COVER STORY
Protocol adopted to bring HNS Convention into effect

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Innocent merchant seafarers have had to contend with the dangers of piracy and armed robbery against ships almost since mankind first set out to cross the oceans. Over the centuries, there have been good times and bad, periods of quiet and periods of intense pirate activity. It is a source of great concern, and a genuine anathema in the 21st century, that we should currently be experiencing a period when the threat of acts of piracy and armed robbery against international shipping is as pernicious as at any time in history.

The global character of piracy, and the imperative of combating it, make it essential that States continue establishing effective co-operative mechanisms and that the UN System provides a leading, indeed, coordinating role. And, while we have recently witnessed – indeed, engendered – just such developments, let us not forget that the job is not yet done. Hijacks and hostage-taking off the coast of Somalia and in the wider waters of the western Indian Ocean remain an all-too-frequent occurrence.

Past experience, particularly in the Straits of Malacca and Singapore and the South China Sea, shows that multilateral co-operation arrangements, between and among States, regions and institutions, can provide the means to reduce the risk of unprovoked attacks on innocent ships, including through coordinated patrols in high-risk areas; information sharing and training; intelligence exchange; and hot pursuit, following attacks.

Building capacity has been at the heart of IMO’s work to promote regional co-operation in the western Indian Ocean and the Gulf of Aden. Our efforts culminated, in January 2009, with the formal adoption of the Djibouti Code of Conduct, which now has 14 signatory States, all united in the effort to implement the rule of law at sea and, together, build regional systems and infrastructure for information sharing, training, maritime situational awareness and legislative improvements. These, we expect, will help to reduce substantially the operation of pirates in the region, just as they did in the South China Sea and the Straits of Malacca and Singapore, where the experience gained is now serving as a template for the signatories to the Djibouti Code.

To promote the Code’s full and effective implementation, IMO is co-operating with several entities from within the UN System; the European Commission, EUROPOL, INTERPOL and ReCAAP-ISC at the multilateral level; individual States such as Japan, which has donated US$13.6 million to our Djibouti Code Trust Fund, as well as France, the Netherlands, Norway and the Republic of Korea, which have provided further contributions; and, last but by no means least, with the Code’s signatories, the Transitional Federal Government of Somalia and the local authorities of Puntland and Somaliland.

It is, of course, acknowledged that the incidence of piracy off the coast of Somalia can only be stemmed when political stability, allowing the country to function as a State once again, is reinstated and the Government is able to exercise its jurisdiction. I am optimistic that the measures taken by the UN System with the Somali authorities, regional organizations and individual States, will be successful in moving the political process in the country forward and helping it re-establish stability on land, all of which will, undoubtedly, contribute to the improvement of the situation with regard to piracy off the Somali coast and in the Gulf of Aden.

The international community must spare no effort to address the root causes of the problem promptly and comprehensively, involving the Somalis themselves in the first place, so that peace, stability, security and the conditions for sustainable development are reinstated in this much-troubled land, to the benefit of its long-suffering people.

Given the global character and global consequences of piracy, the co-operation of all parties concerned, under the auspices of the United Nations, is vital.

“A message from Secretary-General Efthimios E. Mitropoulos

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HNS Protocol adopted at IMO conference

A Protocol to the International Convention on Liability and Compensation for Damage in Connection with the Carriage of Hazardous and Noxious Substances by Sea, 1996 (the HNS Convention), aimed at bringing that Convention into effect, has been adopted by a Diplomatic Conference convened by IMO at its Headquarters in London.

The Protocol of 2010 to the HNS Convention addresses practical problems that have prevented many States from ratifying the original Convention, which, despite being adopted in 1996, has, to date, only 14 ratifications and is some way from meeting the conditions for its entry into force.

Under the 2010 Protocol, if damage is caused by bulk HNS, compensation would first be sought from the shipowner, up to a maximum limit of 100 million Special Drawing Rights (SDR) (around US$150 million). Where damage is caused by packaged HNS, or by both bulk HNS and packaged HNS, the maximum liability for the shipowner is 115 million SDR (US$172.5 million)

Once this limit is reached, compensation would be paid from the second tier, the HNS Fund, up to a maximum of 250 million SDR (US$375 million) (including compensation paid under the first tier). The Fund will have an Assembly, consisting of all States Parties to the Convention and Protocol, and a dedicated secretariat. The Assembly will normally meet once a year.

