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PASSENGER SHIP PROGRAMME REACHES CONCLUSION

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The growing popularity of cruising and the increasing size of cruise ships were among the factors that prompted IMO to initiate a wholesale review of passenger vessel safety – a review which has now been successfully completed. See pages 7 and 23-28 for details.

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E-navigation; a glimpse into the future?

The potential hazards involved in the navigation of ships are many and familiar to us all – grounding, collision, weather damage and so on. However, the traditional hardware designed to aid navigational safety – lights, buoys, channel markers and the like, in association with the corresponding shipborne navigational equipment – is today being supplemented and gradually superseded by a new generation of information-based tools such as Vessel Traffic Services - VTS, the Automatic Identification System - AIS, the Global Positioning System - GPS, electronic charts, vessel reporting schemes, satellite tracking and others.

Technology today is presenting us with an opportunity to re-assess in a fundamental way the whole concept of navigational aids, both onboard and ashore – an opportunity to make changes that will be far-reaching in extent and which can have a significant, beneficial impact long into the future.

Not only do these technologies hold the promise of reducing navigational errors and accidents, they also have the potential to deliver benefits in other ways. Search and rescue, responding to pollution incidents, ship and port security and the protection of critical marine resources, such as fishing grounds, are among those that spring most readily to mind. They can also offer operational benefits: imagine the potential of a system that can make available in advance detailed information on vessel arrival and cargo arrival; or, the ability to ease through put and, thereby, effectively increase capacity in ports, fairways and waterways suffering from chronic congestion or, even simply poor visibility – it would be invaluable.

Technological advances of this kind must be developed in a co-ordinated and structured manner. A lack of standardization both on board ships and in shoreside infrastructure (with its attendant problems of incompatibility either between vessels, or between vessels and shore-based facilities) and increased and unnecessary levels of complexity, clearly has to be avoided.

There is no doubt that we are now entering a crucial stage in the development of what has become known by the “catch-all” designation of “e-navigation”. Many of the building blocks are in place, but the global strategic vision needed to ensure that the new generation of navigational tools, available to us now and in the near future, can be drawn together in a holistic and systematic manner or, in other words, into an all-embracing system, is still at an embryonic stage.

At the 81st meeting of IMO’s Maritime Safety Committee, a paper was presented jointly by a number of countries – Japan, the Marshall Islands, the Netherlands, Norway, Singapore, the United Kingdom and the United States – proposing the addition of a new item, on the development of an e-navigation strategy, to the work programmes of the Organization’s Sub-Committees on Safety of Navigation and on Radiocommunications and Search and Rescue. This proposal was duly approved and the related developmental work is scheduled for completion, in those two Sub-Committees, by 2008. Their mandate is to consider all related issues with the aim of developing a strategic vision to take the matter forward and thus enable the Committee to develop the necessary policy direction to progress the concept further.

This is an important and potentially far-reaching decision and is greatly to be welcomed. No-one can doubt the compelling need to equip ships’ masters and others responsible for the safety of shipping with the very latest tools to make navigation – and maritime communications – more reliable and thereby reduce errors, especially those with a potential for loss of life, injury, environmental damage and undue commercial costs. More substantial and widespread benefits for States, shipowners and seafarers can be expected to arise from the increased safety at sea, which should be the core objective of e-navigation.
IMO adopts guidelines on fair treatment of seafarers

Guidelines on fair treatment of seafarers in the event of a maritime accident were adopted by the IMO’s Legal Committee in April. The guidelines, developed by a Joint IMO/ILO Ad Hoc Expert Working Group on the Fair Treatment of Seafarers in the Event of a Maritime Accident, have also been adopted by the ILO Governing Body.

The objective of the guidelines is to ensure that seafarers are treated fairly following a maritime accident and during any investigation and detention by public authorities and that detention is for no longer than necessary. Seafarers are recognized as a special category of worker, the guidelines state. Given the global nature of the shipping industry and the different jurisdictions with which they may be brought into contact, they need special protection, especially in relation to contact with public authorities. The guidelines recommend that they be observed in all instances where seafarers may be detained by public authorities in the event of a maritime accident.

The Guidelines give advice on steps to be taken by all those who may be involved following an incident: the port or coastal State, flag State, the seafarer’s State, the shipowner and seafarers themselves. The emphasis is on co-operation and communication between those involved and in ensuring that no discriminatory or retaliatory measures are taken against seafarers because of their participation in investigations. The guidelines say that all necessary measures should be taken to ensure the fair treatment of seafarers.

The Joint IMO/ILO Ad Hoc Expert Working Group on the Fair Treatment of Seafarers in the Event of a Maritime Accident was established in 2005 to work on the development of appropriate guidelines for endorsement by IMO and ILO. A resolution prepared by the Group and subsequently adopted jointly by the IMO Assembly and the ILO Governing Body last December (A.987(24)) states that both IMO and ILO are seriously concerned about the need to ensure the fair treatment of seafarers in view of the growing use of criminal proceedings against seafarers after a maritime accident. The resolution recognizes the urgency of adopting Guidelines as a matter of priority and, to this end, requested the Group to finalise its work expeditiously. The Group completed this task in March 2006.

Speaking at the close of the Legal Committee meeting, IMO Secretary-General Efthimios E. Mitropoulos told delegates: “The adoption of guidelines on fair treatment of seafarers has marked a highlight of this session. By doing so, you were able, in a genuine demonstration of the IMO spirit of co-operation and compromise, to take the collective decision that it was vital to promulgate these guidelines by consensus as soon as possible and so to send a clear signal to seafarers around the world that it is the wish of the IMO family that they should be treated fairly. I am sure it will be appreciated by the maritime community at large and the seafarers in particular.”

Member Governments are invited, in the resolution, to implement the Guidelines as from 1 July 2006.

Canada supports IMO security activities

IMO’s Global Technical Co-operation Programme on Maritime Security has received a significant boost in the form of a grant from Canada of $500,000 Canadian Dollars over two fiscal years (2006/2007). The grant was made by Canada’s Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, through its Counter-Terrorism Capacity Building Program.

The specific activities to be supported by the grant include regional seminars/workshops on maritime security for the Caribbean region and Central America, national maritime security train-the-trainer courses in the Arab States and needs assessment and advisory missions in Asia.

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

The Programme was initiated in January 2002 and has included many activities aimed at enhancing maritime security and in particular the implementation of the maritime security measures adopted by IMO. Since its launch, 41 regional or subregional and 59 national workshops, seminars or training courses have been delivered. In addition, 32 country needs’ assessment and advisory missions have been fielded, with some 4,380 people having been trained in the process.

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New MRCC helps close gap in Indian Ocean SAR coverage

A massive gap in the effective search and rescue coverage along the east coast of Africa and out into the Indian Ocean has been filled with the inauguration in May of a new Maritime Rescue Co-ordination Centre (MRCC) in Mombasa, Kenya. The MRCC was commissioned by IMO Secretary-General Efthimios E. Mitropoulos during an official visit to Kenya and Tanzania (see p.32).

The regional search and rescue system that has been put in place is the result of a resolution adopted by the IMO Conference on search and rescue (SAR) and the Global Maritime Distress and Safety System (GMDSS), held in October 2000 in Florence, Italy, proposing the establishment of five sub-regional MRCCs in western, southern and eastern parts of Africa. A second MRCC under this initiative is expected to be inaugurated in Cape Town, South Africa, before the end of this year, while three more, in West Africa, are currently at the planning stage.

Along with its associated Maritime Rescue Sub-Centres (MRSCs) in Victoria (Seychelles) and Dar es Salaam (Tanzania), the Mombasa MRCC will provide search and rescue coverage in what had previously been identified as one of the areas suffering unduly from a lack of adequate SAR and GMDSS facilities.

The successful fruition of this project has been based on a broad co-operation between the three host Governments, IMO and stakeholders from the international and non-governmental sectors. The contribution of the host countries, which have provided the housing facilities and personnel for the operation of the centres, has underpinned its success. Private donors (through Inmarsat plc and IMSO) have contributed equipment, while IMO, as project leader within the framework of its Integrated Technical Co-operation Programme, has collaborated with all parties concerned, co-ordinated the various responsibilities in the provision of expert advice, training and infrastructure and provided the overall supervision.

The Mombasa MRCC and the two MBSCs have been funded through the International SAR Fund (ISAR Fund), the establishment of which was approved by the IMO Council in June 2004 to cover, initially, the establishment of the five regional MRCCs and 26 MRSCs in Africa. The ISAR Fund is a multi-donor trust fund, under the auspices of the Secretary-General. It is designed to assist countries which do not have the resources to put into place an adequate SAR infrastructure and, by doing so, boost IMO’s efforts to implement the Global Search and Rescue Plan, agreed at the related IMO Conference held in 1998 in Fremantle, Australia. To establish the Mombasa MRCC, funds were also used from the Tsunami Maritime Relief Fund established by IMO soon after the catastrophe suffered by the Indian Ocean countries in the wake of the tsunami of 26 December 2004.

Secretary-General Mitropoulos described the new facility as an excellent example of what could be achieved when the need is sufficiently compelling and the will to succeed is sufficiently strong. He said that the experience gained should serve as an example for other regions to follow.

He added, “It also provides an excellent example of how IMO’s technical co-operation activities can yield demonstrable, effective results that serve the greater good of all – and, incidentally, it reflects very well the theme for this year’s World Maritime Day, which is ‘Technical Co-operation: IMO’s response to the 2005 World Summit’, in which we intend to place special emphasis on the maritime needs of Africa.”
Passenger vessel initiative reaches successful conclusion

IMO, through its Maritime Safety Committee (MSC), has brought to a successful conclusion its wide-ranging work programme on passenger ship safety, an initiative which, prompted by former Secretary-General William O’Neil, was launched at MSC 72 in 2000.

A working group on large passenger ship safety began work at the 73rd session of the MSC in November-December of that year, and has continued with input from the cruise industry and Member States who have carried out studies into many aspects of passenger ship safety and other areas of potential concern. The work was concluded at the 81st session of the MSC in May 2006 (see p.23).

Since 2001, the Sub-Committees on Radiocommunications and Search and Rescue, Ship Design and Equipment, Fire Protection, Safety of Navigation, Stability, Load lines and Fishing Vessel Safety and Standards of Training and Watchkeeping have been working on tasks assigned to them and have reported back to the MSC.

The work has reflected IMO’s proactive stance on future legislation and included the use of tools such as formal safety assessment, used in other areas of IMO’s work such as bulk carrier safety. The work has based 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.

It was noted at MSC 81 that, with regard to the so-called “five pillars” of the guiding philosophy for the passenger ship safety initiative, the following have been achieved since the work on passenger ship safety was first initiated:

Prevention: Amendments to SOLAS and the STCW Conventions and supporting guidelines that focus on fire prevention, navigation safety, training and contingency planning.

