulation on Emergency towing arrangements and procedures.

The proposed revised regulation would add a new paragraph on Emergency towing procedures on ships, which would require all ships to carry on board details of their emergency towing procedure, to include drawings showing possible emergency towing arrangements, an inventory of equipment that can be used for towing, means and method of communication and sample procedures to facilitate emergency towing operations. It was agreed to split the date of entry into force into two phases: one date for new ships, existing cargo ships of not less than 20,000 dwt, and existing passenger ships; and another date for existing cargo ships of less than 20,000 dwt two years later.

Inspection and survey requirements for accommodation ladders

The Sub-Committee, noting concern about the number of accidents involving pilot ladders, some of which have resulted in fatalities, discussed proposals for a draft new SOLAS regulation II-1/3-9 on Means of access to and egress from ships and related guidelines for inspection and survey for accommodation and pilot ladders as well as a proposal for a draft new SOLAS regulation on Gangways and accommodation ladders. There was general agreement on the need to discuss inspection and survey requirements for accommodation and pilot ladders further at the next session.

In the meantime, the Sub-Committee agreed to a draft MSC circular on Means of embarkation on and disembarkation from ships, for submission to MSC 81 for approval. The circular is intended to make Member Governments aware of the existing problems regarding adequate inspection and maintenance of accommodation and pilot ladders. It recommends that, in an effort to reduce the number of accidents involving means of access to and from ships, and the resulting loss of life and injury, Administrations should review and update, as necessary, any existing national requirements relating to the means of access to and from ships, as well as the associated survey and inspection provisions.

Oily wastes in machinery spaces

The Sub-Committee agreed draft Revised Guidelines for systems for handling oily wastes in machinery spaces of ships and the Guidelines for integrated bilge water treatment systems (IBTS), for submission to the Marine Environment Protection Committee (MEPC) 54 for approval.

The revised guidelines and guidelines on IBTS are intended to replace the existing guidelines (MEPC/Circ.235) by adding a reference to IBTS and replacing “100 ppm” with “15 ppm” with reference to discharge equipment for bilge water and oily waste, to take into account the requirements in MARPOL, under which the permitted oil content of the effluent which may be discharged into the sea is 15 parts per million (this was reduced from 100 ppm by the 1992 MARPOL amendments).

IBTS is designed to minimize the amount of the oily bilge water generated in machinery spaces by treating the leaked water and oil separately and also by providing integrated means to process the oily bilge water and oil residue (sludge).

Unified Interpretations

The Sub-Committee agreed to a draft MSC circular on Amendments to unified interpretations to SOLAS chapters II-1 and XII approved by MSC/Circ.1176, for submission to MSC 81 for approval. The unified interpretations covered include those related to water level detectors installed on bulk carriers in compliance with SOLAS regulation XII/12; access hatchways and ladders on oil tankers in relation to SOLAS regulation II-1/3-6, paragraph 3.2; and fuel oil service tanks in relation to SOLAS Regulation II-1/26.11.

Review of the SPS Code

A review of the Code of Safety for Special Purpose Ships (SPS Code) was initiated and a correspondence group was established to further the work intersessionally. The original SPS Code was adopted in 1983 and amendments may be needed to reflect amendments to SOLAS adopted since then as well as experience gained in the application of the Code. In particular, the SPS Code could be amended to make clearer its application to training ships, in order to establish common international regulations for ships used on training programmes.

MODU Code amendments

The Sub-Committee established a correspondence group to develop draft amendments to the Code for the Construction and Equipment of Mobile Offshore Drilling Units (MODU Code), to bring it up to date and into line with relevant requirements in SOLAS.

www.imo.org. No.1 2006 IMO NEWS 27
New impetus for co-ordinated approach to ship recycling through new legally binding instrument

A Joint Working Group on ship scrapping, established by IMO, the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the Parties to the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal, has concluded its second meeting.

Since the first meeting of the Joint Working Group in February 2005, the IMO’s Assembly has adopted a resolution seeking the development of a legally binding instrument on ship recycling. This instrument would provide global regulations on the design, construction, operation and preparation of ships so as to facilitate safe and environmentally sound recycling. It would also encompass the operation of environmentally sound ship recycling and the establishment of an appropriate enforcement mechanism for ship recycling.

As the IMO resolution notes, the Joint Working Group can make recommendations for consideration in the development of the new instrument. In this light, first substantive discussions took place on issues of direct relevance to the three Organizations. These are:

- The experience of prior informed consent for ship recycling between States;
- Requirements of a reporting system for ships destined for scrapping;
- Basic principles of an applicable control mechanism;
- Pre-cleaning and preparation of ships;
- Practical approaches that promote occupational health and safety and environmentally sound management of ship scrapping; and
- Possible roles of concerned States, such as flag States, port States and recycling States in the context of occupational health and safety and the environmentally sound management of ship scrapping and the potential benefits of a mandatory ship recycling plan.

In parallel to the development of a new instrument on ship recycling, an International Ship Recycling Fund is expected to be established by IMO in May 2006.

The Joint Working Group also discussed progress made in ongoing activities such as the promotion of the implementation of Guidelines on ship recycling, the examination of relevant ILO, IMO and Basel Convention Guidelines on ship recycling, as well as joint technical co-operation activities. An IMO workshop on technical aspects of ship recycling earlier this year in Izmir, Turkey, was noted as a useful precedent for the participation of the three Organizations in each other’s activities.

The Joint Working Group recommended that each Organization invite the other two Organizations to participate in the workshops or seminars organized by the Organization and that each Organization include in the programme of its activities a section providing information on the Guidelines of the other two Organizations. Governments and other stakeholders are also invited to provide information to the three Organizations on any technical co-operation activities or other relevant initiatives already launched or planned so that these activities could be taken into account in the future technical co-operation programmes of the Organizations.