The Conference agreed that the Protocol should enter into force eighteen months after the date on which: (a) at least twelve States, including four States each with not less than 2 million units of gross tonnage, have expressed their consent to be bound by it; and (b) IMO has received information in accordance with article 20, paragraphs 4 and 6, that those persons in such States who would be liable to contribute pursuant to article 18, paragraphs 1(a) and (c), of the Convention, as amended by this Protocol, have received, during the preceding calendar year, a total quantity of at least 40 million tonnes of cargo contributing to the general account.

The Diplomatic Conference was held from 26 to 30 April 2010 and was attended by delegations from 79 IMO Member States, as well as by observers from one Associate Member, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the European Commission (EC), the International Oil Pollution Compensation Funds (IOPC), the Maritime Organization for West and Central Africa (MOWCA), the International Mobile Satellite Organization (IMSO) and 14 non-governmental organizations.

Her Highness Princess Lalla Joumala Alaoui of Morocco was elected as President of the Conference and Mr Alfred Popp (QC) of Canada chaired the Committee of the Whole.

2005 SUA Protocols to enter into force


The 2005 Protocols were adopted on 14 October 2005, at a Diplomatic Conference held in London at IMO Headquarters. They revise the original SUA treaties of 1988 to ensure that the legal framework developed by IMO is kept up to date and provides an adequate basis for the arrest, detention and extradition of alleged terrorists acting against shipping or ports or when using ships to perpetrate acts of terrorism.

They substantially extend the list of criminal offences actionable under the 1988 treaties and include new rules on consensual boarding, which are of prime importance as they provide States with the necessary legal basis to intercept terrorist activities at sea that are planned or already in progress.

The SUA treaties are complementary to the International Ship and Port Facility Security (ISPS) Code, which aims at putting in place practical measures to make international shipping and port facilities safe from terrorist activity and is mandatory under the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS), 1974, as amended.
The WMU receives generous financial and in-kind support from donors, in particular the host Government of Sweden, the Swedish International Development Agency and the City of Malmö, which have supported the institution and its students since 1983. Other notable supporters, over many years, have included the Nippon Foundation and the Ocean Policy Research Foundation of Japan; the International Transport Workers' Federation; the Governments of Canada, Denmark, France, Norway, the Republic of Korea and the United Kingdom; Inmarsat Global Limited; and several European Union and IMO technical co-operation projects.

The University has established an excellent reputation as the global centre for advanced education, training and research for specialist personnel from the international maritime community. To date, nearly 2,700 people from 157 countries and territories have successfully graduated from the WMU. They maintain close links both with the University and among themselves, furthering IMO's objectives of encouraging and facilitating the highest practicable standards in maritime safety and security and the prevention and control of pollution of the marine environment. Many of its graduates hold senior positions in maritime education, as heads of institutions or as professors. Others hold key posts in national ministries, maritime administrations, ports and shipping companies, or represent their Governments in a range of capacities, enabling them to influence and direct policy in their countries and regions. WMU graduates are also increasingly called upon to contribute to international maritime fora, including IMO itself.

The new Board is part of re-structured governance arrangements for the University established through extensive amendments to its original Charter (dating back to the University’s establishment in 1981), which were adopted by the IMO Assembly in November/December 2009.

The Executive Board presently consists of the following members:

- Mr. Jan Kopernicki, Chairman, Oil Companies International Maritime Forum (OCIMF);
- Ms. Kimberly Karlshoej, Director, The TK Foundation;
- Ms. Doris Magsaysay Ho, President and Chief Executive Officer, A. Magsaysay, Inc;
- Mr. Clay Mattland, Managing Partner, International Registries, LLC;
- Ms. Gunilla Malmöf, Senior Legal Counsel, Swedish Maritime Administration;
- Professor Alice Newton, Professor and Senior Scientist, Norwegian Institute for Air Research;
- Mr. Richard Sadler, Chief Executive Officer, Lloyd’s Register;
- Mr. Hiroshi Terashima, Executive Director, Ocean Policy Research Foundation, Ship & Ocean Foundation;
- His Excellency Mr. Binali Yildirim, Minister of Transport and Communications of the Republic of Turkey; and
- Mr. Andy Winbow, Director, Administrative Division, IMO (representing the Secretary-General of IMO)

The first meeting of the new Executive Board of the World Maritime University (WMU) was held on 14 April 2010 at the University’s Headquarters in Malmö, Sweden, under the chairmanship of Mr. Jan Kopernicki.