Improved survivability: Amendments to SOLAS chapters II-1 and II-2 and supporting guidelines that focus on essential system redundancy, management of emergencies and casualty mitigation.

Regulatory flexibility: Amendments to SOLAS chapters II-1 and III and supporting guidelines that focus on promoting, through rigorous evaluation and approval procedures, the regulatory approval of new safety technologies and arrangements.

Operations in areas remote from SAR facilities: Action taken to develop amendments to SOLAS chapter III and supporting guidelines that will focus on reducing the time it takes to recover persons from survival craft and the water, supporting guidelines approved on external support from SAR Authorities and guidance to assist seafarers taking part in SAR operations.

Health safety and medical care: Supporting guidelines that focus on establishing medical safety programmes and a revised Guide on Cold Water Survival.

Speaking at the conclusion of MSC 81, IMO Secretary-General Efthimios E. Mitropoulos said the approval of draft SOLAS amendments and a number of associated guidance documents relating to passenger ship safety were landmark decisions. He told delegates, “All of us should feel justly proud of the fact that the Committee rose to the challenge set by MSC 72 and approved a noteworthy set of SOLAS amendments that, once adopted, will significantly enhance the safety of passenger ships and aid in the rescue of persons at sea. The long list of annexes and circulars finalized by the Committee on this issue demonstrates the massive work accomplished by it and by the various Sub-Committees involved.”

MSC adopts SOLAS amendments on LRIT

The Maritime Safety Committee adopted new regulations on Long-Range Identification and Tracking of ships (LRIT), together with associated performance standards and functional requirements, when it met for its 81st session from 10 to 19 May 2006 (see page 23).

The new regulation on LRIT is included in SOLAS chapter V on Safety of Navigation, through which LRIT will be introduced as a mandatory requirement for the following ships on international voyages: passenger ships, including high-speed craft; cargo ships, including high-speed craft, of 300 gross tonnage and upwards; and mobile offshore drilling units.

The SOLAS regulation on LRIT establishes a multilateral agreement for sharing LRIT information for security and search and rescue purposes, amongst SOLAS Contracting Governments, in order to meet the maritime security needs and other concerns of the SOLAS Contracting Governments. It maintains the right of flag States to protect information about the ships entitled to fly their flag, where appropriate, while allowing coastal States’ access to information about ships navigating off their coasts. The SOLAS regulation on LRIT does not create or affirm any new rights of States over ships beyond that existing in international law, particularly, the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) nor does it alter or affect the rights, jurisdiction, duties and obligations of States in connection with UNCLOS.

The LRIT information ships will be required to transmit includes the ship’s identity, location and date and time of the position. There will be no interface between LRIT and AIS. One of the more important distinctions between LRIT and AIS, apart from the obvious one of range, is that, whereas AIS is a broadcast system, data derived through LRIT will be available only to the recipients who are entitled to receive such information and safeguards concerning the confidentiality of those data have been built into the regulatory provisions. Contracting Governments will be entitled to receive information about ships navigating within a distance not exceeding 1000 nautical miles off their coasts.

The regulation foresees a phased-in implementation schedule for ships constructed before its expected entry into force date of 1 January 2008 and an exemption for ships operating exclusively in sea area A1 from the requirement to transmit LRIT information, since such ships are already fitted with AIS. It also identifies which authorities may have access to LRIT information.

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Second IMO - EC meeting reinforces working relationship

At the invitation of Mr. Jacques Barrot, Vice-President of the European Commission and Commissioner for Transport, IMO Secretary-General, Efthimios E. Mitropoulos, visited the Headquarters of the European Commission in Brussels, in March, within the framework of cooperation between the two sides aimed at promoting maritime safety and security and environmental protection. The meeting was the second between the two, following Mr. Barrot’s visit to the IMO Headquarters in February 2005.

The following topics were discussed during the meeting:
- the Commission’s Third Maritime Safety Package;
- EU competencies and IMO treaties;
- the Green Paper on Ocean and Seas; and
- EC membership of IMO and relations between the two institutions.

The two sides reiterated their basic agreement concerning IMO’s leading role worldwide in the development and adoption of global technical maritime standards, while recognizing the European Union’s efforts aimed at enhanced maritime safety and, in particular, at ensuring a harmonized and controlled implementation of IMO rules in Europe and its contribution to their regular updating and improvement through the IMO mechanisms.

“I believe in strong co-operation between the European Commission and the International Maritime Organization. With thousands of kilometres of coastline and a fleet of some 11,000 ships controlled by European owners, Europe can make a meaningful contribution to safe, quality shipping worldwide. Regular meetings between Efthimios Mitropoulos and me will allow for mutually reinforcing European maritime transport and IMO policies” said Mr. Barrot.

In this respect, Mr. Barrot reiterated the desire of the EU to attain the highest possible standards and its determination to lead the way in this regard. The latest proposals adopted by the European Commission as its 3rd Maritime Safety Package were a case in point since they sought to serve, taking into account IMO rules and recommendations, the dual purpose of improving accident and pollution prevention and dealing with the aftermath of accidents.

Mr. Mitropoulos welcomed this ambition, noted the Commission’s intention to incorporate IMO rules and recommendations into Community law and stressed the importance of the pursuit of the highest practicable standards through IMO, together with any experience gained in their effective implementation and enforcement, so that international shipping as a whole might benefit. Mr. Mitropoulos added, “The two sides work in partnership to enhance safety, security and the protection of the marine environment and I appreciate the leading role that the EU members and the European Commission play in the efforts of IMO to develop and adopt the highest practicable accepted standards affecting shipping engaged in international trade”.

With many of the most significant IMO treaties, such as the SOLAS, Load Lines, STCW and MARPOL Conventions now applying to more than 90 per cent of global merchant tonnage, Mr. Mitropoulos spoke of the desirability of bringing other IMO instruments, such as those dealing with ballast water management, anti-fouling systems, hazardous and noxious substances and bunkers, into force at the earliest possible date. He stressed the significant part that EU members could play through their early ratification of such measures and the example they could set by so doing.

Both parties also exchanged views on how the relationship between IMO and the European Union could be strengthened.

The two sides expressed satisfaction with the positive and constructive outcome of their deliberations, which provided both with an opportunity to present their views and become aware of each other’s position on the issues discussed. They agreed to keep an open dialogue to promote the many areas of common interest in a manner benefiting international shipping and to meet on a half-yearly basis in the future.

Jacques Barrot, Vice-President of the European Commission and Commissioner for Transport (left) and Secretary-General Mitropoulos reiterated their basic agreement concerning IMO’s leading role worldwide in the development and adoption of global technical maritime standards.

Founding father of World Maritime University dies

Professor Günther Zade, founding father and former Vice-Rector and Academic Dean of the World Maritime University (WMU), has died in Germany. He was 70.

Professor Zade was involved with the design and establishment of the WMU prior to its opening in Malmo, Sweden, in July 1983 and he then dedicated his life and intellect to the creation and progressive development of the University. As Vice-Rector and Academic Dean of WMU, he contributed directly and positively towards the wellbeing and academic achievement of the University and, more importantly, those of its students. Even after his retirement in 2001, he continued to serve WMU as a research fellow and became editor of the WMU Journal of Maritime Affairs.

To honour the memory of Professor Zade, WMU is to establish the annual Günther Zade Lecture, to be held in connection with the annual meeting of the University’s international Board of Governors. Distinguished experts from the international maritime education milieu will speak on issues of maritime education and training, to which Professor Zade devoted his professional life.

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Containerised cargo security - a case for “joined-up” government

By Chris Trelawny,
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The views expressed in this article are those of the author. This article appeared first in Containerisation International

Not only did the devastating terrorist acts of 11 September 2001 in the United States accelerate the development and adoption of maritime security procedures by the IMO, they also raised the spectre of terrorist organizations using ships as weapons _per se_, or as delivery systems for weapons of mass destruction (WMD). Nightmare scenarios of “dirty bombs” and biological agents in containers, or LNG, LPG or chemical carriers being triggered to explode in ports of destination, gained in credibility.

However, it is important to bear in mind that containerised cargo security systems and procedures should not just be concerned with the prevention of terrorist acts. Losses through theft of cargo amount to billions of dollars per year and the costs must ultimately be borne by customers and end users through increased insurance and transportation costs. Seafarers’ lives and ships are lost and environments are damaged through the transportation of undeclared, improperly described and badly packed dangerous goods. The trafficking of illicit drugs arguably kills more people and has a far more detrimental effect on society over time than terrorist attacks. The smuggling and diversion of weapons in contravention of national laws and internationally agreed arms embargoes; the illegal migration and trafficking of men, women and children; and the smuggling of nuclear materials and precursors for WMD are all challenges that need to be addressed. If we factor into this mixture the wider issues of protection of national revenues, environmental, and cultural concerns, and the need to deprive terrorist organizations of funding, it becomes clear that a co-ordinated approach to cargo security is necessary.

IMO’s response to “9/11” was swift and dramatic. The Conference of Contracting Governments to the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS), 1974, held in London in December 2002, adopted amendments to SOLAS, specifically the new chapter XI-2 on “Special measures to enhance maritime security”, and the International Ship and Port Facility Security (ISPS) Code. The new regulatory regime entered into force on 1 July 2004. The security of maritime cargo and, in particular, containerised maritime cargo, poses challenges from both the legislative and technical viewpoints. As the competent body for all aspects of maritime transport, the IMO took the pragmatic decision to link the new security regime to SOLAS rather than to develop a new instrument mainly because that was the quickest way of introducing effective measures.

The trade-off for the time gained in linking maritime security to SOLAS was that SOLAS has limited jurisdiction on land. (As its name implies, it is concerned with the safety of life at sea). As most of the security-sensitive parts of the cargo operation take place on land, either in the port area or further inland, it was clear that other vehicles for addressing cargo and container security needed to be found. The 2002 SOLAS Conference therefore passed resolutions on the enhancement of security in co-operation with the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the World Customs Organization (WCO) to broaden the scope of the maritime security regime ashore.

The co-operation with the ILO has led, amongst other things, to the development of the ILO/IMO Code of practice on security in ports. Not only does this useful document extend the functional requirements of the ISPS Code into the wider port area, thus addressing some aspects of cargo security, it also provides guidance on effective co-operation, co-ordination and communication of security, as well as a practical methodology for threat and risk assessment.

Of even greater significance for container security was the co-operation with the WCO. The WCO was requested to consider urgently measures to enhance security throughout international movements of closed cargo transport units (closed CTUs). Operative paragraph 3 of Conference resolution 9 “agrees that the [SOLAS] Convention should be amended, if and when appropriate, to give effect to relevant decisions taken by the WCO and endorsed by the Contracting Governments to the Convention insofar as these relate to the carriage of closed CTUs by sea”.