The Joint Working Group was set up by the three Organizations to act as a platform for consultation, co-ordination and co-operation in relation to their activities on ship scrapping. The Group aims to promote a co-ordinated approach in order to avoid duplicating work and overlapping roles, responsibilities and competencies between the three Organizations. It also aims at identifying further needs relating to ship scrapping globally.

SAFEMED project launched at IMO

The SAFEMED project for Euro-Mediterranean Co-operation on Maritime Safety and Prevention of Pollution from Ships has been launched at the Headquarters of the International Maritime Organization (IMO) in London.

SAFEMED is a €4 million EU-funded regional project established under the MEDA* programme which is to be implemented by the IMO-administered Regional Marine Pollution Emergency Response Centre for the Mediterranean Sea (REMPEC). SAFEMED will focus on:

- flag State implementation and monitoring of classification societies;
- safety of navigation and traffic monitoring;
- protection of the marine environment;
- human element issues; and
- security of ships and port facilities.

REMPEC representatives outlined the main features of the project at the launch, which was attended by representatives of IMO, EU Member States, the European Commission (EC) and beneficiary countries. The launch coincided with the 24th session of the IMO Assembly, which was held during December last year.

The Project will be implemented by REMPEC during 2006-2008 in ten Mediterranean Partner countries** - Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, the Palestinian Authority, Syria, Tunisia and Turkey - under the overall co-ordination of the EC and with technical backstopping from IMO.

The primary objective of the SAFEMED project is to harmonize the application of maritime legislation in the region between the Mediterranean Partners that are not members of the EU, and those that are members, through promoting coherent, effective and uniform implementation of the relevant international conventions and rules aimed at better protection of the marine environment in the Mediterranean region. Specific activities under SAFEMED will include training courses and seminars, needs’ assessment, capacity building, preparing for the Voluntary IMO Member State Audit Scheme and establishment and maintenance of a dedicated SAFEMED website.

* The MEDA programme is the principal financial instrument of the European Union for the implementation of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership. The programme offers technical and financial support measures to accompany the reform of economic and social structures in the Mediterranean Partners.

** Refers to the “Mediterranean Partners” as defined in the 1995 Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (Barcelona Process), a wide framework of political, economic and social relations between the Member States of the European Union and Partners of the Southern Mediterranean.
IMO and Interferry sign agreement on ferry safety

IMO and the non-governmental industry organization Interferry have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) formalizing the two Organizations’ intent to work together towards enhancing the safety of non-Convention ferries by collaborating, through IMO’s Integrated Technical Co-operation Programme, on related capacity-building activities within developing countries.

Under the agreement, the two Organizations will work closely with interested parties such as Bangladesh, which has been selected as a pilot country for the Organizations’ work, with the aim of identifying potential solutions to increasing ferry safety. The two Organizations have agreed to share certain costs and IMO will seek financial support from governments and multilateral funding organizations. Interferry will reach out to private sector ferry operators and its own members, as well as other international private sector organizations, to inform them of the initiative and seek their support, as well as seeking the assistance of private sector ferry operators in the pilot country itself.

The two Organizations will also collaborate on the preparation of materials and documentation to support the operation of a national working group in the pilot country which will seek to involve all stakeholders in improving ferry safety.

The MoU takes the form of a general framework for co-operation. Following the signature, the next step will be to conduct a detailed, research-based analysis of the problems prior to the establishment of the working group in the pilot country, in which a variety of stakeholders, as well as experts, will be invited to participate.

The purpose of the working group will be to select sites, identify the issues to be addressed, highlight the obstacles that need to be overcome and suggest solutions that could be implemented. At this stage, three pilot projects are being anticipated in different parts of Bangladesh, each site selected to focus on a particular issue.

Following the outcome of the working group the next phase is anticipated to be a larger Government-approved project within Bangladesh looking at issues such as overcrowding; terminal management, vessel design and management, passenger-carrying arrangements, stowage, hazardous weather, crew training and certification systems as well as other issues raised by the working group. The lessons learnt from this project will serve as a model for projects in other countries needing to address ferry safety.

The MoU was signed on behalf of IMO by Secretary-General Efthimios E. Mitropoulos and for Interferry by Mr. Alexander Panagopulos, Director of the Interferry board. Both men reiterated the crucial importance of making progress in a sector which has seen a number of tragic accidents with considerable loss of life in recent years.

Former chairmen honoured

Tom Allan and Alfred Popp, two highly respected former IMO committee chairmen, have been honoured at a reception in London given by the United States. Pictured, from left: Admiral Thomas H. Collins, Commandant, United States Coast Guard; His Excellency Mr. Robert H. Tuttle, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary, American Embassy, London; Mr. Alfred H.E. Popp, QC, former Chairman of the IMO Legal Committee, Senior General Counsel, Transport Canada; Mr. Tom Allan, former Chairman of the Maritime Safety Committee, former United Kingdom Permanent Representative to IMO, Maritime and Coastguard Agency; Mr. Efthimios E. Mitropoulos, Secretary-General, IMO; Rear Admiral Thomas Gilmour, Assistant Commandant for Marine Safety, Security and Environmental Protection, United States Coast Guard.
Robert Holmes Tuttle, the Ambassador of the United States to the United Kingdom, has signed the Protocols to the Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts against the Safety of Maritime Navigation (SUA) that were adopted by IMO last October.

The 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), were adopted by a Diplomatic Conference on the Revision of the SUA Treaties, 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. 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 Protocol is already in force.

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