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IMO – focused, relevant and united

One reason why IMO measures have achieved such widespread acceptance is that, almost without exception, decisions within the Organization are taken by consensus. Agreement by consensus means that all countries have a stake in those measures and a genuine desire to exercise the responsibility that comes with a sense of ownership.

A case in point was the 25th IMO Assembly last November, (see p.30) during which a host of important resolutions, pushing IMO’s agenda forward for the next biennium and beyond, were adopted. Together, they reflected the variety and complexity of the many topics dealt with by the Organization during the previous two years and they were all negotiated, worked out and, eventually, adopted by consensus. Our Strategic Plan and High-level Action Plan were updated, as was the Code for the implementation of mandatory IMO instruments, which serves as the audit standard for the Voluntary IMO Member State Audit Scheme. While, on organization-wide issues, the IMO budget for 2008-2009, which will provide the necessary resources for us to pursue the goals and objectives that the Assembly identified and agreed, was also approved.

On issues related to sustainable development, the Assembly adopted resolutions on the linkage between IMO’s technical cooperation programme and the Millennium Development Goals (with specific emphasis on Africa’s maritime needs) and, in a complementary manner, on the need for capacity-building for the development and implementation of IMO instruments. With respect to maritime safety, the resolutions on amendments to the COLREGS; on Revised criteria for the provision of mobile-satellite communication systems in the GMDSS; on Guidelines for voyage planning for passenger ships operating in remote areas; on the entry-into-force and implementation of the 1993 Torremolinos Protocol; and on the Revised survey guidelines under the Harmonized System of Survey and Certification, can be singled out.

And, on the environmental front, the Assembly’s adoption of a resolution on the application of the Ballast Water Management Convention demonstrated, once again, the ability of the Organization to respond appropriately when it becomes necessary to facilitate pragmatic solutions to very real and practical problems that arise.

The Assembly also reviewed, from the Organization’s perspective, the issue of piracy and armed robbery against ships in the waters off the coast of Somalia and, once again, provided the leadership expected by the maritime community with regard to this unique and complex situation. A wide-ranging new resolution adopted by the Assembly appeals directly to the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) of Somalia and, among other things, asks the TFG to advise the UN Security Council that, in response to a previous request from the IMO Council, it consents to warships or military aircraft entering its territorial sea and airspace, when engaging in operations against pirates or suspected pirates and armed robbers operating off its coasts. In addition, in view of the worsening humanitarian situation in Somalia, it also asks the TFG to advise the Security Council of its readiness to conclude any necessary agreements so as to enable warships or military aircraft to escort ships chartered by the World Food Programme (WFP) for the delivery of humanitarian aid to Somalia.

The Assembly’s approval of these and many other resolutions, too many to highlight here, will make a significant contribution to the IMO mission of ensuring safe, secure and efficient shipping on clean oceans.

And so, IMO stands united, focused on the challenges ahead and continuously relevant to the industry it has been serving for so long. Shipping is, par excellence, a significant contributor to, and facilitator of, economic growth on a worldwide basis. As such, the mission of IMO (that of promoting its safety and security, its efficiency and its environmental credentials) is one that reaches out far beyond the Organization’s immediate constituency and touches the life of nearly everyone on the planet. Our course for the future is set, and we will make our passage with optimism and confidence.

A message from the Secretary-General Efthimios E. Mitropoulos
Technical proposals agreed for reduction of air pollution from ships

Draft amendments to revise the MARPOL regulations on the prevention of air pollution from ships were agreed by the IMO Sub-Committee on Bulk Liquids and Gases (BLG) when it met in February for its 12th session.

Following lengthy and technically challenging discussions in the Air Pollution Working Group, the Sub-Committee agreed a draft revised Annex VI to the MARPOL Convention and amendments to the NOx Technical Code for submission to the Marine Environment Protection Committee (MEPC), at its 57th session from 31 March to 4 April 2008, which was expected to approve the amendments prior to their formal adoption at MEPC 58 (6 to 10 October 2008). The amendments would then enter into force, under the tacit acceptance procedure, 16 months later, in March 2010, or on a date to be decided by the MEPC.

With regard to sulphur oxide and particulate matter emissions, the Sub-Committee agreed to reduce the six fuel options under consideration to just three. It also addressed a number of other matters, including finalization of draft exhaust gas cleaning guidelines and wash water discharge criteria for such systems, to be forwarded to MEPC for discussion and possible adoption. It was, however, decided not to recommend that a market-based instrument or trials for such instruments be included in the amendments to Annex VI.

With regard to nitrogen oxide (NOx) emissions, the Sub-Committee further developed the three-tier structure for new engines, which would set progressively tighter NOx emission standards for new engines depending on the date of their installation. For existing engines, it was agreed that further information was needed and consideration of this matter will be necessary at MEPC 57.

With respect to the NOx Technical Code, earlier debates concerning the certification of serially produced engines, direct measurement and monitoring methods, a draft certification procedure for existing engines, and test cycles to be applied to Tier II and Tier III engines, were resolved.

Speaking at the close of the session, Secretary-General Mitropoulos highlighted the importance of this work for the wider maritime community and for the environment. He told delegates: “draft amendments to MARPOL Annex VI and the NOx Technical Code can now go forward to the Committee, for it to make the sound and well-informed decisions – with the benefit of your advice and within the agreed timelines – that the international maritime community so eagerly expects and the environment deserves.”

North Sea SECA now in effect

Ships operating in the North Sea are now required to demonstrate compliance with stringent new exhaust emission standards, following the full implementation of the North Sea SOx Emission Control Area (SECA) on 22 November 2007, one year after the entry into force of related amendments to Annex VI of the MARPOL Convention.

In a SECA, the sulphur content of fuel oil used onboard ships must not exceed 1.50% m/m. Alternatively, ships must fit an exhaust gas cleaning system. The Baltic Sea Area has also been designated as a SOx Emission Control Area under the regulations and has been implemented and operational since 19 May 2006.
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The last significant gap in the international regime for compensating victims of oil spills from ships is set to be closed with the entry into force on 21 November 2008 of an international treaty covering liability and compensation for pollution damage caused by spills of oil, when carried as fuel in ships’ bunkers. Current regimes covering oil spills do not include bunker oil spills from vessels other than tankers.

Criteria for entry into force of the International Convention on Civil Liability for Bunkers Oil Pollution Damage, 2001, were met on 21 November 2007, following accession to the treaty by Sierra Leone. The Convention was adopted in 2001.

Under the terms of the Convention, it enters into force one year after the date on which 18 States, including five States with ships whose combined gross tonnage is not less than 1 million, have ratified it. With the accession by Sierra Leone, the Bunkers Convention has been ratified by 18 States, with a combined gross tonnage of 114,484,743, representing 15.86 per cent of world merchant shipping tonnage.

The Convention will make the shipowner, defined broadly so as to include the owner, registered owner, bareboat charterer, manager and operator of a ship, liable to pay compensation for pollution damage (including the costs of preventative measures) caused in the territory, including the territorial sea of a State Party, as well as in its exclusive economic zone, or if a State Party has not established one, in an equivalent area.

Ships over 1,000 gross tonnage registered in a State Party to the Convention will be required to carry on board a certificate certifying that the ship has insurance or other financial security, such as the guarantee of a bank or similar financial institution, to cover the liability of the registered owner for pollution damage in an amount equal to the limits of liability under the applicable national or international limitation regime.

Secretary-General Mitropoulos welcomed the latest accession. “With the entry into force of this Convention, the Organization has now in place all the elements of a liability and compensation regime for damage caused by the sea carriage of oils, whether as cargo or as fuel,” he said. “Recent accidents involving spills of oil carried as fuel on large ships have shown how important this Convention is, alongside measures to reduce the number of such casualties to a minimum.”

Oil fuel tank protection

Rules to limit the size of oil fuel tanks on new ships and ensure they are protectively located are included in the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships (MARPOL Convention). A new regulation on oil fuel tank protection was adopted in 2004 and entered into force on 1 January 2007.

The regulation applies to all ships delivered on or after 1 August 2010 with an aggregate oil fuel capacity of 600 m³ 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 2,500 m³ per oil fuel tank is included in the regulation, which also requires flag state 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.
Renewed calls for action to prevent and suppress acts of piracy and armed robbery against ships, in particular off the coast of Somalia, were made by IMO’s 25th Assembly in November 2007 when it adopted a new resolution on Piracy and armed robbery against ships in waters off the coast of Somalia.

The wide-ranging new resolution appeals directly to the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) of Somalia. Among other things, it requests the TFG to take any action it deems necessary to prevent and suppress acts of piracy and armed robbery against ships originating from within Somalia and to ensure that its coastline cannot be used as a safe haven from which attacks can be launched. It goes on to ask the TFG to take action to ensure that all ships seized by pirates and armed robbers and brought into waters within its territory are released promptly and that ships sailing off the coast of Somalia do not become victims of acts of piracy or armed robbery.

Perhaps most significantly, the resolution asks the TFG to take action to ensure that warships or military aircraft entering its territorial sea, when engaging in operations against pirates or suspected pirates and armed robbers. In addition, in view of the worsening humanitarian situation in Somalia, it also asks the TFG to advise the Security Council of its readiness to conclude any necessary agreements so as to enable warships or military aircraft to escort ships employed by the World Food Programme (WFP) for the delivery of humanitarian aid to Somalia or leaving Somali ports after having discharged their cargo.

Through the new resolution, the IMO Assembly, which is the governing body of the Organization and comprises all 167 Member States, has reiterated its condemnation of all acts of piracy and armed robbery against ships, irrespective of where they have occurred or may occur and, in particular, has appealed to all parties able to assist to take action, within the provisions of international law, to ensure that seafarers serving on any hijacked ships, and any other persons on board, are immediately and unconditionally released and that no harm is caused to them.

The resolution also places considerable emphasis on the need for co-operation, communication and the sharing of information, as key elements in tackling the problem. It specifically calls on Governments in the region, in co-operation with IMO, to conclude a regional agreement to prevent, deter and suppress piracy and armed robbery against ships. Other Governments are called upon to assist these efforts.

It also urges Governments to issue, to ships entitled to fly their flag, specific advice and guidance on any appropriate additional precautionary measures necessary to protect themselves from attack, when sailing off the coast of Somalia, and on any measures or actions they may need to take when they are under attack, or threat of attack. Ships are encouraged to ensure that information on attempted attacks is promptly conveyed to the nearby coastal States and to the nearest, most appropriate Rescue Co-ordination Centre and Governments are asked to bring such information to the attention of IMO. Governments are further requested to instruct national Rescue Co-ordination Centres, or other agencies involved, to transmit relevant advice and warnings on reported attacks through the World-Wide Navigation Warning Service, the International SafetyNet Service or other means, so as to warn shipping in the immediate area. They are also asked to provide a point of contact through which ships may request advice or assistance and to which such ships can report any security concerns about other ships, movements or communications in the area.

The investigation of all acts or attempted acts of piracy and armed robbery is actively encouraged by the resolution and Governments are requested to report any pertinent information to IMO. It also urges them to take all necessary legislative, judicial and law enforcement action to ensure they are able to receive and prosecute or extradite suspected pirates and armed robbers.