In June 2004, the WCO Council tasked an _ad hoc_ High Level Strategic Group of the representative Directors General of Customs from across all WCO regions to draw together, by June 2005, the measures and instruments to...
enhance the security of the international supply chain, which the WCO Task Force developed between June 2002 and April 2003, into a Framework of Standards to secure and facilitate global trade (the Framework of Standards).

The Framework of Standards was developed with four principles in mind, namely that customs services would undertake to harmonize advance electronic information; to use a consistent risk-management approach; use non-intrusive detection equipment; and lead to the accrual of benefits to customs, business and ultimately nations. At its heart were two ‘pillars’, the Customs-to-Customs pillar and the Customs-to-Business pillar, each of which is supported by broadly-defined outline standards. The Framework of Standards was unanimously adopted by Directors General of 166 Customs Administrations meeting at the 105th/106th Sessions of the WCO Council, held in Brussels from 23 to 25 June 2005.

The Framework of Standards, per se, is the start of the process and specific standards on cargo security will need to be developed and agreed. The WCO believes that implementation of the Framework of Standards measures will assist security and customs authorities to enhance their risk assessment capabilities and therefore adopt a “smarter” approach to targeting closed CTUs for inspection. As this activity will be primarily based on assessment of documentation and confirmation of the integrity of supply chain security, it is unlikely to have an appreciable effect on the way that containers are physically handled, but it may enhance the speed with which they are cleared for shipment.

There are compelling arguments for using customs authorities in the security process. As the WCO Framework of Standards document points out: “Customs administrations have important powers that exist nowhere else in government - the authority to inspect cargo and goods shipped into, through and out of a country. Customs also have the authority to refuse entry or exit and the authority to expedite entry. Customs administrations require information about goods being imported, and often require information about goods exported. They can, with appropriate legislation, require that information to be provided in advance and electronically. Given the unique authorities and expertise, Customs can and should play a central role in the security and facilitation of global trade. However, a holistic approach is required to optimize the securing of the international trade supply chain while ensuring continued improvements in trade facilitation. Customs should therefore be encouraged to develop co-operative arrangements with other government agencies”.

It is these co-operative arrangements that are the key to success in maritime cargo security.

One of the main challenges to using customs authorities in the cargo security role is their operational culture. Customs have traditionally been more focussed on what is coming into the country rather than what is going out. Whereas this works well for revenue protection and detection of contraband, if maritime security measures are to be effective, they must be implemented prior to departure rather than at the point of arrival. Put simply, if a ship carrying a containerised dirty bomb is not subject to security control until it reaches the port of destination, it may well be too late. Similarly, many traditional maritime control procedures required under SOLAS, for example, port State control for safety purposes, are also concentrated on the point of arrival. Some international programmes, for example the United States’ Container Security Initiative (CSI) (and to a certain extent the overseas end of the Customs - Trade Partnership Against Terrorism (C-TPAT)) have sought to address this issue by transferring the onus for security checks to the point of departure. This, issues of extra-territoriality and sovereignty notwithstanding, is a step in the right direction and echoes the aviation model of “host State responsibility”.

Any cargo security system must involve a considerable degree of liaison between the security practitioners and customs authorities, at least at the policy and legal levels. In many States, international cargo travels under customs bond. Many storage and loading areas in ports and port facilities are customs-controlled areas. What, therefore, are the legal implications for a port facility or ship security officer who wishes to check the contents of a container? Even once the issue of legal right-of-access has been settled and procedures have been agreed, there is also the whole issue of facilitation and co-ordination of inspection between the various control authorities. Opening a container for inspection by customs, re-sealing it, opening it for inspection by port health authorities, re-sealing it, opening it for inspection by security, re-sealing it and so on, would be extremely inefficient and time consuming and therefore delaying. Such practices would also leave little chance of maintaining a credible audit trail for security purposes and would also considerably increase the chances of the ill-disposed (be they corrupt officials or otherwise) adding to or depleting, the contents of the container.

The key question is: which containers need to be checked, and for what? One thing is certain, that you cannot screen them all effectively. From a counter-terrorist security perspective,
While high-technology solutions such as container-screening systems at ports and port facilities, coupled with the use of smart seals, have a part to play, their effectiveness may be limited (pic: Leghorn).

The Governmental buy-in to this would be in the form of national legislation empowering control authorities to delegate some of their functions to the consignors and/or cargo-handling agents, through the application of agreed cargo-security plans. This would have to be matched with appropriate powers for the control authorities to oversee compliance with the agreed plans by the “regulated agents”.

The benefit to the industry of such an approach could be that regulated agents would be able to “fast track” their containers through export controls. The threat of losing regulated agent status, thus losing economic benefits of the fast track facility, should be enough incentive to maintain compliance by the shippers. The benefits to the control authorities would be a ready-made risk assessment process, thus allowing them to concentrate on the higher risk exporters who do not qualify for regulated agent status, coupled with an auditable trail for investigating irregularities.

The regulation process could vary in complexity according to the individual national need. For example, individual agents could be regulated in respect of security, customs and revenue (“approved economic operators” in WCO parlance), carriage of dangerous goods, licensable goods, etc., or any combination thereof.

As a further incentive for compliance, and using the WCO’s “customs-to-customs” model, importing States could also “fast track” clearance of consignments received from regulated agents, subject to the regulated having a clean record. Any irregularities found by control authorities in the importing State during the course of random inspection, could be referred back to the relevant control authorities in the originating State.

The implementation, by Governments, of a regulated agent system for maritime supply chain security, based upon the WCO Framework of Standards model, could have significant benefits for increasing safety and security while at the same time enhancing the facilitation of international trade. Procedural security measures, consistent with the approach of ISO, would enhance the effectiveness of such an approach, while at the same time building confidence in the integrity of the system. For such a system to work will require the commitment of all Government agencies concerned with cross-border controls and security.

Surely the logical solution to all of this is a partnership between Governments, control authorities and security agencies, consignors, companies and cargo-handling agents.

The logical place to apply the security is at the source, i.e. where the containers are stuffed. Once the contents have been established as being correct, non-threatening and legal, procedural security measures such as the use of seals, control of access, correct documentation and verifiable handling procedures can be applied. This then removes the need for further screening or searching of the containers at the port or port facility, except on a random sampling basis.
IMO Publishing
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Code of Safe Practice for Solid Bulk Cargoes (BC Code), 2004
ID260E, English ..........................................................£30.00
ID260F, French ..........................................................£30.00
ID260S, Spanish ..................................................£30.00

Condition Assessment Scheme (CAS)
IS30E, English ..........................................................£10.00

IA749E, English ..........................................................£18.00
IA749F, French ..........................................................£18.00
IA749S, Spanish ..................................................£18.00

Code of Safety for Fishermen & Fishing Vessels, Part B - Safety and Health Requirements for the Construction and Equipment of Fishing Vessels, 2005
IA755E, English ..........................................................£18.00
IA755F, French ..........................................................£18.00
IA755S, Spanish ..................................................£18.00

ID962E, English ..........................................................£30.00
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COMSAR agrees draft performance standards and functional requirements for LRIT

Draft performance standards and functional requirements for the Long-Range Identification and Tracking (LRIT) were agreed by the Sub-Committee on Radiocommunications and Search and Rescue (COMSAR) when it met for its 10th session. The draft standards were forwarded to the Maritime Safety Committee (MSC 81) for consideration (see page 23).

The proposed draft SOLAS regulation on LRIT, which was considered and adopted by the MSC, foresees:

- a phased-in implementation schedule for ships constructed before the date the proposed new regulation would enter into force;
- exemption of ships operating exclusively in sea area A1 from the requirements to transmit LRIT information since such ships are already fitted with AIS;
- the various functional requirements for LRIT;
- the circumstances during which a ship can switch off LRIT; and
- which authorities may have access to LRIT information.

The amendments to SOLAS were developed by an MSC intersessional working group on LRIT (MSC/ISWG/LRIT) which met in October 2005.

The Sub-Committee agreed that each Contracting Government should instruct the ships entitled to fly their flag to transmit the LRIT information to the LRIT Data Centre selected by that Contracting Government.

The Sub-Committee agreed that a number of technical specifications and other detailed technical requirements need to be developed for the LRIT system to be established and function in a smooth and efficient manner, and it agreed to invite the Committee to establish an ad hoc LRIT Engineering Task Force for the purpose of developing the required technical specifications.

Passenger ship safety

The Sub-Committee reviewed the tasks assigned to it in relation to the work by IMO on passenger ship safety. The guiding philosophy for the holistic programme of work on passenger ship safety is based on the premise that the regulatory framework should place more emphasis on the prevention of a casualty from occurring in the first place and that future passenger ships should be designed for improved survivability so that, in the event of a casualty, persons can stay safely on board as the ship proceeds to port.

Draft amendments to SOLAS chapter III on recovery arrangements for the rescue of persons at sea were agreed, for submission to the MSC. The draft
amendments state that all SOLAS ships must be equipped to recover persons from the water and/or survival craft and rescue craft, and give functional requirements for achieving this.

The Sub-Committee also agreed, for submission to the MSC:

- draft MSC circular on Guidelines for recovery techniques which is aimed at seafarers who may be faced with having to recover people in distress at sea.
- draft MSC circular on Guidelines on the provision of external support as an aid to incident containment for SAR Authorities and others concerned.
- draft MSC circular on Enhanced contingency planning guidance for passenger ships operating in areas remote from SAR facilities as well as Criteria for what constitutes an area remote from SAR facilities.
- draft MSC circular on Guidelines on training of SAR service personnel working in major incidents.
- draft MSC circular on Guidance for cold water survival. It was suggested that the short check list on cold water survival contained in the Guide would be useful if produced in a water resistant format for use by seafarers.
- draft amendments to the IAMSAR Manual, aimed at incorporating the external support guidance into Volume II, chapter 7 (Emergency assistance other than search and rescue).

**Use of cellular (mobile) telephones in maritime distress alerting**

The Sub-Committee discussed the lack of a common worldwide approach on the use of mobile telephones in maritime distress alerting and agreed proposed draft amendments to the International Aeronautical and Maritime Search and Rescue Manual (IAMSAR manual), relating to the use of cellular (mobile) telephones.

The proposed amendments stress the fact that while popular, inexpensive, and multi-purpose, these devices have limitations in emergencies involving SAR in the maritime environment, and, therefore, the advantages of dedicated marine communications systems should continue to be stressed by national administrations. In particular, where installed, cellular phone coverage in the maritime environment can be limited, intermittent, or non-existent, based on several factors including cellular tower accessibility and orientation in relationship to a cellular telephone call initiated from an offshore or coastal area.

However, cellular service providers may be able to provide some help in finding the position of callers in an emergency.

The Sub-Committee also agreed a liaison statement to the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), which concerns the possibility of creating a single common international cellular phone number for possible use by SOLAS ships within range of national cellular networks. Calls to this number would be directly routed to the national SAR Authority (MRCC) within the applicable Search and Rescue Region (SRR) from which the call is made, along with positional and caller identification information as is able to be made available. This common international SOLAS SAR number could be promulgated in nautical publications maintained by SOLAS ships.

**SART - revised performance standards endorsed**

The Sub-Committee endorsed proposed draft amendments to the performance standards for Search and Rescue Transponder (SART) (currently resolution A.802(19)).

The Sub-Committee also endorsed preliminary draft performance standards for survival craft AIS Search and Rescue Transmitter (AIS-SART) to supplement the existing SART performance standards. The AIS-SART would use AIS technology.

The Sub-Committee also endorsed draft proposed amendments to regulations in SOLAS chapter III to reflect the development of new AIS-SART performance standards.

The Sub-Committee noted that it was important to ensure that the definitions of AIS Search and Rescue Transmitter (AIS-SART) and Search and Rescue (radar) Transponder (SART) were clear, so as to avoid confusing two distinct technologies.

**Exchange of medical information - draft circular agreed**

The Sub-Committee agreed a draft MSC circular on Guidance on exchange of medical information between telemedical assistance services (TMAS) involved in international SAR operations. The circular provides a common form to facilitate the transfer of all available and relevant medical information between TMAS, MRCCs and ships.

**Criteria for provision of communication systems in the GMDSS - revision agreed**

The Sub-Committee agreed a proposed draft revised resolution A.888(21) Criteria for the provision of mobile-satellite communication systems in the GMDSS for submission to MSC 81 for consideration.

The proposed revisions note the decision of the MSC that the International Mobile Satellite Organization (IMSO) is the appropriate organization to carry out the required oversight of mobile-satellite services for the GMDSS. The revised resolution sets out the following general procedure:

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**The Sub-Committee endorsed proposed draft amendments to the performance standards for Search and Rescue Transponders or SARTs (pic: McMurdo)**
(a) IMO establishes the regulatory regime, via the revision of resolution A.888, which states that IMSO evaluates and approves satcom companies to participate in the GMDSS, undertakes the oversight on a continuing basis and keeps IMO (MSC) informed;

(b) the Company applies - through its Government - to IMO. The application is reviewed by the MSC - which has a general discussion of principles and policy issues only - and forwards the application to IMSO; and

(c) IMSO verifies the information provided and evaluates the application (the process is open and transparent with IMO and the sponsoring Government involved as Observers), decides on the acceptability of the applicant (based on criteria established by IMO in the revised resolution A.888) and, if appropriate, recognizes the applicant’s services and conducts ongoing oversight. IMSO is also responsible for ensuring compliance - including any resulting enforcement procedures.

Tsunami warning system

The Sub-Committee was updated on the status of the Indian Ocean Tsunami Warning and Mitigation System (IOTWS), which formally came into existence in June 2005 at the 23rd Assembly of the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization/Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (UNESCO/IOC) in Paris with the establishment of an Intergovernmental Co-ordination Group (ICG) to govern it. The architecture of the IOTWS was based on the establishment of national tsunami centres capable of issuing warnings in each of the participating countries through radio and TV broadcast and, possibly, mobile phone services. Between May and September 2005, national assessments of 16 countries in the vicinity of the Indian Ocean were conducted to identify capacity building needs and support requirements for the establishment of an IOTWS. By July 2006 it is intended that an initial system will be operating, utilizing 28 additional tide gauges, and 25 seismic stations will be in place, together with the first three out of 60 planned open ocean buoys and updated communication facilities for data and warning exchange. Nevertheless, implementing the complete system including all the intended instrumentation updates, the installation of all national warning centres, as well as ensuring the effective communication of all warnings to the possibly affected population along the coasts, will not be in place before the turn of the decade.

The Sub-Committee recognized that in respect of the threat to shipping, a tsunami poses a significant risk only to those ships in shallow waters and in port areas; ships in port are not required to maintain watch on GMDSS communications equipment, consequently a separate system for promulgating warning messages needs to be established within each port; and tsunami warnings need to be sent to those ships most at risk in a rapid manner.

The most important communication links were those between regional and national centres and it was noted that while new links being established appear to be predominantly by e-mail or through the WMO Global Telecommunications System, use of the International SafetyNET system remains an option for UNESCO/IOC and relevant authorities if required. For communication links within nations to coastal regions and ports, it was agreed that, while this is a national issue, IMO, IHO and WMO can guide and support national authorities through national or regional capacity building programmes. For links to both SOLAS ships and non-SOLAS ships/fishing vessels in shallow coastal waters, NAVTEX can be used for these warnings, but there may be no stations currently covering the affected areas and non-SOLAS ships/fishing vessels may not carry suitable receiving equipment, therefore other means such as local news broadcasts and warnings on maritime VHF channels should be considered.

It was recognized that options to use the IMO GMDDSS communications facilities through either the relevant WNWWS NAVAREA Co-ordinators or the METAREA Issuing Services, should remain available to national or regional centres if required by UNESCO/IOC. IMO, WMO and IHO should continue to participate in ongoing discussions, particularly at the IOC/UNESCO Assembly in June 2006, to ensure that maritime interests are not overlooked.

It was also noted that IMO might wish to consider the provision of technical assistance to those nations under threat of tsunami and involved in the preparation and operation of tsunami warning systems for vessels and ports.

COSPAS-SARSAT Programme update

The Sub-Committee was updated on the status of the COSPAS-SARSAT Programme, which now has 39 active participant countries. During 2004, COSPAS-SARSAT assisted in the rescue of 1,505 persons in 321 maritime incidents. A draft MSC circular containing Guidance on the COSPAS-SARSAT International 406 MHz Beacon Registration Database was approved by the Sub-Committee, to promote the use of the database, which is freely available to users with no access to national registration facilities. The IBRD is on the Internet at https://www.406registration.com.

Statements to ITU approved

The Sub-Committee approved liaison statements to the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) relating to: the complexity of DSC operational procedures; the use of MMSI and ITU-R M.585-3; the satellite detection of AIS messages and the spectrum resource implications for AIS channels; and HF Spectrum requirements for the maritime mobile service.
Proposed ship recycling instrument progressed at MEPC

The Marine Environment Protection Committee made progress in developing the draft text of a mandatory instrument providing globally-applicable ship recycling regulations for international shipping and for recycling activities. A working group on ship recycling met during the session to work on the draft text and discuss related issues. The proposed instrument would include articles and an annex with regulations for safe and environmentally-sound recycling of ships, covering requirements for ships, requirements for ship recycling facilities and reporting requirements.

A work plan for the further development of the draft legally-binding instrument was developed by the working group and agreed by the Committee. The draft is to be further developed during 2006-2007 with a view to completion in time for its consideration and adoption in the 2008-2009 biennium.

A correspondence group was established to carry out that task and to develop a provisional list of necessary guidelines. It will report to the next session of MEPC in October 2006.

The MEPC also considered the report of the second session of the Joint International Labour Organization (ILO)/IMO/Basel Convention Working Group on Ship Scrapping which met in December 2005 in Geneva. The views of the group were taken into account by the MEPC Working Group on Ship Recycling and it was noted that the Committee would continue co-operating with ILO and the Basel Convention on this subject.

Adoption of amendments to MARPOL

The MEPC adopted a number of amendments to the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships, 1973, as modified by the Protocol of 1978 relating thereto (MARPOL 73/78).

- MARPOL regulation on oil fuel tank protection

The amendment to the revised MARPOL Annex I (which was adopted in October 2004 with entry into force set for 1 January 2007) includes a new regulation 12A on oil fuel tank protection. The regulation is intended to apply to all ships delivered on or after 1 August 2010 with an aggregate oil fuel capacity of 660m³ and above. It includes requirements for the protected location of the fuel tanks and performance standards for accidental oil fuel outflow. A maximum capacity limit of 2,500m³ per oil fuel tank is included in the regulation, which also requires Administrations to consider general safety aspects, including the need for maintenance and inspection of wing and double-bottom tanks or spaces, when approving the design and construction of ships in accordance with the regulation. Consequential amendments to the IOPP Certificate were also adopted.

The MEPC also agreed to include appropriate text referring to the new regulation in the amendments to the Guidelines for the application of the revised MARPOL Annex I requirements to FPSOs and FSUs and approved a Unified Interpretation on the application of the regulation to column-stabilized MODUs.

- Definition of heavy grade oil

A further amendment to the revised MARPOL Annex I relates to the definition of “heavy grade oil” in regulation 21 on Prevention of oil pollution from oil tankers carrying heavy grade oil as cargo, replacing the words “fuel oils” with “oils, other than crude oils”, thereby broadening the scope of the regulation.

- MARPOL Annex IV amendment

The amendment to MARPOL Annex IV Prevention of pollution by sewage from ships adds a new regulation 13 on Port State control on operational requirements. The regulation states that a ship, when in a port or an offshore terminal of another Party, is subject to inspection by officers duly authorized by such Party concerning operational requirements under the Annex, where there are clear grounds for believing that the master or crew are not familiar with essential shipboard procedures relating to the prevention of pollution by sewage.

- Amendments to BCH Code

Amendments to the Code for the Construction and Equipment of Ships Carrying Dangerous Chemicals in Bulk (BCH Code) were adopted as a consequence of the revised Annex II of MARPOL 73/78 and the amended International Code for the Construction and Equipment of Ships carrying Dangerous Chemicals in Bulk (IBC Code), which are expected to enter into force on 1 January 2007. The MEPC also adopted a resolution on Early and Effective Application of the 2006 amendments to the BCH Code to invite MARPOL Parties to consider the application of the amendments to the BCH Code, as soon as practically possible, to ships entitled to fly their flag. Also adopted were the revised Guidelines for the provisional assessment of liquids transported in bulk. In this context the Committee urged industry, in particular the chemical industry, to provide information on the revision of List 2 of the MEPC circular which contains pollutant-only mixtures based on section 5 of the revised Guidelines.

South Africa Special Area

The MEPC agreed to the designation of the southern South African sea area as a Special Area under MARPOL Annex I and approved
the draft amendment in respect of the Special Area to regulation I(11) of the revised MARPOL Annex I. The draft amendment will be circulated for consideration with a view to adoption at MEPC 55 in October 2006.

Harmful aquatic organisms in ballast water
The MEPC adopted the Guidelines for approval and oversight of prototype ballast water treatment technology programmes (G10), which are part of a series of guidelines developed to assist in the implementation of the International Convention for the Control and Management of Ships’ Ballast Water and Sediments (BWM Convention), which was adopted in February 2004. Eleven sets of guidelines are referred to in the Convention. Six have already been adopted and the remainder are being developed by the Sub-Committee on Bulk Liquids and Gases (BLG) with input from the Sub-Committee on Flag State Implementation (FSI).