IMO Assembly issues renewed call for action on piracy off Somalia

IMO Assembly confirms Secretary-General’s re-appointment

The 25th biennial meeting of the IMO Assembly unanimously confirmed the decision of the Organization’s Council to extend the appointment of Secretary-General Eftimios E. Mitropoulos for a further term of four years, for the period 1 January 2008 to 31 December 2011.

Mr Mitropoulos thanked delegates for the continuing trust they had placed in him and for their unfailing understanding and co-operation during his first four years as Secretary-General. He also thanked the Secretariat for its hard work and support.
The 1991 amendments to the IMO Convention are to enter into force on 7 December 2008, as a result of which the IMO’s Facilitation Committee will become formally institutionalized.

This follows the deposit of an instrument of acceptance with the United Nations by the Republic of Yemen on 7 December 2007. Yemen became the 112th IMO Member State to do so, thereby satisfying the entry-into-force requirements set out in Article 66 of the IMO Convention, under the terms of which the amendments will enter into force twelve months after the requisite instruments of acceptance from two-thirds of the Members of the Organization, that is 112 Member Governments out of the present total membership of 167, have been deposited with the Secretary-General of the United Nations.

The Facilitation Committee traces its origin to an ad hoc Working Group on Facilitation which met for the first time in September 1967. In May 1972, the IMO Council, noting the satisfactory work done by the Group and the desire of the Member States to broaden the facilitation activities of IMO and place them on a permanent basis, established the Facilitation Committee as a subsidiary body of the Council. The Facilitation Committee held its first session in April 1973. By the end of the 1980s, the Facilitation Committee was the only IMO committee that was not institutionalized under the IMO Convention and the Netherlands proposed its institutionalization, *inter alia*, “so as to ensure the complete legal reflection of the IMO’s structural activities”. This proposal led to the adoption of the 1991 amendments to the IMO Convention.

Once formally institutionalized, the Committee will have the same legal standing as IMO’s other Committees, reflecting the importance of its work and the issues it addresses. Participation in the Facilitation Committee is open to all Member States of IMO.

The Committee is the focus for IMO’s work in eliminating unnecessary formalities and “red tape” in international shipping. Its role is to facilitate maritime traffic by simplifying and reducing to a minimum the formalities, documentary requirements and procedures on the arrival, stay and departure of ships engaged in international voyage. Traditionally, large numbers of documents are required by customs, immigration, health and other public authorities pertaining to a ship, its crew and passengers, baggage, cargo and mail. Unnecessary paperwork is a problem in most industries, but the potential for red tape is probably greater in shipping than in other industries, because of its international nature and the traditional acceptance of formalities and procedures. Among issues the Committee addresses are those relating to implementation of the Convention on Facilitation of International Maritime Traffic (FAL Convention). The Convention was adopted in 1965 to prevent unnecessary delays in maritime traffic, to aid cooperation between Governments, and to secure the highest practicable degree of uniformity in formalities and other procedures.

The Committee also addresses issues surrounding stowaways, illicit drug trafficking and ships’ security. The Ship-Port Interface Working Group, which meets during the Facilitation Committee sessions and reports to the Facilitation, Maritime Safety and Marine Environment Protection Committees, works on specific issues such as the development of guidelines and manuals for terminal personnel.

Welcoming Yemen’s acceptance of the amendments, IMO Secretary-General Mitropoulos said: “I have repeatedly emphasized the significant link between enhanced security and facilitation of international traffic as representing an even stronger incentive to expedite the entry into force of the amendments. Once it is formally institutionalized, the FAL Committee will be on a par with the other IMO Committees and will be in a better position to fulfill its role of complementing those other Committees’ work by ensuring an appropriate balance between their regulatory tasks and the maintenance of the desired efficiency in shipping operations.”

**New Council elected for 2008-2009**

The IMO Assembly has elected the following States to be members of the IMO Council for the 2008-2009 biennium:

**Category (a)** 10 States with the largest interest in providing international shipping services:

- Argentina
- Bangladesh
- Brazil
- Canada
- France
- Germany
- India
- the Netherlands
- Spain
- Sweden

**Category (b)** 10 other States with the largest interest in international seaborne trade:

- Australia
- Bahamas
- Chile
- Cyprus
- Denmark
- Egypt
- Indonesia
- Jamaica
- Kenya
- Malaysia
- Malta
- Mexico
- New Zealand
- Nigeria
- the Philippines
- Saudi Arabia
- Singapore
- South Africa
- Thailand
- Turkey

**Category (c)** 20 States not elected under (a) or (b) above which have special interests in maritime transport or navigation, and whose election to the Council will ensure the representation of all major geographic areas of the world:

- Africa
- Americas
- Asia
- Europe
- Oceania

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

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LRIT - SOLAS amendment enters into force

A new SOLAS regulation on long-range identification and tracking of ships (LRIT) entered into force on 1 January 2008, giving SOLAS Contracting Governments a year to set up and test the LRIT system and ship operators a year to start fitting the necessary equipment or upgrading so that their ships can transmit LRIT information.

This is among a series of amendments to IMO instruments that entered into force on the same day, covering training requirements for ship security officers, launching/recovery of fast rescue boats and including an amendment to the International Maritime Dangerous Goods (IMDG) Code.

LRIT amendments

The new regulation in SOLAS chapter V Safety of Navigation introduces LRIT as a mandatory requirement for passenger ships, including high-speed craft; and cargo ships, including high-speed craft, of 300 gross tonnage and upward on international voyages; and for mobile offshore drilling units.

Ships constructed on or after 31 December 2008 must be fitted with a system to transmit automatically the identity of the ship, the position of the ship (latitude and longitude) and the date and time of the position provided.

Ships constructed before 31 December 2008 must be fitted with a system to transmit automatically the identity of the ship, the position of the ship (latitude and longitude) and the date and time of the position provided.

Ships operating exclusively in sea area A1 and fitted with an automatic identification system (AIS) are exempt from the requirement to transmit LRIT information. The LRIT system is intended to be operational with respect to the transmission of LRIT information by ships from 30 December 2008.

Minimum training requirements for ship security officers

Amendments to the STCW convention and Code 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.

The amendments also provide that, until 1 July 2009, an STCW Party may continue to recognize personnel who hold or can document qualifications as ship security officers issued before the entry into force of the regulation.

Fast rescue boats

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

Amendments to the IMDG Code

Amendments to the IMDG Code (Amendment 33-06) include those 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 changes relating to the requirements for transport of ethylene oxide with nitrogen up to a total pressure of 1 Mpa (10 bar) at 50ºC (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.

The LRIT system will enable ships to be tracked and identified long before they arrive in coastal waters.
Greece announces US$1m donation to Straits’ fund

The Government of Greece has announced its decision to donate one million dollars to support projects aimed at enhancing the safety, security and environmental protection of the vital shipping route through the Straits of Malacca and Singapore in south-east Asia. The sum will be used to support the ongoing efforts of the Governments of Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore to implement a range of projects developed and agreed during three meetings convened by IMO in co-operation with the three littoral States and held in Jakarta (2005), Kuala Lumpur (2006) and Singapore (2007).

The Singapore meeting also endorsed a new framework, formally dubbed the “Co-operative Mechanism”, in which the littoral States can work together with the international maritime community to enhance navigational safety, security and environmental protection in the Straits, which handle some 30 per cent of all sea transport globally. The establishment of the Co-operative Mechanism constitutes the first time ever that a scheme has been put in place for the management of straits used for international navigation, as envisaged in Article 43 of the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea.

The Greek Minister of Mercantile Marine, Mr. Georges Voulgarakis, announced his country’s donation during the 25th Assembly of IMO. Mr. Voulgarakis said he hoped that his country’s gesture would be “duly appreciated by the littoral States, Straits users, other stakeholders and the maritime community at large, and will act as a stimulus for other Governments and interested parties to come forward with appropriate contributions to enable the IMO and the littoral States to achieve their set objectives”.

Secretary-General Mitropoulos welcomed the Greek initiative, saying “this is one of the key shipping lanes of the world and safety and security of passage through it, and its protection from any pollution that may be caused by ships, is something in which we are all stakeholders to a greater or lesser extent. I am delighted that Greece has, once again, acted in its capacity as one of the world’s major maritime nations and I, too, hope very much that others will follow its lead. I am convinced that the successful outcome of our work to protect shipping lanes of strategic importance and significance, coupled with work to address the needs brought to the fore by the Governments of Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore, will go a long way to ensure the safe, secure and pollution-free passage of ships through the Straits.”

Connecting the Pacific and Indian oceans, the 805-kilometre (500-mile) strait has been one of the sea routes most affected by piracy, despite recent improvements in the security situation thanks to active co-operation between the countries bordering the area.

Large-scale ocean fertilization not currently justified

Parties to the international treaties which regulate the dumping of wastes and other matter at sea, say that planned operations for large-scale fertilization of the oceans using micro-nutrients – for example, iron – to sequester carbon dioxide (CO₂), are currently not justified.

The Contracting Parties to the Convention on the Prevention of Marine Pollution by Dumping of Wastes and Other Matter, 1972 (London Convention – LC) and to the 1996 Protocol thereto (London Protocol – LP), meeting in London in November, 2007 considered a report from their scientific advisers and other submissions relating to fertilization of the oceans to sequester CO₂, using iron and other micro-nutrients. The meeting endorsed the “Statement of Concern” on large-scale fertilization agreed by the LC and LP Scientific Groups, in June 2007, which indicated that knowledge about the effectiveness and potential environmental impacts of ocean iron fertilization was currently insufficient to justify large-scale operations and that this could have negative impacts on the marine environment and human health. The meeting agreed to study the issue further, from scientific and legal perspectives, with a view to its regulation.
A joint campaign by the International Shipping Federation (ISF), the International Chamber of shipping (ICS) and the International Transport Workers Federation (ITF) to promote the IMO/ILO Guidelines on Fair Treatment of Seafarers in the event of a maritime accident, has been endorsed by IMO Secretary-General, Efthimios E. Mitropoulos. The campaign encourages members of ISF/ICS and ITF to approach Governments to promote the Guidelines and monitor how effectively they are being implemented.

Mr. Mitropoulos said that the campaign, which includes the distribution of posters worldwide to inform seafarers of the Guidelines, was fully in line with the request of IMO’s Legal Committee that the Guidelines should be widely disseminated and their application encouraged.

"By the actions you are taking, seafarers serving throughout the shipping industry will not only have a clearer understanding of the fundamental elements of fair treatment in the unfortunate event they are caught up in a maritime accident, but they will also feel encouraged by the knowledge that they have the international community at their side, which, should the situation arise, is prepared and willing to pay attention to their plight," Mr. Mitropoulos said in a letter to Mr. Tony Mason, Secretary-General, ICS/ISF, and Mr. David Cockroft, General Secretary, ITF.

"I have no doubt that, by acting as you suggest, you will render a good service to shipping by, among other things, establishing faith in young people, who are thinking of a career at sea, that seafarers are not alone and unprotected when something goes wrong at sea," Mr. Mitropoulos added.

The Guidelines on fair treatment of seafarers in the event of a maritime accident were adopted by IMO’s Legal Committee, at its 91st session in April 2006. Developed by a Joint IMO/ILO Ad Hoc Expert Working Group on the Fair Treatment of Seafarers in the Event of a Maritime Accident, they were also adopted by the ILO Governing Body, in June 2006.

The Guidelines request that all necessary measures should be taken to ensure the fair treatment of seafarers and recommend that they be observed in all instances where seafarers may be detained by public authorities in the event of a maritime accident.

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 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 any detention is for no longer than necessary.

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.
Major shipping nation accedes to key Conventions

One of the world’s largest shipowning nations, the Commonwealth of the Bahamas, has acceded to two major IMO Conventions and deposited its annual assessment for 2008 with the Organization.

His Excellency Mr. Basil G. O’Brien, High Commissioner and Permanent Representative of the Commonwealth of the Bahamas to IMO, deposited with Secretary-General Mitropoulos, instruments of accession to the International Convention on the Control of Harmful Anti-fouling Systems on Ships, 2001 (AFS Convention) and the International Convention on Civil Liability for Bunker Oil Pollution Damage, 2001 (Bunkers Convention).

During his meeting with Mr. Mitropoulos, High Commissioner O’Brien also deposited the contribution of the Bahamas to the budget of IMO for 2008, with a cheque for $1,227,968. Contributions to IMO’s funding are assessed according to the size of a country’s registered merchant shipping tonnage. The Bahamas has the world’s third-largest registered fleet.

High Commissioner O’Brien of the Bahamas hands his country’s contribution to Secretary-General Mitropoulos
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IMO – SHAPING SHIPPING FOR 60 YEARS

IMONews
THE MAGAZINE OF THE INTERNATIONAL MARITIME ORGANIZATION

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IMO – the International Maritime Organization - is the specialized agency of the United Nations with responsibility for the safety and security of shipping and the prevention of marine pollution by ships. Member Governments use IMO to draw up internationally agreed standards that can be applied to all ships. At IMO, we sum up our objectives in our corporate vision: **Safe, secure and efficient shipping on clean oceans.**

The year 2008 contains a number of key milestones and anniversaries for the Organization. March 6th was the 60th anniversary of the adoption of the IMO Convention at a conference held in Geneva, in 1948, under the auspices of the United Nations; March 17th was the 50th anniversary of that Convention entering into force in 1958; and June will see the 100th meeting of our Council, the executive organ of IMO, which is responsible, under the Assembly, for supervising the work of the Organization in between successive sessions of the latter. As ever, such anniversaries offer a time to reflect on what has gone before and to look forward to what lies ahead.

IMO – originally known as the Inter-governmental Maritime Consultative Organization, or IMCO – held its first meeting in London in 1959.

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

IMO has always been headquartered in London, being based at a variety of different addresses before moving to its present home on Albert Embankment in 1982. The headquarters building was purpose-built for IMO by the UK Government and is leased from the UK under the so-called “headquarters agreement”. In 2006, a major refurbishment exercise began to bring the headquarters building fully up to date with the latest facilities for conferences, meetings, staff offices and ancillary functions, and the completion of this exercise will be celebrated together with the 100th meeting of the Council, in June 2008.

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

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

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

IMO has come a very long way since its inception all those years ago. The Organization was born into a world weary from war and in which the old colonial powers still held sway in terms of global prosperity and trade. As a consequence, these were also major powers in shipping and, as the leading maritime nations, they tended to create their own standards with regard to vessel construction, safety, manning and so on. But, in 1948, the new spirit of global unity that was in the air and the first glimpses of a new world order on the horizon combined to cause a number of far-sighted nations to draw up the blueprint for an international organization that would develop...
standards for shipping – for adoption and universal implementation throughout the entire industry. For it was becoming generally accepted that a situation in which each shipping nation had its own maritime laws was counter-productive in ensuring safety in shipping operations worldwide. Not only were standards different, but some were far higher than others. Conscientious safety-minded shipowners were at an economic disadvantage vis-à-vis their competitors who spent relatively little money on safety, and this was a threat to any serious attempt to improve safety at sea and to international seaborne trade as a whole.

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

The role played by maritime transport in underpinning the new global economy is crucial. Moreover, shipping also makes a very direct contribution to poverty alleviation and the economic growth of developing countries.

The existence of strong transport and communication infrastructures is essential to sustainable development. And maritime activity provides an important source of invisible income to many developing countries. Indeed, important sources of invisible income to many developing countries. Indeed, international transport and telecommunications are essential for the development of many developing countries. Ships are an important component of a manufacturing sector which now sets its store by providing a complete “door-to-door” service. In this regard, the word “vital” is often over-used but in the context of shipping and trade, it is apt; for, without shipping, it is hard to see how international trade could possibly survive.

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

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

It was the first convention to lay down international rules governing safety of shipping, including construction of ships, maintaining a 24 hour listening watch for distress alerts, and making sure enough lifeboats and lifejackets are on board for all the persons on board.

Today, albeit much revised and updated, SOLAS, under the guardianship of IMO, remains the most important of the international conventions regulating maritime safety. Nearly 160 countries are Parties to the SOLAS Convention and its provisions apply to almost 99 per cent of the world fleet.

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

IMO’s first task was to adopt a new version of the SOLAS Convention, the most important of all treaties dealing with maritime safety. This was achieved in 1960 and IMO then turned its attention to such matters as the facilitation of international maritime traffic, load lines and the carriage of dangerous goods, while the system of measuring the tonnage of ships was revised.

But although safety was and remains IMO’s most important responsibility, in the 1960s and 70s a new problem began to emerge – marine pollution. The growth in the amount of oil being transported by sea and in the size of oil tankers was of particular concern and the Torrey Canyon disaster of 1967, in which 120,000 tonnes of oil was spilled, demonstrated the scale of the problem.

During the next few years IMO introduced a series of measures designed to prevent
tanker accidents and to minimize their consequences. It also tackled the environmental threat caused by routine operations such as the cleaning of oil cargo tanks and the disposal of engine room wastes - in tonnage terms a bigger menace than accidental pollution.

The most important of all these measures was the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships, known as the MARPOL Convention. It covers not only accidental and operational oil pollution but also pollution by chemicals, goods in packaged form, sewage, garbage and air pollution.

IMO was also given the task of establishing a system for providing compensation to those who had suffered financially as a result of pollution. Two treaties were adopted, in 1969 and 1971, which enabled victims of oil pollution to obtain compensation much more simply and quickly than had been possible before. Both treaties were amended in 1992, and again in 2000, to increase the limits of compensation payable to victims of pollution. A protocol adopted in 2003 created a supplementary fund, increasing the compensation limits to an amount in excess of US$1.2 billion. A number of other conventions concerning liability and compensation issues have subsequently been developed.

Today, IMO remains one of the smallest UN agencies, with a modest annual budget and a total of around 300 staff in the secretariat. As befits a UN agency, there are many different nationalities represented on the staff, in six divisions: Maritime Safety, Marine Environment, Legal Affairs and External Relations, Technical Co-operation, Administrative and Conference.

Unusually for a UN Agency, the greater part of the IMO budget is today contributed by developing countries. But that was not always the case. When IMO was formed, the Member States agreed to pay for the Organization's budget according to the size of each country's shipping fleet. Because of the changes that have occurred in shipping over the last 20 or 30 years, in particular the open registry system, this means that some of the biggest contributions to the budget are now drawn from countries such as Panama, Liberia and the Bahamas, as these are the countries with the world's largest registered fleets.

The direct output of IMO's regulatory work is a comprehensive body of international conventions. Today there are 50 such IMO treaty instruments, supported by literally hundreds of other measures such as protocols, guidelines, recommended practices and so on. Between them, they influence almost every aspect of shipping and ship operation, including ship design, construction, equipment, maintenance, manning and eventual disposal – literally, from the drawing board to the scrapyard.

IMO's structure for success

When the IMO Convention entered into force on 17 March 1958, the Organization had 21 Member States, which was the minimum requirement for entry into force. The membership now stands at 167 Member States and three Associate members, which includes virtually all the nations of the world with an interest in maritime affairs, be they coastal states with an interest in governmental and non-governmental organizations, representing a wide variety of interests ranging from industry sectors to environmental groups, enjoy consultative status with the Organization. They are able to attend meetings and participate in proceedings, but do not have voting powers. Their input to the whole process of developing and refining international standards for shipping over many years has been innumerable and remains greatly valued.

IMO's main governing body is the Assembly, which consists of all Member States and meets every two years. The Assembly is responsible for approving the Organization's work programme, voting the budget and determining the financial arrangements of the Organization. Then there is a Council, which, in November 2002, was increased in size from 32 to 40 Member States, elected by the Assembly. It oversees the work of the Organization between Assembly sessions.

The technical work of the Organization is carried out by a series of Committees, to which the Member States send their experts as appropriate. The titles of the Committees clearly reflect their areas of expertise and responsibility – the Maritime Safety Committee, the Marine Environment Protection Committee, the Legal Committee, the Technical Co-operation Committee and, most recently, the Facilitation Committee, which will become formally institutionalized when the 1991 amendments to the IMO Convention enter into force on 7 December 2008.

IMO also has nine sub-committees, each with a very specific area of responsibility and expertise. Meetings of committees and sub-committees usually last for a week or more, and there are, on average, around 25 meetings each year.

IMO Conventions - making shipping safer, cleaner and more efficient

Broadly speaking, the main IMO Conventions fall into four categories – safety and security, the protection of the marine environment, minimising the immediate negative effect of accidents and dealing with the aftermath of casualties.

Prime among those dealing with safety and security is the Safety of Life at Sea Convention (SOLAS) which is generally considered to be the most important of all international treaties concerning the safety of merchant ships. Among the topics covered in its chapters are ship construction, subdivision and stability, fire protection, life saving appliances and arrangements, radio communications, safety of navigation, carriage of cargoes and dangerous goods, safe management and the security of ships and port facilities.

Others include the Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Seafarers, the Load Lines Convention, the Collision Regulations or COLREGS, as well as the so-called SUA Conventions, which are legal instruments aimed at ensuring that appropriate action is taken against persons committing unlawful acts against ships such as the seizure of ships by force, acts of violence against persons on board ships and the placing of devices on board a ship which are likely to destroy or damage it. The 2005 SUA Protocols were adopted in October 2005 to update the earlier treaties.

Another set of Conventions is designed to prevent pollution of the marine...
environment. Foremost among these is the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships, or MARPOL, which has six annexes, dealing with oil pollution, pollution by chemicals carried in bulk, harmful substances in packaged form, sewage, garbage and air pollution.

Others include Conventions on the dumping of wastes at sea, on the rights of coastal states to intervene if their coastline is under threat of pollution following upon a maritime casualty, on the use of certain toxic substances in ships’ anti-fouling paint and on ballast water management to control the spread of alien micro-organisms in ships’ ballast water.

In recognition of the fact that, despite everyone’s best efforts, accidents do nevertheless occur, another series of Conventions has been developed that is designed to ensure a proper response to minimise their negative repercussions. The most important consideration in this regard is the protection of human life and, to this end, the International Convention on Maritime Search and Rescue (the SAR Convention) enshrines an international SAR plan to ensure that, no matter where an accident occurs, rescue operations will be co-ordinated by a proper search and rescue organization and, when necessary, by co-operation between neighbouring SAR organizations.