The MEPC agreed to give basic approval to two ballast water management systems that make use of active substances, after consideration of the report of the first session of the GESAMP Ballast Water Working Group on Active Substances, which met in January 2006.

One system involves the use of a biocide for treatment of ballast water and the other involves the disinfection of ballast water by electrolysis with the generation of free chlorine, sodium hypochlorite and hydroxyl radicals and by electrochemical oxidation through the creation of ozone and hydrogen peroxide.

The Committee noted that, to date, six countries (Maldives, Saint Kitts and Nevis, the Syrian Arab Republic, Spain, Nigeria and Tuvalu) had ratified or acceded to the Ballast Water Management Convention, becoming Contracting States. The Committee urged Member States to give consideration to the ratification, approval of, or accession to, the BWM Convention at the earliest possible opportunity.

Prevention of air pollution from ships
A working group was established to consider issues relating to the prevention of air pollution from ships, including follow-up action to the IMO Policies and practices related to the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions from ships (resolution A.963(23)). Following the work by the group, the MEPC approved two circulars aimed at assisting implementation of MARPOL Annex VI:

1. The MEPC circular on Bunker Delivery Note and Fuel Oil Sampling, to clarify how to comply with regulation 18, which places requirements on ship-owners and fuel oil suppliers in respect of bunker delivery notes and representative samples of the fuel oil received and on Parties to the 1997 Protocol to regulate the bunker suppliers in their ports. The circular urges all Member States, both Parties and non-Parties to the 1997 Protocol, to require fuel oil suppliers in their ports to comply with the requirements and to raise awareness of the necessity to enhance implementation and enforcement of regulation 18 of Annex VI.

2. The MEPC circular on Notification to the Organization on ports or terminals where volatile organic compounds (VOCs) emissions are to be regulated, which notes that regulation 15 of Annex VI requires Parties to inform the Organization of their intention to introduce requirements for the use of vapour emission control systems and to notify the Organization of ports and terminals under their jurisdiction where such requirements are already in force. However, many terminals are implementing or operating such practices without notification to the Organization. The Committee expressed concern that, since there is no circulation of such information, it is difficult for owners and operators to prepare for these changes at ports and terminals. The circular reiterates that Parties to the 1997 Protocol are required to notify the Organization without delay with information on ports and terminals under their jurisdiction at which VOCs emissions are or will be regulated, and on
requirements imposed on ships calling at these ports and terminals. Any information received by the Organization on the availability of vapour emission control systems will be circulated through MEPC circulars.

As instructed by MEPC 53, the Sub-Committee on Bulk Liquids and Gases (BLG) will undertake a review of MARPOL Annex VI and the NOx Technical Code with a view to revising the regulations to take account of current technology and the need to further reduce air pollution from ships. The progress of this work will be reported to the next session of the MEPC.

The Committee and its Working Group on Air Pollution had long and extensive debates on how to follow up resolution A.963(23) on Air Pollution had long and extensive debates on how to follow up resolution A.963(23) on oil spill risk evaluation and assessment of response preparedness; the revised draft IMO/UNEP Manual on the assessment and restoration of environmental damage following marine oil spills; and the development of two introductory courses on preparedness for and response to HNS incidents.

The Committee was made aware of the introduction of an IMO web page providing information on preparedness and response to marine oil spills, now activated on the IMO web page, and approved the content and structure of a website providing information and assistance for HNS incidents developed by the Group.

**Port reception facilities database**

The Committee noted that the Internet-based Port Reception Facility Database (PRFD) went live to the public on 1 March 2006, as a module of the IMO Global Integrated Shipping Information System (GISIS) http://gisis.imo.org/Public. The database provides data on the available port reception facilities for the reception of ship-generated waste and is designed to allow Member States to update it via a log-in password, and to allow the public access to all the information on a view-only basis.

Meanwhile, the MEPC emphasized the importance of adequate reception facilities in the chain of implementation of the MARPOL Convention, and stated that the policy of “zero tolerance of illegal discharges from ships” could only be effectively enforced when there were adequate reception facilities in ports. Therefore the Committee urged all Parties to the MARPOL Convention, particularly port States, to fulfill their treaty obligations to provide reception facilities for wastes generated during the normal operation of ships.

**Revised guidelines for handling oily wastes**

The MEPC approved the Revised Guidelines for systems for handling oily wastes in machinery spaces of ships incorporating guidance notes for an integrated bilge water treatment system (IBTS). A draft MEPC circular on the Harmonized Implementation of the Revised Guidelines and Specifications for Pollution Prevention Equipment for Machinery Space Bilges of Ships adopted by resolution MEPC.107(49), which provides guidance concerning specifically the type-approval process with the aim of ensuring that realistic on-board operating conditions are taken into account during the tests, was referred to the DE Sub-Committee for further consideration.
Revised Guidelines on implementation of effluent standards and performance tests for sewage treatment plants were finalized by the Sub-Committee on Bulk Liquids and Gases when it met for its 10th session.

The revised guidelines are intended to replace the Recommendation on International effluent standards and guidelines for performance tests for sewage treatment plants adopted by resolution MEPC.2(VI) in 1976, and will be submitted to the Marine Environment Protection Committee (MEPC) for adoption.

Revised regulations for the prevention of pollution by sewage, contained in Annex IV of MARPOL 73/78, entered into force on 1 August 2005.

The Sub-Committee also agreed a standard rate of discharge and the swept volume definition for the discharge of untreated and undiluted sewage that is not comminuted or disinfected from holding tanks.

Meanwhile, draft amendments to regulation 11 of the revised MARPOL Annex IV to include untreated sewage from spaces containing living animals were finalized for approval by the MEPC.

Ballast Water Convention guidelines agreed

The Sub-Committee finalized Guidelines for sediment control on ships, Guidelines for ballast water exchange design and construction standards, Guidelines for additional measures including emergency situations and Guidelines on designation of areas for ballast water exchange for submission to the MEPC for adoption.

The guidelines are part of a series developed to assist in the implementation of the International Convention for the Control and Management of Ships’ Ballast Water and Sediments (BWM Convention), which was adopted in February 2004. Eleven sets of guidelines are referred to in the Convention; six have already been adopted. Work on the remaining guidelines will continue at BLG 11.

Review of MARPOL Annex VI and the NOx Technical Code

Work on the review of MARPOL Annex VI Regulations for the Prevention of Air Pollution from Ships and the NOx Technical Code commenced and a correspondence group was established. An intersessional meeting of the Air Pollution Working Group is scheduled to take place in November 2006 in Norway, to progress the work further.

The review of Annex VI is intended to take account of current technology and the need to reduce further air pollution from ships. The Sub-Committee noted that the contribution of ship emissions to air quality problems in many parts of the world is growing, and that many Governments are now considering how better to address ship emissions at local, national and international levels. Emissions from marine diesel engines are of concern to the international community because of their negative environmental effects such as eutrophication, acid deposition, and nitrification and also the adverse impact on human health and life quality.

However, the Sub-Committee noted that it is widely acknowledged by scientists and marine engine manufacturers that different technology improvements now exist that will enable significant improvement over the existing emission standards found in the current MARPOL Annex VI, especially for new engines, while leading manufacturers have revealed that significant emission improvements can also be achieved in engines manufactured before 2000 through valve upgrades and other adjustment procedures that are feasible through routine maintenance of the engines.

Meanwhile, the Sub-Committee finalized unified interpretations concerning implementation of MARPOL Annex VI and the NOx Technical Code for approval by MEPC 55.
Evaluation of safety and pollution hazards of chemicals

Three new substances were classified under the amended IBC Code (Distilled Resin Oil, Oxygenated Aliphatic Hydrocarbon Mixture and Alkyl Benzene Mixtures (containing at least 50% toluene)). The Sub-Committee agreed BLG circulars on:

- Use of the correct product name in the shipping document for bulk liquid cargoes;
- Example of an optional shipping document for the purposes of MARPOL Annex II and the IBC Code; and
- Products which have been classified or re-classified since the adoption of the amended IBC Code in 2004.

Requirements for protection of personnel in transport of cargoes with toxic substances

Draft amendments to SOLAS chapter VI, making material safety data sheets (MSDS) mandatory for ships carrying MARPOL Annex I cargoes and marine fuel oils, were finalized for submission to the Maritime Safety Committee (MSC).

Structural guidelines for new ships carrying liquids in bulk containing benzene

The Sub-Committee agreed a draft MSC circular on Voluntary structural guidelines for new ships carrying liquids in bulk containing benzene for submission to the MSC. The aim is to introduce technical improvements in the design and equipment of tankers in order to reduce the exposure of seafarers to benzene vapours, be it on deck, in the engine-room or in the accommodation, in particular during loading and gas-freeing.

Development of provisions for gas-fuelled ships

A long-term action plan for further work on the development of provisions for gas-fuelled ships was agreed and a correspondence group was established to continue the work intersessionally. It was agreed that interim guidelines for gas-fuelled ships should be developed first, which should then be followed by the development of a draft International Code of Safety for Gas-fuelled Engine Installations in Ships (IGF Code).

Unified interpretations

A draft MSC circular on Interpretation to SOLAS regulation II 2/4.5.1.1, concerning pump-rooms intended solely for ballast transfer or fuel oil transfer, was finalized for approval by MSC 82.

Prevention of marine pollution during oil transfer operations between ships at sea

Work on the development of amendments to MARPOL Annex I for the prevention of marine pollution during oil transfer operations between ships at sea commenced. A correspondence group was established to develop a draft new chapter 8 of the revised MARPOL Annex I, containing regulations on the subject, for consideration at BLG 11.
Legal Committee progresses wreck removal convention

In addition to adopting guidelines on fair treatment of seafarers in the event of a maritime accident (see page 5) the IMO’s Legal Committee, which met for its 91st session from 24 to 28 April 2006, moved a step closer towards completion of the draft text of the new convention on the removal of wrecks.

Once adopted and in force, the new convention will provide the legal basis for States to remove, or have removed, from their EEZs, wrecks that may pose a hazard to navigation or, because of the nature of their cargo, to the marine and coastal environments, or to both. The new convention will also safeguard the rights and specify the duties of owners of wrecked ships to remove them by their own means, or with the assistance of salvors.

It is intended to hold a diplomatic conference in Nairobi, Kenya, to adopt the new convention in 2007.

Athens Protocol

Further to the request of the Assembly in resolution A.988(24), the Committee discussed two outstanding key issues relating to the 2002 Athens Protocol aimed at facilitating its entry into force.

These concern the ability of the insurance market to provide compulsory cover up to the general limits established under the Convention and, more particularly, its ability to provide insurance cover for death, injury and damage to passengers on sea voyages arising out of acts of terrorism. Such cover is required under the Protocol.