Other measures in this category include the OPRC Convention (Oil Pollution Preparedness, Response and Co-operation) which establishes measures for dealing with pollution incidents, either nationally or in co-operation with other countries, and its related protocol dealing with hazardous and noxious substances, and the Wreck Removal Convention, adopted in Kenya in 2007, which will provide the legal basis for States to remove, or have removed, shipwrecks that may have the potential to affect adversely the safety of lives, goods and property at sea, as well as the marine environment.

Finally, the aftermath of casualties has to be addressed, and for this IMO has developed a series of Conventions to cover questions of liability and establish compensation regimes for victims of pollution incidents and accidents. These include the International Convention on Civil Liability for Oil Pollution Damage (CLC), the treaty establishing an International Fund for Compensation for Oil Pollution Damage (IOFPC), the Athens Convention relating to the Carriage of Passengers and their Luggage by Sea and its 2002 Protocol which totally revised the original Convention, the International Convention on Civil Liability for Bunker Oil Pollution Damage and the International Convention on Liability and Compensation for Damage in Connection with the Carriage of Hazardous and Noxious Substances (HNS Convention).

All these Conventions are kept up to date, with limits of liability increased where appropriate to match changing demands and expectations.

Oil pollution and tanker safety

The 1954 OILPOL Convention was the first to deal with oil pollution from ships. Subsequently amended in 1962, 1969 and 1971, it primarily addressed pollution resulting from routine tanker operations and from the discharge of oily wastes from machinery spaces - then regarded as the major causes of oil pollution from ships.

The grounding of the tanker Torrey Canyon in 1967 was the biggest marine pollution disaster in history at the time and it was to have profound consequences. IMO called an extraordinary session of its Council, which drew up a plan of action on technical and legal aspects of the Torrey Canyon incident. Subsequently, IMO decided to convene an international conference in 1973 to prepare a new international agreement to cover marine pollution.

In 1973 IMO adopted the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships, 1973. This was modified by a Protocol in 1978 and was further amended by the Protocol of 1997. It is generally known as the MARPOL Convention and today covers pollution by chemicals, packaged goods, sewage, garbage and atmospheric emissions, as well as oil pollution.

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

The 1978 MARPOL Protocol introduced the concept known as protective location of segregated ballast tanks. It means that the ballast tanks (which are empty on the cargo carrying leg of the voyage and only loaded with water ballast for the return leg) are positioned where the impact of a collision or grounding is likely to be greatest. In this way the amount of cargo spilled after such an accident will be greatly reduced. The 1983 MARPOL amendments ban the carriage of oil in the forepeak tank, the ship’s most vulnerable point in the event of a collision. Operational techniques such as load-on-top, crude-oil washing and inert gas systems are also enshrined in MARPOL or SOLAS.

In 1992 MARPOL was amended to make it mandatory for tankers of 5,000 dwt and more ordered after 6 July 1993 to be fitted with double hulls, or an alternative design approved by IMO. Amendments to Annex I of MARPOL adopted in 2001 introduced a new global timetable for accelerating the phase-out of single-hull oil tankers. This was subsequently revised again by further amendments adopted in 2003.

Since 1995 all tankers and bulk carriers aged five years and over have been subject to a specially enhanced inspection programme to ensure that any deficiencies - such as corrosion or wear and tear resulting from age or neglect - are detected. The SOLAS Convention also includes special requirements for tankers. Fire safety provisions, for example, are much more stringent for tankers than dry cargo ships, since the danger of fire on board ships carrying oil and refined products is much greater. SOLAS also makes it necessary for essential parts of the steering gear of tankers to be duplicated. As with other ships, much of the navigational equipment of tankers must also be duplicated.
The human element

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

The 1978 STCW Convention was the first to establish basic requirements on training, certification and watchkeeping for seafarers on an international level. Previously, standards for officers and ratings were established by individual governments, usually without reference to practices in other countries. As a result standards and procedures varied widely, even though shipping is the most international of all industries.

The Convention was revised in 1995 to bring it fully up to date. It places the emphasis firmly on demonstrating competence, rather than simply undertaking training. And, for the first time, it required Parties to provide detailed information to IMO concerning administrative measures taken to ensure compliance with the Convention. The so-called “White List” of parties deemed to be giving full and complete effect to the Convention was first published in 2000 and is regularly updated. In 2006, a comprehensive review of the STCW Convention and Code was initiated, with a view to the resulting amendments entering into force on 1 July 2010.

In 1991, a Working Group was established on the role of the Human Element in Maritime Casualties.

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

A resolution on fatigue in manning and safety was adopted by IMO in 1993, drawing the attention of all parties involved in ship operations to the factors which can contribute to fatigue and encouraging them to take them into account when making decisions on ship operations. IMO has also developed practical guidance to promote better understanding and management of fatigue.

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

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

Technical co-operation

Although IMO adopts international shipping regulations, it is the responsibility of Governments to implement them. Not all Governments are equally equipped to do this, so IMO has developed an Integrated Technical Co-operation Programme (ITCP) which is designed to assist Governments that lack the technical knowledge and resources that are needed to operate a shipping industry successfully.

Its aim is to help developing countries improve their ability to comply with international rules and standards relating to maritime safety and security and the prevention and control of maritime pollution, giving priority to technical assistance programmes that focus on human resource development and institutional capacity-building.

The emphasis of the ITCP is very much on training and perhaps the best example is the World Maritime University in Malmö, Sweden, and the IMO International Maritime Law Institute, in Malta, which were established in 1983 and in 1988 respectively and provide advanced training for the men and women involved in maritime administration, maritime law, education and management.

IMO has successfully provided assistance to all developing regions, including Small Island Developing States (SIDS) and Least Developed Countries (LDCs), in all its fields of competence. For example:

- establishment of Regional Maritime Rescue Co-ordination Centres (RMRCs) and their associated Maritime Rescue Sub-Centres (MRCScs)
- development of demonstration sites for multi-disciplinary activities relating to the protection of the marine environment that can be replicated in other developing countries and regions
- establishment of regional co-operation centres and development of national and regional contingency plans and related training courses for marine pollution preparedness and response in partnership with Governments and the oil industry
- establishment of MARPOL port reception facilities in selected ports
- provision of fellowships for specialized maritime training both ‘on the job’ and at institutions
- development of national and regional maritime training institutions
- establishment of networks or associations for women in the maritime sector.
Responding to spills

IMO, through its technical co-operation programme and other initiatives, assists countries to prepare response plans to deal with a pollution incident.

In November 1990, IMO adopted the International Convention on Oil Pollution Preparedness, Response and Co-operation (OPRC Convention), which is designed to help Governments combat major oil pollution incidents. It entered into force in 1995.

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

In 2000, IMO adopted the Protocol on Preparedness, Response and Co-operation to Pollution Incidents by Hazardous and Noxious Substances (the OPRC-HNS Protocol) which follows the principles of the OPRC Convention for hazardous and noxious substances other than oil. It entered into force in 2007.

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

In 1976, in co-operation with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), IMO established the Regional Marine Pollution Emergency Response Centre for the Mediterranean Sea (REMPEC), located in Malta, to co-ordinate anti-pollution activities among the Mediterranean States.

The Regional Marine Pollution Emergency, Information and Training Centre for the Wider Caribbean (REMPEITC-Carib) was established in 1995 and is based in Curacao, Netherlands Antilles. IMO, through its technical co-operation programme, finances activities by the Centre.

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

A flagship of this initiative is the two-year rolling programme for the West and Central Africa region (GI-WACAF), to complement the preparedness and response activities being undertaken in the region by IMO under its technical co-operation programme, together with UNIDO (United Nations Industrial Development Organization) under the GEF (Global Environment Facility) funded project “Combatting living marine resources depletion and coastal areas degradation in the Guinea Current Large Marine Ecosystem through ecosystem-based regional actions”.

Liability and compensation

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

In 1969, IMO adopted the International Convention on Civil Liability for Oil Pollution Damage (CLC Convention) which ensured that adequate compensation was paid to victims and the liability was placed on the shipowner. In 1971 the treaty establishing an International Fund for Compensation for Oil Pollution Damage (Fund Convention), which set higher limits than the CLC Convention, was adopted. This came into force in 1978 and the Fund has its own headquarters in London. Unlike the Civil Liability Convention, which puts the onus on the shipowner, the Fund is made up of contributions from oil importers. The idea is that if an accident at sea results in pollution damage which exceeds the compensation available under the Civil Liability Convention, the Fund will be available to pay an additional amount, while the burden of compensation will be spread more evenly between shipowner and cargo interests. The limits of liability in the two conventions have subsequently been increased through amendments adopted in 1992 and 2000.

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


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

Search and Rescue (SAR)

Although the obligation of ships to go to the assistance of vessels in distress was enshrined both in tradition and in international treaties such as SOLAS 1974, there was no international system covering search and rescue operations until the adoption of the International Convention on Maritime Search and Rescue (the SAR Convention) in 1979. Until then, some areas were well organized and able to provide assistance promptly and efficiently, while others had little, if any, appropriate coverage.

A principal aim of the SAR Convention was to develop an international SAR plan, so that, no matter where an accident might occur, the rescue operation could be co-ordinated by a bona-fide SAR organization and, whenever necessary, through co-operation between neighbouring SAR organizations.

Following adoption of the Convention, IMO divided the world’s oceans into 13 search and rescue areas, in each of which the countries concerned have delimited search and rescue regions for which they are responsible. Provisional search and rescue plans for all these areas were completed when plans for the Indian Ocean were finalized at a conference in 1996.

Meanwhile, IMO had been working on a revision of the 1979 Convention, which was adopted in 1998 and entered into force on 1 January 2000. The revised SAR Convention clarifies the responsibilities of Governments and puts greater emphasis on the regional approach and co-ordination between maritime and aeronautical SAR operations.

Concurrently with the revision of the Convention, IMO and the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) jointly developed the International Aeronautical and Maritime Search and Rescue (IAMSAR) Manual.

In an associated development, maritime distress and safety communications entered a new era on 1 February 1999 with the full implementation of the Global Maritime Distress and Safety System (GMDSS) – an integrated communication system using satellite and terrestrial radiocommunications to ensure that, no matter where a ship in distress may be, its call for assistance can be properly received and acted upon.

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

Under the GMDSS, all passenger ships and all cargo ships over 300 gross tonnage on international voyages have to carry specified satellite and radiocommunications equipment, for sending and receiving distress alerts and maritime safety information, and for general communications.
Maritime security

Maritime security issues first came to prominence on the IMO agenda following the hijacking of the Italian cruise ship *Achille Lauro*, in October 1985. IMO adopted resolution A.584(14) on Measures to prevent unlawful acts which threaten the safety of ships and the security of their passengers and crews. In 1986, the Organization issued MSC/Circ.443 on Measures to prevent unlawful acts against passengers and crew on board ships.

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

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

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

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

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

Air pollution

Annex VI of MARPOL deals specifically with this topic. It was adopted in 1997 and entered into force in May 2005. Among other things, Annex VI sets limits on sulphur oxide and nitrogen oxide emissions from ship exhausts and prohibits deliberate emissions of ozone-depleting substances.

In July 2005, the MEPC agreed on the need to undertake a review of 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 emissions from ships. That work is set for completion during 2008.

Simultaneously, the Organization is also working on the issue of greenhouse gas emissions from ships. In addition to the update of the 2000 IMO Study on the subject, current work includes development of a CO2 Emission Indexing Scheme, a CO2 emission baseline and technical, operational and market-based methods to achieve a reduction of greenhouse gas emissions.

Although shipping only contributes a very small proportion of the noxious substances entering the world’s atmosphere, it is considered important that the industry makes a contribution to global efforts to tackle this problem.

Bulk carrier safety

The international Code of Safe Practice for Solid Bulk Cargoes (BC Code) was first adopted in 1965 and has been updated at regular intervals since then.

In November 1997, following a spate of losses of bulk carriers in the 1990s, IMO adopted a special chapter in SOLAS on bulk carrier safety (chapter XII), covering such topics as damage stability, structural strength, surveys and loading. At the same time, a Code of Practice for the safe unloading and loading of bulk carriers (BLU Code) was also adopted.

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

Over the years, IMO has adopted many specific regulations for passenger ships and ro-ro ferries – for example, specific requirements to count all passengers on board as well as requirements to train certain crew in crisis management and human behaviour so they can deal with passengers in emergency situations.

Although many of these regulations have been adopted in response to major accidents such as the Herald of Free Enterprise (1987) and Estonia (1994) tragedies, IMO has also taken a proactive approach to new regulations.

In 2006, it adopted a package of amendments to SOLAS resulting from a comprehensive review of passenger ship safety, initiated in 2000 with the aim of assessing whether the current regulations were adequate, in particular for the new generation of large passenger ships that were beginning to be built.

These amendments were based on a guiding philosophy that the regulatory framework should place more emphasis on the prevention of a casualty from occurring in the first place 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. They are expected to enter into force on 1 July 2010.

IMO has adopted new regulations on passenger ship safety, aimed at the current generation of large cruise ships.

Fishing vessels

The safety of fishing vessels has been a matter of concern to IMO since the Organization’s inception, but the differences in design and operation between fishing vessels and other types of ship have proved obstacles to their inclusion in most of the chapters of SOLAS and in the Load Lines Convention.

In 1993, IMO adopted the Torremolinos Protocol for the Safety of Fishing Vessels; two years later, it adopted the International Convention on Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Fishing Vessel Personnel, 1995. However, neither instrument has yet received sufficient ratifications to enter into force, meaning that the fishing sector, which reportedly suffers around 24,000 human losses annually, is still lacking the international mandatory safety regime which they would provide. IMO’s technical co-operation programme on fishing vessel safety includes regional seminars to raise awareness of the issue.

In 2005, IMO, in collaboration with the UN Food and Agriculture Organization and the International Labour Organization developed a revised Code of Safety for Fishermen and Fishing Vessels and Voluntary Guidelines for the Design, Construction and Equipment of Small Fishing Vessels.

IMO’s past Secretaries-General

Ove Nielsen
(Denmark)
1959-1961

William Graham
(United Kingdom)
1961-1963

Jean Roulier
(France)
1964-1967

Colin Goad
(United Kingdom)
1968-1973

Chandrika Prasad
Srivastava (India)
1974-1989

William A. O’Neill
(Canada)
1990-2003
Ship recycling

In the process of recycling ships, virtually nothing goes to waste – materials and equipment are almost entirely re-used, and recycling thus makes a positive contribution to the global conservation of energy and resources. Properly handled, ship recycling is, without question, a “green” industry. However, concerns have been raised about the working and environmental conditions at many of the world’s ship scrapping locations. Ships sold for scrapping may contain environmentally hazardous substances such as asbestos, heavy metals, hydrocarbons, ozone depleting substances and others.

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

In 2005, it was agreed that IMO should develop a new, legally-binding instrument on ship recycling for adoption during the 2008-2009 biennium. It is anticipated that the new treaty will be adopted in 2009. IMO continues to co-operate on this topic with the International Labour Organization and the relevant bodies of the Basel Convention on Transboundary Movement of Hazardous Wastes, and a joint Working Group on the subject, embracing all three Organizations, has been established.

Ballast water management

Organisms can be transported across the world in ships’ ballast water before being discharged in alien ecosystems where they have no natural predators; they can cause considerable environmental damage and enter the food chain, causing great harm. The problem was first raised at IMO in 1988 and, since then the MEPC, together with the MSC and technical sub-committees, has been dealing with the issue.

IMO adopted guidelines to address this problem in 1997. Subsequently, further technical advances were sought, leading eventually to the adoption in February 2004 of the International Convention for the Control and Management of Ships’ Ballast Water and Sediments - a new international instrument to prevent the potentially devastating effects of the spread of harmful aquatic organisms carried by ships’ ballast water.

The Convention will require all ships to implement a Ballast Water Management Plan. All ships will have to carry a Ballast Water Record Book and will be required to carry out ballast water management procedures to a given standard. Existing ships will be required to do the same, but after a phase-in period. Parties to the Convention are given the option to take additional measures which are subject to criteria set out in the Convention and IMO guidelines.

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

The spread of invasive species has been recognized as one of the greatest threats to the world’s oceans and a major problem for the ecological and economic well-being of the planet.

Facilitation of maritime traffic

In the spirit of promoting international standards for shipping, IMO adopted the Facilitation Convention in 1965. This is designed to secure the highest practicable degree of uniformity in formalities and other procedures, such as harmonising the documentation required by ports and customs authorities, all with a view to preventing unnecessary delays in maritime traffic, aiding co-operation between Governments and boosting efficiency within the industry.

The Facilitation Committee and the ship port interface working group deal with these and other related issues that clearly require a common approach among governments, such as how to deal with stowaways and migrants.

The Facilitation Committee will become the fifth fully institutionalized IMO Committee on 7 December 2008, when the 1991 amendments to the IMO Convention enter into force.
The monthly publication providing timely news on transport regulations, safety issues, market developments and new products and services in the dangerous goods supply chain.

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IMO strategy and budget approved by governing body

IMO’s strategic plan for the next six years and high-level action plan for the next two years were updated by the Organization’s highest governing body, the Assembly, when it met for its 25th regular session from 19 to 30 November, 2007. The Assembly also approved the Organization’s budget for the next two years, elected a new Council, confirmed the re-appointment of Secretary-General Efthimios E. Mitropoulos for a further term and adopted a wide range of technical and other resolutions.

IMO’s high-level action plan sets out in detail the planned “outputs” for the biennium and links them to the six-year strategic plan. The new strategic plan supersedes the previous version, and identifies strategic directions that will enable IMO to achieve its mission objectives in the years ahead. Among the new challenges for IMO in the updated plan are to place a greater emphasis on contributing to international efforts to reduce atmospheric pollution and address global warming, and to contribute to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

The Assembly also approved the Organization’s budget for the next biennium, agreeing to a total appropriation of £54,669,300 for the 2008-2009 biennium, comprising £26,799,300 for 2008 and £27,870,000 for 2009.

The decision of the Organization’s Council to extend the appointment of Secretary-General Mitropoulos for a further term of four years, for the period 1 January 2008 to 31 December 2011, was unanimously confirmed. The newly elected IMO Council for 2008-2009 met on Friday 30 November and re-elected, by acclamation, Mr. Johan Franson (Sweden) as its Chairman and Mr. Dumisani Ntuli (South Africa) as Vice-Chairman.

Earlier, the Assembly had adopted resolution A.1000 on implementation of part (c) of article 17 of the IMO Convention, with a view to ensuring that the IMO Council is representative, balanced, diverse, efficient and supportive of the interests of the whole membership.

Wide range of resolutions adopted

Altogether, twenty-two resolutions were adopted by the Assembly, which was attended by some 1,000 delegates from IMO Member States as well as international and non-governmental organizations. They covered a broad spectrum of topics, including piracy in waters off the coast of Somalia, technical co-operation, ballast water management, fishing vessel safety and voyage planning in remote areas.

Piracy off the coast of Somalia

The Assembly adopted a resolution on piracy and armed robbery against ships in waters off the coast of Somalia, which, among other things, requests the

Transition to a secure and sustainable world

IMO and the UN Secretariat, in cooperation with the Office of the Defender of the People of the Transitional Federal Government of Somalia to advise the UN Security Council that it consents to warships or military aircraft entering its territorial sea when engaging in operations against pirates or suspected pirates and armed robbers.

Technical co-operation

A resolution on the linkage between the Integrated Technical Co-operation Programme (ITCP) and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) was adopted, which includes mechanisms to enable Member States to analyse and assess their progress in developing maritime capacity, over time. It requests the Technical Co-operation Committee to give high priority to activities that not only promote the early ratification and effective implementation of IMO instruments but also contribute to the attainment of the MDGs, taking into account the special needs of the Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and Small Island Developing States (SIDS), and the particular maritime transport needs of Africa.

The related resolution A.998, on the need for capacity-building for the development and implementation of new, and amendments to, existing instruments, recommends that IMO establishes mechanisms to identify the capacity-building needs of developing countries and provide any related technical assistance when considering the introduction of new IMO instruments or amendments to existing ones.
Implementation of Mandatory IMO Instruments

The Assembly adopted a revised Code for the Implementation of Mandatory IMO Instruments, 2007, which serves as the audit standard for the Voluntary IMO Member State Audit Scheme. The revised Code updates that adopted in 2005, to take into account amendments to mandatory IMO instruments which have entered into force or become effective since then.

Ballast Water Management

Resolution A.1005(25) Application of the International Convention for the Control and Management of Ships’ Ballast Water and Sediments, 2004 was adopted to provide certainty and confidence in the application of the BWM Convention, thereby assisting shipping companies, ship owners, managers and operators, as well as the shipbuilding and equipment manufacturing industries, in the timely planning of their operations.

The resolution addresses concerns over implementation of the Convention for vessels constructed in 2009, given the uncertainties as to whether type-approved technology would be immediately available for these ships. It allows for certain new ships built in 2009 to be exempted, if such technologies are not available, and calls on States, which have not yet done so, to ratify, accept, approve or accede to the Convention as soon as possible.

Fishing Vessel Safety

The Assembly adopted a resolution on the entry into force and implementation of the 1993 Torremolinos protocol, which reiterates the need for Governments to consider ratifying, accepting, approving or acceding to the Torremolinos Protocol at the earliest possible opportunity, so that this international treaty covering fishing vessel safety can enter into force. The IMO Assembly remains convinced that the entry into force of the Torremolinos Protocol would make a significant contribution to maritime safety in general (and that of fishing vessels in particular) and also that the continuing and alarmingly high number of fishermen’s lives and of fishing vessels reportedly lost every year could be substantially reduced by the global, uniform and effective implementation of the Protocol.

To that end, the Assembly endorsed the decision of the Maritime Safety Committee to explore further the legal and technical options to facilitate and expedite the Protocol’s entry into force, which were previously recommended by the Joint FAO/IMO Ad Hoc Working Group on Illegal, Unregulated and Unreported Fishing and Related Matters.

Voyage Planning in Remote Areas

A resolution on Guidelines on voyage planning for passenger ships operating in remote areas, was adopted, in response to the growing popularity of cruise ships sailing to new destinations, some of which are at considerable distances from search and rescue facilities. This new IMO initiative comes in the aftermath of the adoption, by the Organization’s Maritime Safety and Marine Environment Protection Committees, in December 2002, of Guidelines for ships operating in Arctic ice covered waters.