HNS Convention

The Committee agreed on an interpretation of article 1.5(a)(ii) of the 1996 International Convention on Liability and Compensation for Damage in connection with the Carriage of Hazardous and Noxious Substances by Sea (the HNS Convention). The article refers to "noxious liquid substances carried in bulk referred to in Appendix II of Annex II to MARPOL 73/78, as amended", and the interpretation makes it clear that, as expected, the revised Annex II to MARPOL 73/78 enters into force on 1 January 2007, the reference to "noxious liquid substances carried in bulk" in article 1.5(a)(ii) of the HNS Convention will, as from that date, refer to noxious liquid substances as defined in regulation 1.10 of the revised Annex II of MARPOL 73/78, which are carried in bulk.

2007 has been set as the date for adoption of a new convention on the removal of wrecks. LEG 91 made significant progress towards completion of the draft text.

The HNS Convention currently has eight Contracting States (Angola, Cyprus, Morocco, Russian Federation, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Samoa, Slovenia and Tonga). Entry into force will be 18 months after 12 States have accepted the Convention, four of which have not less than two million units of gross tonnage, provided that persons in these States who would be responsible to pay contributions to the general account have received a total quantity of at least 40 million tonnes of contributing cargo in the preceding calendar year.
MSC completes major work on passenger ship safety

The 81st session of the MSC saw the completion of the major work programme on passenger ship safety (see p.7). A working group on passenger ship safety was established to consider the work in detail and a number of amendments to the SOLAS Convention were approved for adoption at MSC 82 in November-December 2006. The approved proposed draft amendments to SOLAS chapters II-1, II-2 and III and the FSS Code relate to:

• alternative designs and arrangements;
• safe areas and the essential systems to be maintained while a ship proceeds to port after a casualty, which will require redundancy of propulsion and other essential systems;
• on-board 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;
• fire prevention, including amendments aimed at enhancing the fire safety of atriums, the means of escape in case of fire and ventilation systems; and
• time for orderly evacuation and abandonment, including requirements for the essential systems that must remain operational in case any one main vertical zone is unserviceable due to fire.

The MSC agreed that the DE Sub-Committee should develop performance standards for recovery systems for all types of ships, by 2008, with a view to preparing further draft amendments to SOLAS chapter III on recovery arrangements for the rescue of persons at sea. The Committee agreed that the new amendments and guidelines should be enforced by 2012. The MSC also agreed that the STW Sub-Committee should develop relevant training standards after the performance standards have been finalized. The idea is that ships should be equipped to recover persons from the water and/or survival craft and rescue craft, and that there should be functional requirements for achieving this.

The following circulars were approved:

• Guide to recovery techniques;
• Guidelines on the provision of external support as an aid to incident containment for SAR Authorities and others concerned;
• Enhanced contingency planning guidance for passenger ships operating in areas remote from SAR facilities which includes Criteria for what constitutes an area remote from SAR facilities;
• Guidelines on training of SAR service personnel working in major incidents; and
• Guide for cold water survival.

A draft Assembly resolution on Guidelines on voyage planning for passenger ships operating in remote areas was agreed for submission to the next Assembly.

Further consequential work to be carried out includes the development of guidelines for the approval of novel life-saving appliances (Sub-Committee on Ship Design and Equipment (DE)); and guidelines on the layout and ergonomic design of safety centres on passenger ships (Sub-Committee on Safety of Navigation (NAV)).

The MSC also instructed the Sub-Committee on Stability, Load Lines and Fishing Vessel Safety (SLF) to consider draft amendments for water ingress detection and flooding level monitoring systems; and for a safe return to port capability for passenger ships in damaged condition. The STW Sub-Committee is instructed to review the guides for recovery techniques and cold water survival from the point of view of training.

Star Princess - fire regulations for balconies agreed

The MSC approved draft amendments to SOLAS chapter II-2 and the FSS Code to strengthen the fire protection arrangements in relation to cabin balconies on passenger vessels, in the wake of the fire aboard the cruise ship Star Princess.

The fire in March of this year aboard the Bermuda-registered cruise ship Star Princess, while on passage between Grand Cayman and Montego Bay, Jamaica, began on an external balcony and spread over several decks. The cause is currently being investigated by the UK’s Marine Accident Investigation Branch (MAIB) on behalf of the Bermuda Maritime Administration in cooperation with United States’ authorities.
Although the investigation is not yet complete, the MAIB has issued a safety bulletin which includes urgent safety recommendations pertaining to the incident and a paper was submitted to the MSC by the United Kingdom. The MSC agreed to fast-track consideration of the incident report.

The proposed draft amendments to SOLAS chapter II-2 are aimed at ensuring that existing regulations 4.4 (Primary deck coverings), 5.3.1.2 (Ceilings and linings), 5.3.2 (Use of materials including incremals), and 6.2 (Smoke generation potential and toxicity) are also applied to cabin balconies on new passenger ships.

For existing passenger ships, the MSC approved relevant provisions to require that furniture on cabin balconies be of restricted fire risk unless fixed water-spraying systems, fixed fire detection and fire alarm systems are fitted and that partitions separating balconies be constructed of non-combustible materials, similar to the provisions for new passenger ships.

The draft amendments will be circulated with a view to their adoption at MSC 82 in November-December this year.

It was agreed that the Sub-Committee on Fire Protection (FP) should review the fire safety of external areas on passenger ships and develop draft guidance for the approval of fixed water-spraying, fire detection and fire alarm systems for cabin balconies, taking into account that some existing passenger ships are already installing such systems in response to the Star Princess fire.

The MSC in the meantime agreed an MSC circular on Operational recommendations for passenger ships with cabin balconies. The circular recommends that the shipping industry implement a number of recommendations including increased vigilance such as the deployment of lookouts, fire patrols and television surveillance systems; passengers and crew should be advised not to leave towels and personal belongings on balconies; and passengers and crew should be reminded of the hazards associated with the use of unauthorized heating elements such as electrical heating coils used in cups or mugs and open flames such as candles.

**SOLAS amendments on LRIT adopted**

The MSC adopted new regulations for the LRIT together with associated performance standards and functional requirements. (see ps.7, 14)

The new regulation on LRIT is included in SOLAS chapter V on Safety of Navigation, through which LRIT will be introduced as a mandatory requirement. The regulation foresees a phased-in implementation schedule for ships constructed before its expected entry into force date of 1 January 2008 and an exemption for ships operating exclusively in sea area A1 from the requirement to transmit LRIT information, since such ships are already fitted with AIS.

The MSC also adopted performance standards and functional requirements for LRIT and an MSC resolution on Arrangements for the timely establishment of the long-range identification and tracking system.

**Prevention of accidents involving lifeboats**

The MSC approved for subsequent adoption a proposed draft amendment to SOLAS regulation III/19.3.3.4 concerning provisions for the launch of free-fall lifeboats during abandon-ship drills. The amendment will allow, during the abandon-ship drill, for the lifeboat either to 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.

Meanwhile, the MSC agreed an MSC circular on Early implementation of draft SOLAS regulation III/19.3.3.4; an MSC circular on Guidelines for developing operation and maintenance manuals for lifeboat systems and an MSC circular on Measures to prevent accidents with lifeboats consolidating previous circulars MSC/Circ.1049, MSC/Circ.1063, MSC/Circ.1136 and MSC/Circ.1137. The 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.

**Maritime security - containers**

Following the adoption by the World Customs Organization (WCO) in June 2005 of the Framework of Standards to secure and facilitate global trade (the Framework of Standards), the MSC discussed the carriage of closed cargo transport units and of freight containers transported by ships and referred the matter to the Ship/Port Interface (SPI) Working Group, a working group of the Facilitation Committee which also reports to the MSC on relevant matters, for further consideration.
If appropriate, the SPI Working Group will develop draft amendments to the SOLAS Convention in order to enable port facilities and ships to accept closed cargo transport units and freight containers for carriage by ship, without the need for further security checks other than the maintenance of access controls, where the security of such consignments has been established through the application of security measures consistent with the Framework of Standards.

The SPI Working Group will also consider whether other IMO instruments and guidance should be amended to include provisions on supply chain security and facilitation.

**Goal-based new ship construction standards**

The MSC continued its work on developing goal-based standards (GBS) for new ship construction. The work has a five-tier structure: goals (Tier I), functional requirements (Tier II), verification of compliance criteria (Tier III), technical procedures and guidelines, classification rules and industry standards (Tier IV) and codes of practice and safety and quality systems for shipbuilding, ship operation, maintenance, training, manning, etc. (Tier V).

Intersessional work by a correspondence group was reviewed by the MSC and a GBS Working Group continued the work during the session. The work plan for GBS includes consideration of the probabilistic safety level 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.

In relation to GBS for bulk carriers and oil tankers, the MSC agreed Tier I goals and Tier II functional requirements, including a new requirement concerning recycling, with the proviso that these might need to be adjusted following completion of Tier III (verification of compliance).

In terms of Tier III, the MSC noted that the GBS working group proposed that the verification would be carried out by an expert group composed of independent experts nominated by Administrations according to their knowledge and expertise relevant to the subject under consideration. Tier III verification criteria would contain the information necessary to guide the group of experts to complete the verification of the classification society rules. Requests for verification could be submitted by a single classification society or by a group of classification societies.

In terms of incorporation of GBS in IMO instruments, there was general agreement that Tier I should be prepared in the form of amendments to SOLAS chapter II-1, whereas Tiers II and III could be included in a separate Code or a resolution, to be made mandatory under the SOLAS amendments. The Tier III process details as well as the Tier III verification guidelines could be footnoted as guidelines to be developed by the Organization so that they could be easily amended if necessary.

In considering the work outstanding in order to implement goal-based standards for new ship construction for bulk carriers and oil tankers, it was agreed that carrying out a pilot project using the IACS Common Structural Rules (CSR) would be advantageous to help uncover issues that had not been discussed and resolved previously and to also determine what, if any, changes were needed. This pilot project should be completed before amending SOLAS.

The MSC established a correspondence group to progress work on the goal-based standards for new ship construction for bulk carriers and oil tankers intersessionally and a second correspondence group to work on the safety level approach for developing GBS.

**Review of the STCW Convention and the STCW Code**

The MSC agreed that 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 the future. The MSC instructed the STW sub-Committee to define, as a first step, the issues to be reviewed and advise the MSC accordingly, before embarking on the actual work. A target completion date of 2008 was agreed.

**Review of Principles of safe manning**

The MSC also agreed the STW Sub-Committee should include a new work programme item on review of the principles for establishing the safe manning levels of ships, with a target completion date of 2008 and working in co-operation with the NAV Sub-Committee as necessary.
From the meetings • Maritime Safety Committee (MSC)

81st session
10 - 19 May 2006

Consideration of human element issues in IMO’s work

The report of the Joint MSC/MEPC Working Group on Human Element, which was reconvened during the fifty-third session of the Marine Environment Protection Committee (18 to 22 July 2005) was considered. The MSC approved MSC/MEPC circulars on: checklist for considering human element issues by IMO bodies; strengthening of human element input to the work of IMO; framework for IMO consideration of ergonomics and work environment; and the Organization’s strategy to address the human element, which includes a related action plan.

Assessment of the impact and effectiveness of implementation of the ISM Code

The MSC reviewed the report of a study on the impact and effectiveness of the ISM Code which was carried out by a Group of Independent Experts selected from administrations, organizations, academia and the shipping industry. Based on the data collected, the group concluded that where the ISM Code had been embraced as a positive step toward efficiency through a safety culture, tangible positive benefits were evident; and ISM Code compliance could be made easier through a reduction in the administrative process. The Group recommended that a further study should be undertaken, at a later date. The MSC agreed that the Human Element Working Group should further study the report at its next meeting.

Adoption of new TSS, other routeing measures and ship reporting system

The MSC adopted a new traffic separation scheme (TSS) (Canary Islands) and amendments to existing TSSs “In the Strait of Juan de Fuca and its approaches”; “Off Cabo de Gata”; “Off Porkkala Lighthouse”; and “In the Strait of Dover and Adjacent Waters”; adopted routeing measures other than TSSs, namely new areas to be avoided in the Dover Strait and Canary Islands; and adopted a new mandatory ship reporting system for the Canary Islands. The new TSS, amendments to existing TSSs, routeing measures and mandatory reporting system should be implemented six months after their adoption, i.e. on 1 December 2006 at 0000 hours UTC.

The Committee instructed the DE Sub-Committee to review recommendations of the FSI Sub-Committee concerning the definition of bulk carriers and to report to MSC 83.

Definition of bulk carrier

The MSC approved an MSC circular on Interim Guidance on compliance of ships carrying dry cargoes in bulk with requirements of SOLAS chapters II-1, III, IX, XI-1 and XII. The guidance is intended to address the concern that, while a bulk carrier is identified through its Safety Construction and Safety Equipment Certificates and its Safety Management Certificate, the status of a ship which is not certified as a bulk carrier but nevertheless carries a cargo in bulk, might cause problems and be questioned by port State control (PSC) officers for non-compliance with SOLAS chapter XII. Meanwhile, the DE sub-Committee was instructed to review recommendations of the FSI Sub-Committee concerning the definition of bulk carriers and the approval for the carriage of dry cargoes in bulk and to report to MSC 83.

Explosions on tankers - inter-industry study

The MSC reviewed the report of the Inter-Industry Working Group (IIWG)1 which was established to study the reported incidents of explosions on chemical and product carriers. The IIWG had concluded that a failure to follow procedures was the primary cause of the incidents in question and a Human Factors Task Group, which is looking into ways of addressing this issue in the context of tankers, has been established by the IIWG. The IIWG recommended that, as an additional safety measure, the MSC give consideration to amending SOLAS to provide for the application of inert gas to new chemical tankers and new product tankers of less than 20,000 dwt.

The MSC recalled that the Sub-Committee on Bulk Liquids and Gases (BLG) had approved a circular on the use of the correct product name in offering bulk liquid cargoes for shipment, to emphasise the importance

1 The IIWG includes European Chemical Industry Council (CEPIC), International Association of Classification Societies (IACS), International Association of Ports and Harbors (IAPH), International Chamber of Shipping Limited (ICS), International Association of Independent Tanker Owners (INTERTANKO), International Parcel Tankers Association (IPTA), Oil Companies International Marine Forum (OCIMF), International Group of P&I Associations.
of the use of the Proper Shipping Name for the carriage of IBC Code products.

The MSC referred the human element issues identified in the report to the joint MSC/MEPC Working Group on the Human Element and, noting the view that the recommended formal safety assessment (FSA) study and cost/benefit analysis should be carried out before decisions are made, referred the issues related to the proposals on inert gas to the FP and DE Sub-Committees. The MSC also referred issues relating to ignition sources, also identified in the report as a problem, to the FP and DE Sub-Committees. Concerns about the availability of incident data were referred to the FSI Sub-Committee.

Implementation of the revised STCW Convention

The list of Parties deemed to be giving full and complete effect to the provisions of the International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Seafarers (STCW), 1978, as amended, was updated when IMO Secretary-General Efthimios E. Mitropoulos submitted his report on those countries whose reports of independent evaluations have been completed since the previous MSC meeting. The Committee confirmed that the procedures for the assessment of information provided had been correctly followed in respect of 24 STCW Parties and four overseas territories of another STCW Party.

Other issues

The MSC also agreed amendments to the 1994 and 2000 High-Speed Craft (HSC) Codes; amendments to the revised performance standards for shipborne voyage data recorders (VDRs) (resolution A.861(20)) and simplified voyage data recorders (S-VDRs) (resolution MSC.163(79)), for which carriage requirements enter into force on 1 January 2006; an MSC circular on Means of embarkation on and disembarkation from ships; an MSC/MEPC circular on IMO requirements on carriage of publications on board ships; and approved amendments to unified interpretations to SOLAS chapters II-1 and XII.

Adoption of amendments

The MSC adopted a number of other amendments to SOLAS and mandatory codes and guidelines with an expected entry into force date of 1 July 2010, except where indicated below.

Amendments to SOLAS Chapter II-2 - Fire protection

These include amendments relating to Regulation 9 – Containment of fire, so as to include a requirement for water-mist nozzles which should be tested and approved in accordance with the guidelines approved by the Organization; and in Regulation 15 – Arrangements for oil fuel, lubricating oil and other flammable oils, new text relating to the application of the regulations to ships constructed on or after 1 February 1992 and on or after 1 July 1998.

Amendments to SOLAS Chapter III – Life-saving appliances and arrangements

In Regulation 7 – Personal life-saving appliances, the amendments add a new requirement for infant lifejackets. For passenger ships on voyages of less than 24 hours, a number of infant lifejackets equal to at least 2.5% of the number of passengers on board is to be provided; and for passenger ships on voyages of 24 hours or greater, infant lifejackets are to be provided for each infant on board. A further amendment relates to the provision of lifejackets for larger passengers and states that, if the adult lifejackets provided are not designed to fit persons with a chest girth of up to 1,750 mm, a sufficient number of suitable accessories are to be available on board to allow them to be secured to such persons.

Amendments to SOLAS Chapter IV – Radiocommunications

The amendments relate to the provision of radio equipment, in Regulation 7, to require ships to carry an EPIRB capable of transmitting a distress alert through the polar orbiting satellite service (COSPAS-SARSAT) operating in the 406 MHz band; and, in Regulations 9 and 10, to clarify that the means of initiating ship-to-shore distress alerts may be through the Inmarsat geostationary satellite service by a ship earth station.

Amendments to SOLAS Chapter V – Safety of navigation

The amendment adds a new paragraph to allow ballast water exchange at sea, provided that the master has determined that it is safe to do so and takes into consideration any increased blind sectors or reduced horizontal fields of vision resulting from the operation to ensure that a proper lookout is maintained at all times. The operation should be conducted in accordance with the ship’s ballast water management plan, taking into account the recommendations on ballast water exchange. The commencement and termination of the operation should be recorded in the ship’s record of navigational activities.

Amendments to the International Code for Fire Safety Systems (FSS Code)

The amendments replace the text of Chapter 5 Fixed gas fire-extinguishing systems with a revised text.

Amendments to the International Life-Saving Appliances Code (LSA Code)

The amendments include the requirement that all life-saving appliances should withstand in stowage an air temperature range of -30°C to +65°C and personal life-
saving appliances should remain operational throughout an air temperature range of -15°C to +40°C. The colour of life-saving appliances is now specified to be "of international or vivid reddish orange, or a comparably highly visible colour on all parts where this will assist detection at sea". The existing section 2.2 on General requirements for lifejackets is revised and replaced. Further amendments relate to specifications for immersion suits and anti-exposure suits.

Amendments to Guidelines for the authorization of organizations acting on behalf of the Administration (Resolution A.739(18))

The amendments to the guidelines, which are mandatory under SOLAS chapter XI-1, add a new paragraph 2-1 to require the use of only exclusive surveyors and auditors for surveys and certification, although radio surveys may be subcontracted to non-exclusive surveyors.

Amendments to the STCW Convention and STCW Code

The amendments add new minimum mandatory training and certification requirements for persons to be designated as ship security officers (SSOs). The amendments to the STCW Convention and to parts A and B of the STCW Code include Requirements for the issue of certificates of proficiency for Ship Security Officers; Specifications of minimum standards of proficiency for ship security officers; and Guidance regarding training for Ship Security Officers.

Further amendments to part A of the STCW Code add additional training requirements for the launching and recovery of fast rescue boats. The amendments have been prepared in response to reports of injuries to seafarers in numerous incidents involving the launching and recovery of fast rescue boats in adverse weather conditions.

The anticipated entry into force date for the STCW amendments is 1 January 2008.

Amendments to the 1988 SOLAS Protocol

The amendments relate to surveys of structure, machinery and equipment of cargo ships, to require a minimum of two inspections of the outside of the ship’s bottom during the five-year period of validity of the Cargo Ship Safety Construction Certificate or the Cargo Ship Safety Certificate, except in certain circumstances. The interval between any two such inspections should not exceed 36 months.

The amendments to the 1988 SOLAS Protocol will be deemed to have been accepted on the date on which they are accepted by two-thirds of the Parties to the Protocol and will enter into force six months later.

Amendments to the IMDG Code

Amendments to the IMDG Code (Amendment 33-06) were prepared on the basis of proposals received from Member Governments and Organizations and those prepared by the UN Committee of Experts on the Transport of Dangerous Goods and on the Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals. The amendments include those relating to transport of Ethylene Oxide with Nitrogen up to a total pressure of 1 MPa (10 bar) at 50°C (UN 1040); Polymeric beads (UN 2211); Plastics moulding compound (UN 3314); Ammonium Nitrate (UN 1942) and Ammonium Nitrate Fertilizer (UN 2067); segregation provisions for class 8 acids and alkalis when not in limited quantities; and the packaging of articles containing dangerous goods in limited quantities.

Governments are invited to apply the amendments on a voluntary basis from 1 January 2007, pending their entry into force date on 1 January 2008.

PORT STATE CONTROL

LONDON, 26 March – 05 April 2007

This widely recognised and practical intensive course is now in its 19th successive year. The course is designed especially for officials in national marine departments, port or terminal operators, ship managers and shipowners.

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Maritime invaders star as villains in new ballast water documentary film

Tiny alien invaders transported in ballast water star as the villains in a new documentary film on harmful organisms in ships’ ballast water launched by IMO and BBC Worldwide.