"Safety has increased threefold; loss of life, cargo and ships have fallen, security has improved and oil spills have been reduced to one third or less of the level they were at 10 years ago," Secretary-General Mitropoulos told delegates.
IMO has a good record but more needs to be done, Secretary-General tells Assembly delegates

IMO has a good and improving record in enhancing safety and security at sea and preventing marine pollution from ships, but more needs to be done, Secretary-General Efthimios E. Mitropoulos told delegates at the opening of the 25th session of the Organization’s governing body, the Assembly. The meeting was attended by more than 1,000 delegates from IMO Member States as well as international and non-governmental organizations.

In his opening address, Mr. Mitropoulos pointed out that, during the last 10 years, the amount of cargo carried by sea has tripled, ships have increased in numbers, size and complexity, and their service characteristics (including speed, endurance, propulsive efficiency, emissions, automation, strength, fatigue life and even coatings) have significantly improved. At the same time, he added, safety has increased threefold; loss of life, cargo and ships have fallen, security has improved and oil spills have been reduced to one third or less of the level they were at 10 years ago.

He told delegates that “much still remains to be done if we are to continue serving safety, security, efficiency and environmental protection with the vigilance, preparedness to respond and meticulous care they deserve. The fact is that we operate from a solid foundation, which allows grounds for optimism that even better days lie ahead.”

Mr. Mitropoulos went on to highlight the Organization’s work in preventing marine pollution from ships, noting the current action plan to address greenhouse gases and other harmful emissions from ships. The World Maritime Day theme in 2007 focused on environmental challenges, enabling the Organization to draw attention to the work IMO and the shipping industry have done, and continue doing, to tackle environmental issues.

“Our aim has been both to showcase the good story that IMO and shipping have to tell about what we have already achieved on the environment and to highlight the fact that we are very aware of what still needs to be done and that we are proactively and responsibly addressing the situation in search of still further improvements,” Mr. Mitropoulos said.

As usual, former graduates of the World Maritime University from among the Assembly delegates and IMO staff used the occasion for a reunion.
Election of Officers

The 25th Assembly elected Mr. Gehad Madi, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Egypt, as President.

The Vice-Presidents elected were:

1st Vice-President: His Excellency Mr. Vassilis Achilleas Pispinis, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Greece; and

2nd Vice-President: His Excellency Mr. Rafael Moreno Rojas, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Chile.

The Assembly elected the following to chair the two Committees of the Assembly:

Committee 1: Mr. Jørgen Hammer Hansen, Director General, Danish Maritime Authority, Denmark; and

Committee 2: Mr. Neil Ferrer, Alternate Permanent Representative of the Republic of the Philippines to IMO and First Secretary, Embassy of the Republic of the Philippines.

The meeting elected Mr. Gehad Madi, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Egypt, as President.
Industry study on oil and chemical tanker explosions prompts working group

Chemical tankers can present special safety challenges and the work of an industry group investigating a series of fires and explosions is to be further developed by the Sub-Committee.

A Working Group on measures to prevent explosions on oil and chemical tankers transporting low flash-point cargoes will be established at the next session of the Sub-Committee on Fire Protection, in January 2009, the Sub-Committee agreed at its 52nd session. The aim will be to progress work based on the recommendations of the Inter-Industry Working Group (IIWG), which was established to study incidents of fires and explosions on chemical and product tankers. The IIWG reported to the Maritime Safety Committee (MSC) at its 81st session, in May 2006, and a number of issues were referred to the Sub-Committee.

During its 52nd session, the Sub-Committee discussed a number of submissions on the matter and noted the following views expressed during the discussion:

- further investigation into the application of the “property based approach” and a review of the relevant parts of SOLAS are needed to verify how the above approach could be incorporated for new tankers;
- there is still a lack of information on human element issues such as maintenance procedures, tank cleaning, etc., and how such procedures actually work in practice, which emphasizes the importance of industry participation in this work;
- cost and benefit studies should be considered as part of this work, including port costs associated with shore-based inerting of tanks;
- casualty data should be collected to determine if the introduction of inert gas systems reduces the fires and explosions on tankers or increases tank entry casualties; and
- there is a need for detailed information on low flash-point cargoes in order to determine what substances are referred to, and the type and number of ships engaged in the transport of such cargoes.

Governments and interested organizations are invited to submit papers to the next session.

Approval of fixed fire detection and fire alarm systems for cabin balconies – guidelines agreed

Draft Guidelines for the approval of fixed-pressure water-spraying and water-based fire-extinguishing systems for cabin balconies were agreed by the Sub-Committee. They will be submitted to the MSC at its 84th session, in May 2008, for approval.

Associated SOLAS amendments to strengthen the fire protection arrangements in relation to cabin balconies on passenger ships are due to enter into force on 1 July 2008. They were adopted by MSC 82 in December 2006, following the fire aboard the Star Princess in March 2006.

Review of fire safety of external areas on passenger ships

Following work by a correspondence group and working group on the review of fire safety of external areas on passenger ships, the Sub-Committee also agreed draft Guidelines for evaluation of fire risk of external areas on passenger ships.

The Guidelines take into account the fact that external areas have routinely been assumed to have little or no fire risk, and have not had to comply with SOLAS Chapter II-2 requirements applicable to interior spaces. While this assumption may be accurate for general open deck areas, the continual evolution of new types of passenger amenities on open deck areas may be introducing levels of fire risk that are not fully accounted for by the existing regulations.

The guidelines include Part 1: Design Guidelines for the evaluation of fire risk of external areas on new passenger ships; and Part 2: Simplified risk assessments method for external areas on passenger ships. It is recommended that all parties concerned use Part 1 at the early stage of design of new passenger ships when determining the fire risk of external areas; conduct fire risk assessments in accordance with Part 2, whenever an external area on existing passenger ships is subject to change of use; and document fire risk assessments when conducted in accordance with Part 2 within the Shipboard Safety Management System.

Draft SOLAS amendments agreed

The Sub-Committee agreed a number of draft amendments to SOLAS and the 2000 HSC Code for submission to MSC 84 for approval, with a view to adoption:

- draft amendments to SOLAS regulation II-2/9 (Containment of fire) concerning the control of the installation of fire doors with three-sided frames. The draft amendments would apply to new ships only;
- draft amendments to SOLAS regulation II-2/9.7 on matters related to fire resistance of ventilation ducts, to require ventilation ducts to be of steel or equivalent material, while short ducts, not generally exceeding 2m in length, may be of heat resisting non-combustible material on new ships;
- draft amendments to SOLAS regulation II-2/10 regarding recharging requirements.
and the appropriate number of spare charges for the required breathing apparatus. The proposed new paragraph 10.2.6 would be applicable to new passenger ships carrying more than 36 passengers and would require the ships to be fitted with a suitably located means for fully recharging breathing air cylinders, free from contamination; and

- draft amendments to the SOLAS Convention and to the 2000 HSC Code, concerning the application of requirements for the carriage of dangerous goods. The amendments update the requirements, including an update of tables 19.3 (in SOLAS chapter II-2) and 7.17-3 (in the 2000 HSC Code), which set out the application of the requirements to different classes of dangerous goods (except solid dangerous goods in bulk).

Performance testing and approval standards for fire safety systems

The Sub-Committee agreed, for submission to MSC 84 for approval:

- draft Revised Guidelines for the approval of equivalent fixed fire-extinguishing systems, as referred to in SOLAS 74, for machinery spaces (MSC/Circ.1007);
- draft Guidelines for high-expansion foam using inside air for the protection of machinery spaces and cargo pump-rooms; and
- draft Guidelines for the approval of fixed water-based fire-fighting systems for ro-ro spaces and special category spaces equivalent to that referred to in resolution A.123(V).

Guidelines for drainage systems in closed vehicle and ro-ro spaces and special category spaces

The Sub-Committee instructed the Correspondence Group on Performance Testing and Approval Standards for Fire Safety Systems to continue developing the Guidelines for drainage systems in closed vehicle and ro-ro spaces and special category spaces, with a view to finalizing them at FP 53 in 2009.

The guidelines are intended to support the recently approved SOLAS amendments related to the drainage of fire-fighting water from the vehicle decks of ro-ro ships, which were approved by MSC 83, for adoption at MSC 84, in response to the tragic loss of life caused by the sinking of the passenger ferry Al-Salam Boccaccio 98. The draft amendments to SOLAS chapters II-1 and II-2 are designed to enhance the current regulations, and include the addition of a requirement for measures to be taken to prevent the blockage of drainage arrangements.

Comprehensive review of the Fire Test Procedures Code

The Sub-Committee continued its review of the Fire Test Procedures (FTP) Code, which is aimed at enhancing its user-friendliness and providing for a more uniform application of the Code through the inclusion of appropriate interpretations.

A correspondence group was established to finalize the work and to submit a report, containing the complete text of the draft revised FTP Code, to FP 53.

Unified interpretations agreed

The Sub-Committee agreed, for submission to MSC 84 for approval:

- draft Unified interpretations of SOLAS chapter II-2 on the number and arrangement of portable fire extinguishers on board ships;
- draft Unified interpretations of SOLAS chapter II-2 on portions of open decks utilized for the storage of gas bottles; separation of galley exhaust ducts from spaces; and protection of enclosed pipe trunks within the cargo tanks deck area by a fixed fire-extinguishing system; and
- draft Unified interpretations of the FTP Code on large fire doors.

Fixed hydrocarbon gas detection systems on double hull oil tankers

Following consideration of the report of the Correspondence Group on Measures to Prevent Fires in Engine-Rooms and Cargo-Pump Rooms, which considered matters relating to fixed hydrocarbon gas detection systems on double hull oil tankers, as well as other submissions, the Sub-Committee agreed in principle with a proposal to make the installation of fixed hydrocarbon gas detection systems on board double-hull tankers of 20,000 dwt and above mandatory, and to adopt a new chapter 16 of the FSS Code.

In this context, a correspondence group was established to develop corresponding draft amendments to the SOLAS regulation II-2/4.5.7 and to develop a new chapter 16 of the FSS Code to detail the specifications for such systems.

Development of provisions for gas-fuelled ships

The Sub-Committee reviewed fire protection-related aspects of the draft Interim Guidelines on safety for gas-fuelled engine installations in ships, and established a Correspondence Group on Development of Provisions for Gas-Fuelled Ships to review the fire protection-related provisions of the draft Interim guidelines and report to FP 53.

The work on developing the guidelines is being co-ordinated by the Sub-Committee on Bulk Liquids and Gases (BLG), with a target completion date of 2009.
Draft amendments to MARPOL Annex VI and the NOx Technical Code agreed

Draft amendments to revise the MARPOL regulations on the prevention of air pollution from ships were agreed by the IMO Sub-Committee on Bulk Liquids and Gases (BLG), at its 12th session.

Following lengthy and technically challenging discussions in the Air Pollution Working Group, the Sub-Committee agreed a draft revised Annex VI to the MARPOL Convention and amendments to the NOx Technical Code for submission to the Marine Environment Protection Committee (MEPC 57, 31 March to 4 April 2008).

A number of options remain open for discussion at the MEPC, which is expected to approve the amendments prior to their formal adoption at MEPC 58 (6 to 10 October 2008). The amendments would then enter into force, under the tacit acceptance procedure, 16 months later, in March 2010, or on a date to be decided by the MEPC.

SOx and PM emissions from ships

Given the significant environmental, human health, and economic consequences of a decision on how best to further reduce emissions of sulphur oxide (SOx) and particulate matter (PM) from ships, the Sub-Committee felt it appropriate that relevant policy decisions should be taken at the Committee level and that its principal duty was to “set the table” for such discussions. The Working Group was tasked with reviewing the six options under consideration and, following extensive discussion in the group, the BLG Sub-Committee agreed to reduce the six options to just three, representing an equitable and fair compression of the different concepts and proposals under consideration by the Organization, as described below (the figures in square brackets remain open for further consideration by the MEPC):

**Option 1 Global**
- 1.00% (10,000 ppm)* fuel standard applied globally in [2012]
- 0.50% (5,000 ppm) fuel standard applied globally in [2015]

**Option 2 Global/Regional**
- Global cap remains unchanged at 4.50% (45,000 ppm)
- Emission Control Areas require 0.10% (1,000 ppm) standard in [2012]

**Option 3 Global/Regional with Micro-Areas**
- Global cap is lowered to 3.00% (30,000 ppm) in [2012]
- Emission Control Area standard lowered to 1.00% (10,000 ppm) in [2010]
- Emission Control Area standard lowered to 0.50% (5,000 ppm) in [2015]
- Micro-Emission Control Areas may be established at a distance of no more than 24 nautical miles from the baseline with a 0.10% (1,000 ppm) standard. A proposal for such Micro-Emission Control Areas must be submitted to IMO for review, but are to be subject to a relaxed set of criteria.

The respective parts per million (ppm) and corresponding percentages all refer to maximum sulphur content limits.

It was noted that the respective implementation dates, control levels, and concepts outlined in the above options would all be subject to debate and modification and that nothing precluded the development of a hybrid proposal. A concern was raised over whether sufficient quantities of compliant fuel would be available to support the options as presented. As initially presented, all options would require significant changes in product output from many refineries around the world, with some options representing an unprecedented single step regulatory change compared to the changes that have driven global fuel markets in the past decade.

Particular attention was drawn to the need to maintain the production link between marine fuel and land-based fuel with respect to specifications around the world and to adopt a phased approach such that refinery and supply configurations could be adapted, in response to market signals, to ensure continued availability and supply without major disruption.

A number of other matters were also addressed, including finalization of draft exhaust gas cleaning guidelines and wash water discharge criteria for such systems, to be forwarded to MEPC for discussion and possible adoption by the Committee. It was, however, decided not to recommend that a market-based instrument or trials for such instruments be included in the amendments to Annex VI.

**NOx regulations for new engines**

The Sub-Committee further developed the three-tier structure for new engines, which would set progressively tighter nitrogen oxide (NOx) emission standards for new engines depending on the date of their installation. Tier I represents the 17 g/kW standard stipulated in the existing Annex VI.

For Tier II, it was agreed to recommend a standard that would see NOx emission...
levels for new engines installed from 1 January 2011 reduced by a figure of between 15.5 per cent and 21.8 per cent, depending on the engine’s operating parameters.

With regard to Tier III, a number of delegations expressed the view that a geographically based approach requiring significant reductions in designated Emission Control Areas (ECAs), should be introduced. Such an approach, it was felt, would provide a global framework for reducing NOx emissions in coastal areas with the most severe problems, while allowing operation at the Tier II level outside the designated Emission Control Areas. It was also noted that this approach would offer significant protection of the environment and human health, while avoiding the increased fuel consumption that is associated with less advanced NOx reduction technologies.

The recommended Tier III standard, applicable to new builds beginning on January 2016, will, therefore, see a reduction of 80 per cent from Tier I levels in specific emission control areas designated through IMO. The Organization will develop guidelines for the designation of such areas, taking into account the environmental impact. The meeting noted that engine manufacturers in Japan are already developing advanced engine treatment systems to meet the proposed Tier III standard.

### NOx standards for existing engines

The working group reviewed the issue of whether it was appropriate and feasible to establish a standard applicable to pre-2000 marine diesel engine installations. While a wide range of opinion exists on the question of whether such a standard is appropriate and practical, many delegations felt that insufficient information and studies had been submitted to inform such a decision. It was, therefore, agreed that further information and consideration of this matter will be necessary at MEPC 57.

### NOx Technical Code

With respect to the NOx Technical Code, earlier debates concerning the certification of serially produced engines, direct measurement and monitoring methods, a draft certification procedure for existing engines, and test cycles to be applied to Tier II and Tier III engines, were resolved. Among other things, it was agreed that it should be left to the Administration to decide whether serially produced engines will be required to be certified individually, and that each engine should be accompanied throughout its life installed on a ship, while under the authority of a given Administration, by a certificate demonstrating its conformity as part of a generic engine family certification or a certificate issued for that single engine.

Draft text for chapter 6.4 of the NOx Technical Code concerning direct measurement and monitoring was further developed and agreed, and test cycles to be applied for the Tier II and Tier III NOx standards were also agreed. It was, however, recognized that the test cycle and respective load points may be revisited in the future, if necessary.

### Ship-to-ship oil transfer operations – draft amendments agreed

In other issues, the Sub-Committee reached substantive agreement on proposed draft amendments to MARPOL Annex I for the prevention of marine pollution during ship-to-ship (STS) oil transfer operations (Pic: ShipCargo Ltd).

Substantive agreement was reached on proposed draft amendments to MARPOL Annex I for the prevention of marine pollution during ship-to-ship (STS) oil transfer operations for
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submission to the MEPC for further consideration. It was agreed that the scope of the application of the proposed new draft chapter 8 of Annex I on Prevention of pollution during transfer of oil cargo between oil tankers at sea should be oil tankers of 150 gross tonnage and above.

The proposed new regulations would require any oil tanker involved in STS operations to have on board a plan prescribing how to conduct STS operations (STS Plan), which would be approved by its Administration. The STS Plan would take into account best practice guidelines for STS operations, referred to in a footnote as IMO’s “Manual on Oil Pollution, Section I, Prevention” as amended, and the ICS and OCIMF “Ship to ship Transfer Guide, Petroleum”, fourth edition, 2005.

Notification to the relevant coastal State would be required not less than 48 hours in advance of the scheduled STS operations. The geographic scope of the notification requirements includes the exclusive economic zone and the territorial sea of the coastal State.

Guidelines for implementation of the BWM Convention agreed

The Sub-Committee finalized Guidelines for ballast water sampling, the last of the 14 Guidelines required for uniform implementation of the International Convention for the Control and Management of Ships’ Ballast Water and Sediments, 2004, for submission to the MEPC for adoption by an MEPC resolution. The Sub-Committee also agreed a Guidance document on arrangements for responding to emergency situations involving ballast water operations, for submission to the MEPC.

Carriage of Heavy Grade Oil in the Antarctic area

The Sub-Committee agreed to request the MEPC to include a new high priority item on its work programme and provisional agenda for BLG 13 on Amendments to MARPOL Annex I on the use of carriage of Heavy Grade Oil in the Antarctic area. The aim is to develop new requirements for the protection of the unique environment of the Antarctic area.

During discussion on the issue, there was overwhelming support, in principle, for a ban on the use and carriage of HGO in the Antarctic area while, at the same time, acknowledging that there were significant issues needing resolution and that further discussion was necessary before implementation.

Development of interim Guidelines for gas-fuelled engine installations in ships

The Sub-Committee reviewed the report of a correspondence group on the development of provisions for gas-fuelled ships and confirmed that, in furthering the development of provisions for gas-fuelled ships, it would be appropriate to have a two-step approach, and that the first set of the provisions developed should be applicable to LNG carriers only.

The correspondence group on development of provisions for gas-fuelled ships was instructed to continue an editorial and technical review of the draft Interim guidelines on safety for gas-fuelled engine installations in ships; prepare a work plan, scope and framework for development of the International Code of Safety for Gas-Fuelled Engine Installations in Ships (IGF Code); collect safety analyses performed for all gas fuels for consideration by the correspondence group, in conjunction with the development of the IGF Code; and submit a report to BLG 13.

Material Safety Data Sheets resolution revision

Significant progress was made on the revision of resolution MSC.150(77) on Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS) for MARPOL Annex I cargoes and marine fuels.

The Sub-Committee agreed, in principle, to amendments to annex 1 of the resolution (safety, handling and environmental information to be supplied to a ship) and established a correspondence group to review its annex 2 (guidelines for the completion of the MSDS)

It was agreed that the information in the MSDS, which are intended to inform seafarers of the possible dangers associated with the handling of chemicals and oils, should accurately reflect the product being carried. For example, considering product XYZ, where the properties are well known and reflected in the MSDS, then that MSDS may be used for each instance that product is carried, provided it continues to reflect the properties of the product accurately. However, in the event that the properties change, e.g. through blending, such that the MSDS is no longer accurate, even if the name of the product name has not changed, a new and accurate MSDS needs to be provided.

Bio-fouling of ships

The Sub-Committee began work on the development of measures to minimize the transfer of invasive aquatic species through the bio-fouling of ships, in other words the adherence of sealife such as algae and molluscs to ships’ hulls. There are currently no international measures in place to address the risks of invasive aquatic species introduction through bio-fouling.

The International Convention on the Control of Harmful Anti-fouling Systems on Ships, 2001, which will enter into force on 17 September 2008, will prohibit the use of harmful organotins in anti-fouling paints used on ships and will establish a mechanism to prevent the potential future use of other harmful substances in anti-fouling systems. However, it does not address the actual issue of bio-fouling and transfer of species. Other instruments such as MARPOL and the BWM Convention also do not directly address the issue.

Even with the application of anti-fouling systems, bio-fouling of properly maintained vessels can still occur to a biologically significant extent, particularly in so-called “niche areas”, such as sea chests, dry docking support strips or bow thrusters, contributing to the potential for transfer of harmful aquatic organisms.

A range of potential implementation options for managing the risks caused by ships’ bio-fouling were noted, namely: (1) develop Guidelines for adoption as an MEPC or Assembly resolution; (2) link measures to the APS Convention; (3) link measures to the BWM Convention; (4) develop a new convention; and (5) develop a bio-fouling annex to MARPOL Convention.

A correspondence group was established and instructed to:

• review ongoing research on the potential for harmful effects of bio-fouling on ships
on the marine environment, human health, property and resources, and the effect existing and proposed regional, national and local requirements may have on the shipping industry, with the aim being to facilitate the development of practical proposals for measures that may be needed to address this risk;

- further consider existing best practice and potential future measures aimed at minimizing the harmful effects of ships’ bio-fouling on the marine environment, human health, property and resources;
- further consider the practicality and feasibility of the five options identified for implementing international measures to minimize the transfer of invasive aquatic species through bio-fouling of ships and recommend to the Sub-Committee potential ways forward for its consideration;
- commence development of draft interim practical guidance for minimizing the transfer of invasive aquatic species through bio-fouling of ships using resolution A.868(20) as a model,
- develop a draft work plan for the further development of potential international measures for minimizing the transfer of invasive aquatic species through bio-fouling of ships; and
- submit a written report to BLG 13.