The documentary film, "Invaders from the Sea", which will be broadcast and distributed on television worldwide, shows that harmful organisms transported in ballast water by ships have caused biological and economic havoc around the world, largely due to the expanded sea trade and traffic volume over the last few decades. The effects in many areas of the world have been devastating. The film also highlights the progress made by IMO and the maritime industry in addressing this issue and the measures which can be taken to prevent the spread of harmful organisms.

The film captures the dramatic impact of this issue on the lives of millions of people, using examples of three harmful organisms, which have been transported to new areas in ships’ ballast water:

North American comb jelly - has been transported to the Caspian Sea. This tiny ctenophore is a voracious predator and reproduces rapidly under favourable conditions. It feeds excessively on zooplankton, depleting stocks and altering the food web and ecosystem function. It contributed significantly to the collapse of fisheries in the Black and Azov Seas in the 1990s, with massive economic and social impact, and has now depleted stocks of the local kilka fish in the Caspian Sea. The impact on one Caspian fisherman and his family is highlighted in the documentary.

Golden mussel (Lymnoperma fortunei) - a native to south eastern Asian rivers and creeks which has been transported in larval form in ships’ ballast water to South America. It travelled to Brazil up river from the coastline of Argentina and is a highly reproductive invasive species that clogs up water intake pipes for hydro-electric power stations and fouls up other structures. It affects the feeding patterns of local fish, causing fish stocks to fall. The film shows the devastating impact of the golden mussel on fishing and hydro-electric power stations and on the local ecosystem.

Toxic Algae (Red Tides) - various species, including toxic dinoflagellates, cause red tides to appear. Several species have been transferred to new areas in ships’ ballast water. They may form harmful algal blooms and, depending on the species, can cause massive kills of marine life through oxygen depletion, release of toxins and/or mucus. They can foul beaches and impact on tourism and recreation, while some species may contaminate filter-feeding shellfish and cause fisheries to be closed. Consumption of contaminated shellfish by humans may cause severe illness and death. The film focuses on South Africa where there has been an increase in cases of paralytic shellfish poisoning, after people ate shellfish collected from beaches affected by red tides. Paralytic shellfish poisoning can cause tingling and numbness of the mouth, lips and fingers, difficulty in breathing, accompanied by general muscular weakness and lack of co-ordination, and can lead to paralysis and death if not treated.

Quantitative data show the rate of bio-invasions is continuing to increase at an alarming rate, in many cases exponentially, and new areas are being invaded all the time. Volumes of seaborne trade continue to increase and the problem may not yet have reached its peak.

It is estimated that about 3 to 10 billion tonnes of ballast water are transferred globally each year, potentially transferring from one location to another species of sealife that may prove harmful when released into a non-native environment.

The documentary features some of the solutions for preventing the spread of invasive species in ships’ ballast water, including exchange of ballast water on the high seas and new technologies that are under development, such as flow-through systems to continuously exchange ballast water while the ship is sailing and methods to kill/inactivate microscopic life forms such as by using ozone or ultraviolet light.

Filming for the documentary took place during 2005 and 2006, around the world. The production enjoyed considerable sponsorship from Vela International Marine, BP Shipping and Wallenius-Alfa Laval Consortium, as well as...
The best moment for me came when I was thinking about the conclusion to the programme. I wanted to end on a positive note, to show how, with careful consideration, shipping can work in harmony with the environment. A popular series called 'Coast' had just been aired on BBC-2, looking at the lives of people living along the entire coastline of the British Isles. I knew it had some fantastic aerials over a cargo ship in the Bristol Channel and as I searched for this footage my heart leaped, for there was a ship chugging across the Moray Firth in Scotland and as the camera zoomed into its bows, two dolphins suddenly leaped out of the water. I had my perfect conclusion.

The documentary will be distributed by IMO through the United Nations film distribution channels in developing countries and by BBC Worldwide elsewhere. BBC Worldwide has the exclusive rights to distribute the film in the developed countries. It is expected that the film will be broadcasted by BBC World in the near future.

IMO's new documentary on the problem of invasive species in ships' ballast water will be screened worldwide.
Maritime rescue and piracy issues top agenda in successful Africa mission

The commissioning of a regional maritime rescue co-ordination centre (see p.6) as well as meetings with the Presidents of both Kenya and Tanzania were among highlights of a recent mission to Africa by IMO Secretary-General Efthimios E. Mitropoulos. In his discussions with the two Presidents, he took the opportunity to draw attention to how IMO's technical co-operation activities could yield demonstrable, effective results that serve the greater good of all. He also highlighted how the establishment of the search and rescue facilities reflected very well the theme for this year's World Maritime Day, which is "Technical Co-operation: IMO's response to the 2005 World Summit", through which special emphasis will be placed on the maritime needs of Africa and on IMO's contribution to the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals.

Mr. Mitropoulos began a busy three days of meetings (3 to 6 May) with a visit to the President of Kenya, His Excellency Mr. Mwai Kibaki in the capital, Nairobi. The two discussed matters of mutual interest, in particular arrangements for the diplomatic conference to adopt a new international convention on wreck removal which Kenya is to host on IMO's behalf next year.

Mr. Mitropoulos then travelled to Mombasa, where he first visited the Mission to Seafarers. In praising seafarers for their services to the community, he described them as "the soul, heart and brains of a ship". After addressing the seafarers present, he answered questions on a variety of topics.

Also in Mombasa, Mr Mitropoulos commissioned the new regional Maritime Rescue Co-ordination Centre (MRCC), the first such facility to be inaugurated following a resolution adopted by the IMO Conference on search and rescue (SAR) and the Global Maritime Distress and Safety System (GMDSS), held in October 2000 in Florence, Italy, proposing the establishment of five sub-regional MRCCs in western, southern and eastern parts of Africa.

Speaking to the staff of the MRCC during the commissioning ceremony, Mr. Mitropoulos took the opportunity to point out the immense importance of the work that lay before them. He said, "I congratulate you on your employment and on the humanitarian task you will be asked to perform, 24 hours-a-day, seven days-a-week, 365 days-a-year – the same hard tasks shipping performs in the service of the community."

"The Indian Ocean has many times, most recently with the 2004 tsunami, shown its inhospitable face and has caused many disasters to the detriment of shipping, with the loss of precious human lives and the destruction of the marine environment."

He went on to speak of the zeal and enthusiasm with which he felt sure the staff would undertake their heavy duties and offered them these words of advice: "Never be complacent, never underestimate the seriousness of any distress incident you handle and never consider any incident to be the same as another – because each has its peculiarities and special characteristics that demand special attention."

He reminded staff that they would be the last hope of seafarers for whom fate had in store the bitter experience of a shipwreck, but would be the first they would thank once rescued and safe on solid ground, earning their eternal gratitude and that of their families.

Mr. Mitropoulos also stressed the importance of continual personnel training to ensure that the knowledge and professional skills of the staff of the Centre could be kept up to date with developments in the sophisticated satellite and terrestrial communication systems with which the new facility is equipped.

Moving on to the United Republic of Tanzania, Mr. Mitropoulos travelled to the capital, Dar es Salaam, to meet the country's president, His Excellency Mr. Jakaya Kikwete. He also visited the Mission to Seafarers there, and inspected the site of the Maritime Rescue Sub-Centre that is due to come into operation later this year.

As part of a wide-ranging agenda, Mr. Kikwete and Mr. Mitropoulos discussed matters of mutual concern including the increasing threat of piracy in east African waters. When in service, the Dar es Salaam facility will act not only as a rescue sub-centre but will also undertake personnel training, vessel traffic surveillance and piracy monitoring.
Security seminar for Caribbean

More than 40 participants from nineteen States and territories in the Caribbean area attended an IMO Sub-Regional Seminar on Maritime Security, Piracy and Armed Robbery against Ships in Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago, in April.

During the week-long event, presentations were given by representatives from INTERPOL, the Joint Inter-Agency Task Force South, the United Kingdom Department for Transport, the UK’s Royal Navy, the International Council of Cruise Lines (ICCL), the Mediterranean Yacht Brokers’ Association (MYBA), and Drum-Cussac Maritime, as well as by IMO.

Delegates saw a demonstration of a long range acoustic device, similar to the one used on the Seabourne Spirit, and undertook a visit to the cruise ship terminal in Port of Spain.

The event was funded by the Governments of Canada and the United Kingdom and hosted by the Ministry of National Security and the Ministry of Works and Transport of the Government of Trinidad and Tobago.

SGs past and present meet in London

The occasion of a recent visit to London by Dr C.P. Srivastava of India provided an unusual opportunity for the three most recent Secretaries-General of IMO to meet and spend time together. Between them, Dr Srivastava (centre), Mr William O’Neil (left) and Mr Efthimios E. Mitropoulos (right) have led the Organization for more than 30 years. Dr Srivastava served as Secretary-General from 1974 until 1989; Mr O’Neil from 1990 to 2003 and Mr Mitropoulos, the current incumbent, has served since 2004.
Rescue plane lands at IMO

Admiral L. Dassatti, Commander of the Italian Coast Guard, has presented IMO with a model of an ATR 42 search and rescue aircraft, the real-life counterpart of which is equipped with state-of-the-art technology for search and rescue and pollution prevention and control.

The ATR42 is a twin-engine turbo-prop aircraft largely used by civil airline companies for passenger transport. The MP (Marine Patrol) version, developed by Italian company Alenia, is modified for activities such as maritime patrol (for search and identification of surface shipping), search and rescue and surveillance against illegal immigration and pollution. Among its secondary roles, the ATR 42 MP can carry out missions such as transport of troops, parachutists, goods, sanitary and humanitarian evacuation.

Regional seminar on non-convention ships proposed

IMO, the Co-Operation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf (GCC) and the Government of Bahrain are to organize a regional seminar on the safety of ships not covered by IMO Conventions.

The main objectives of the seminar are to present the relevant provisions of draft technical regulations for the safety of small ships and set up new standards for the region adapted to the circumstances of its member States and complying with IMO standards in order to improve safety and marine environmental protection in the GCC area.

The draft text of the regulations is being prepared by IMO consultants with the collaboration of Bahrain and is expected to be considered during the seminar, which is planned for September 2006.

IMLI graduates swell global network

The IMO International Maritime Law Institute (IMLI) held its 17th Graduation Ceremony in May at the Maritime Museum in Vittoriosa, Malta. This year’s IMLI graduates come from 22 different countries and territories, including Argentina, Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, Germany, Iraq and Turkey. These States were represented at IMLI for the first time and will now form part of IMLI’s global network in 107 States and territories. Altogether 31 lawyers from 22 States were awarded the Master Degree in International Maritime Law, while one lawyer was awarded the Advanced Diploma in International Maritime Law.

Members of IMLI’s Academic Staff and the Class of 2006 during the Graduation Ceremony. Graduates from 22 countries successfully passed out from IMLI this year.
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