Requirements for the carriage of gas-to-liquid oils

The Sub-Committee agreed a BLG circular on conditions of carriage for Gas to Liquid (GTL) oils, confirming that GTL oils should continue to be transported under MARPOL Annex I provisions, in view of their similar composition and comparable properties with petroleum oil, equivalent products such as naphtha, kerosene, diesel and luboils.

Scientific study to assist MARPOL amendment process completed

The comprehensive study commissioned by IMO to assist in the planned revision of regulations governing air pollution from ships was successfully completed.

The informal cross government/industry scientific group of experts was set up in July 2007. It was tasked with reviewing the impact on the environment, on human health and on the shipping and petroleum industries, of applying any of the fuel options proposed to reduce SOx and particulate matter generated by shipping, as well as the consequential impact such fuel options could have on other emissions, including CO2 emissions from ships and refineries.

The group’s report was presented to BLG 12, which finalized proposals for amendments to Annex VI of the MARPOL Convention. These proposals have been forwarded to the Marine Environment Protection Committee for approval and subsequent formal adoption in October 2008. Amendments to MARPOL normally enter into force 16 months after their adoption.

The study group was led by Mr. Mike Hunter of the United Kingdom and was made up of independent experts nominated by The Bahamas, China, Germany, Japan, Norway, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, Sweden, the United Kingdom and the United States of America, as well as from a number of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in consultative status with IMO, representing a broad range of shipping and oil industry interests.
The inaugural IMO Award for Exceptional Bravery at Sea has been presented to two seafarers who risked their lives to save others in a dramatic rescue operation in gale-force winds.

Second Officer Mustafa Topiwala of the 83,155 dwt Bahamas-registered oil/bulk ore carrier Searose G and Captain Zvonimir Ostric (who was on the vessel as onboard trainer at the time of the incident) were selected to receive the inaugural 2007 IMO Award for Exceptional Bravery at Sea, in recognition of their part in the rescue of survivors from the sunken vessel Teklivka, in the eastern Mediterranean, in March 2006. They were nominated by the Bahamas and by the International Federation of Shipmasters’ Associations (IFSMA).

Presenting the award, during a special ceremony in London held during the Organization’s 25th Assembly, IMO Secretary-General Mr. Eftimios E. Mitropoulos said the award was “a tribute to extraordinary courage; to adversity faced and adversity overcome; to determination in the face of grave danger; and to lives risked and lives saved.”

The Searose G was on passage through the Mediterranean, bound for the Suez Canal, when it responded to a distress call from the Maltese-flagged Teklivka, which was sinking 50 miles south in gale force winds. By the time the Searose G reached the scene, the Teklivka had sunk. Nevertheless, a dramatic rescue operation was launched and the Searose G managed to rescue nine crew members with a further three survivors picked up by another vessel. Tragically, three crew members of the Teklivka were lost.

The Assessment and Judging Panels considered that Second Officer Topiwala and Captain Ostric had placed their own lives in jeopardy, even though they were not trained professional rescuers, by undertaking acts that went well beyond the scope of their normal duties. They left the comparative safety of their ship, descending to a liferaft filled with oil and water. Second Officer Topiwala then jumped into the sea, in extremely hazardous weather conditions and reduced visibility, during the rescue, assisted by Captain Ostric.

A significant degree of skill was demonstrated by the master in manoeuvring his vessel in the severe conditions, further complicated by the need to avoid collision with containers floating in the sea. Throughout the operation there was excellent co-operation among the entire crew and this contributed to its success. The crew on the deck were at risk of being swept overboard or injured by seas breaking over the decks, while Second Officer Topiwala and Captain Ostric were also at great risk, as they could have been swept away by the particularly rough waters.

After eight oil-covered survivors had been picked up from a liferaft, the ninth was too weak to climb on the ladder and fell out of the liferaft into the sea. He was sighted floating face down, having previously removed his lifejacket. Second Officer Topiwala descended a ladder wearing a safety harness to assist the survivor in the water, assisted by Captain Ostric. The survivor was drifting unconscious by this time but was finally secured and brought on board the Searose G.

Oil-covered survivors from the Teklivka cling to their damaged liferaft (Pic: Searose G)
Mr. Topiwala and Captain Ostric were each presented with a silver medal produced with the support of the Royal Mint of Spain, and a certificate citing the act of exceptional bravery performed.

Mr. Mitropoulos also presented certificates to eight other nominees, recommended by the Assessment and Judging Panels, saying “The elemental nature of their working environment still occasionally places professional seafarers in the sorts of situation for which there can be little or no adequate preparation. How they respond is a test of true courage – courage that deserves to be acknowledged and recognized”.

The IMO Award for Exceptional Bravery at Sea was established by the Organization to provide international recognition for those who, at the risk of losing their own life, perform acts of exceptional bravery, displaying outstanding courage in attempting to save life at sea or in attempting to prevent or mitigate damage to the marine environment – and, by so doing, help to raise the profile of shipping and enhance its image.

“The obligation to assist those in distress at sea is now enshrined in international law, in particular within a variety of instruments such as the Safety of Life at Sea Convention, the Salvage Convention, the International Convention on Search and Rescue and the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. However, I doubt whether any of that was in the minds of these gallant men and women when they performed the acts of bravery for which we are paying tribute this evening. They were, I am sure, motivated solely by the purest of humanitarian motives and, in so doing, were continuing a practice that has its roots in traditions lost in the annals of maritime history,” Mr. Mitropoulos said.

Altogether, nominations for 21 acts of bravery, for the 2007 Award, were received from nine IMO Member States and three non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the Organization. The nominations focused on such factors as location of the incident; prevailing weather conditions; skill displayed; leadership demonstrated; determination to conduct the rescue operation; exceptional courage demonstrated; and degree of risk (to human lives and/or the marine environment) involved.

The nominations were scrutinized initially by an Assessment Panel made up of representatives of non-governmental organizations in consultative status with IMO*, which met at IMO on 30 May 2007, under the chairmanship of the Secretary-General. The subsequent Panel of Judges was chaired by the Chairman of the IMO Council (Mr. J. Franson of Sweden) and its membership comprises the Chairmen of the five IMO Committees.

The winners were each presented with a silver medal produced with the support of the Royal Mint of Spain.

The Certificate recipients (The first two nominees below were also shortlisted for the Award.)

The Hong Kong Government Flying Service, nominated by China, for courageous actions that went well above those expected of a professional rescue service.

Members of the Hong Kong Government Flying Service risked their own lives to rescue 91 crew members of the vessel Wing on IV and the barge Hai Yang Shi You 298 in August 2006, during the course of three consecutive aircraft/helicopter operations carried out in severe typhoon weather conditions, at some 170km and 132km southwest of Hong Kong, China, respectively.

Captain Xufeng Zu of the diving squad of Quinghuangdao Base of Beihai Rescue Bureau of China Rescue and Salvage (CRS). Captain Xufeng Zu was nominated by the International Maritime Rescue Federation (IMRF) for a selfless act of bravery in August 2006. During the course of a professional operation involving two consecutive dives to locate and rescue the crew from the upturned hull of the capsized bulk carrier Fu Hua 1 (41 miles off Quinghuangdao, China), Captain Zu gave up his own breathing equipment, with no guarantee that he would survive, thereby placing his own life at risk so that two remaining survivors could be saved, before he himself was able to leave the stricken vessel.

Dr. Christine Jane Bradshaw (a civilian nominated by IMRF), for descending on a winch in rough weather, having been to sea only once before in benign conditions, to assist in treating and rescuing the last surviving crew member of the tanker FR8 Venture, in the Pentland Firth, Scotland, in November 2006.

The crew of the ocean-going rescue tug Nanhaijui 111, of Nanhai Rescue Bureau (nominated by China), for a series of successful rescue missions since the rescue tug was put into service in March 2006, including the location and rescue of 14 small Vietnamese fishing boats during typhoon Chan Chu, in May 2006.

Mr. Brett Churcher, skipper of the fishing boat Striker (nominated by IMRF), for prompt and effective actions which led to the saving of the lives of a man and his four-year-old daughter off Cape Palliser, New Zealand, in April 2007.

The crews of the fast action lifeboats and vessels of the Spanish Maritime Safety Agency (nominated by Spain), for a series of successful operations to locate and recover safely, thousands of migrants at sea. Between March 2006 and February 2007, 30,493 migrants were assisted by the Spanish rescue services in the Atlantic and the Mediterranean.

Viktors Timoscenko, Master of the Latvian-registered tanker Ance (nominated by IFSMA), for persisting in the successful rescue of two persons adrift on a catamaran, after other efforts had been called off, during an operation that lasted almost 14 hours at night time, some 834km off Cape Cod, United States, in November 2006.

Station Officer Kekoi Jaiteh, of the West Gambia Fire Department (nominated by IMRF), for actions which resulted in the saving of the captain and three crew members from a capsized cargo vessel in rough inshore waters, in January 2007.
Silver Jubilee conference to examine climate change impacts

The consequences of climate change for maritime and coastal activities will be examined at an international conference forming the cornerstone of the World Maritime University’s Silver Jubilee celebrations later this year. ICCMI2008 – Impacts of Climate Change on the Maritime Industry – will take place in Malmö, Sweden, from 2 to 4 June 2008. The intention is to bring together experts from around the globe to discuss how climate change is affecting maritime activities, and to evaluate current and proposed measures to respond to the consequences of climate change.

The three-day conference will address three main themes: the scientific basis of our understanding of climate change, the foreseeable impacts on operations in maritime sectors and the legal, policy and governance frameworks needed to deal with the impact of climate change. Day one will feature a series of keynote presentations dealing with global climatic scenarios and ocean science; global biological, physical and chemical implications; effects on maritime transport; effects on ports and harbors; mitigation instruments and changes to laws and conventions. The second day will consist of two parallel sessions, one related to the Baltic and North Sea, and the other to the Arctic Ocean. The final day will be a plenary session including a panel discussion to close the conference. The plenary session is intended to produce conclusions and recommendations on how maritime industries, globally and regionally, can best cope with and adapt to the challenges arising from climate change.

H.M. Carl XVI Gustaf, the King of Sweden will be guest of honour and IMO Secretary-General Mitropoulos will also be in attendance. For more, visit the ICCMI2008 Conference website at www.iccmi.info, or contact iccmi@wmu.se.

RoK provides funding boost for Marine Electronic Highway

The Republic of Korea (RoK) and IMO have signed a Memorandum of Agreement under which the RoK will contribute US$850,000 to the Marine Electronic Highway project, in which it is a Project Partner. Dr. Chun Byoung-Jo, Director General, Maritime Safety Bureau, RoK Ministry of Maritime Affairs and Fisheries (MOMAF) and Secretary-General Mitropoulos signed the agreement on behalf of their respective organizations.

China confirms support for technical co-operation activities

China has pledged its in-kind support for IMO’s Integrated Technical Co-operation Programme with the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding covering, among other things, the provision of Chinese experts for regional training events organized in China, at no cost to IMO and the provision of Chinese experts at no fee for participation in IMO organized training events held outside of China. The MoU was signed by Mr. Xu Zuyuan, Vice Minister of Communications of the People’s Republic of China and the Secretary-General.
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