The WMU board convenes in Malmö

Djibouti anti-piracy Code gains momentum

Fourteen countries have now signed the Code of Conduct on the Suppression of Piracy and Armed Robbery against Ships in the Western Indian Ocean and the Gulf of Aden – the Djibouti Code of Conduct.

The Djibouti Code of Conduct was adopted by a regional meeting on maritime security, piracy and armed robbery against ships for Western Indian Ocean, Gulf of Aden and Red Sea States, held in January 2009, and signed initially by nine countries, bringing it into effect immediately.

Signatories to the Code have undertaken to review their national legislation to ensure they have laws in place to criminalize piracy and armed robbery against ships and adequate provisions for the exercise of jurisdiction, conduct of investigations and prosecution of alleged offenders. The Code also provides for the sharing of piracy information, through information-sharing centres to be established in Sana’a in Yemen, Mombasa in Kenya and Dar es Salaam in the United Republic of Tanzania. A training centre is also to be established in Djibouti.

To assist in the implementation of the Djibouti Code of Conduct, a programme of activities has been developed within IMO and is already underway. It includes the following projects:

- Regional activities to review national legislation on piracy,
  (conducted in co-operation with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC));
- The establishment of a training centre in Djibouti to train key personnel from the region;
- The establishment and operation of the three above-mentioned information-sharing centres;
- Workshops to train national focal points and staff of the information-sharing centres;
- The training of coastguard and other personnel entrusted with law enforcement roles; and
- Initiatives for enhancing maritime situational awareness.

To date, the Code had been signed by the following countries: Comoros, Djibouti, Egypt, Ethiopia, Kenya, Madagascar, Maldives, Mauritius, Saudi Arabia, Seychelles, Somalia, Sudan, United Republic of Tanzania and Yemen.

Additionally, four new posts have been created at IMO specifically for promoting, and providing support to, the implementation of the Djibouti Code of Conduct.
IMO Secretary-General meets EC Commissioners

IMO Secretary-General Mitropoulos has hosted the first two in a series of planned meetings with newly-appointed European Commissioners whose portfolios include matters of interest to IMO.

In April, Mrs. Maria Damanaki, European Commissioner for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries, visited the Organization’s Headquarters, followed in May by Mrs. Connie Hedegaard, European Commissioner for Climate Action.

During discussions with both, Mr. Mitropoulos referred to IMO’s work in setting safety, security and pollution prevention standards for shipping engaged in international voyages – noting, in particular, the substantive contribution to that work by the Member States of the European Union (EU), as well as the need for international shipping to be regulated, in all technical respects, on a global basis, avoiding unilateral or regional measures that would hinder the industry’s operations and development.

Speaking with Commissioner Damanaki, he summarized progress being made on several key issues, including the protection of the marine and atmospheric environment, the suppression of acts of piracy and armed robbery against ships (in particular, off the coast of Somalia and in the Gulf of Aden), the safety of fishing vessels and the training and certification of seafarers and of fishing vessel personnel.

On the latter subject, he underlined that, globally, loss of life on fishing vessels continues to be unacceptably high and that the Organization has addressed this through the adoption of the 1993 Torremolinos Protocol for the Safety of Fishing Vessels and the 1995 International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Fishing Vessel Personnel. In this respect, Secretary-General Mitropoulos sought Mrs. Damanaki’s good offices in urging all Members of the EU that have not yet done so to ratify both instruments at the earliest opportunity.

Mrs. Damanaki stated that she fully supported the objectives and work of IMO and would seek to facilitate continued improvement and implementation of the Organization’s standards, both in the EU and globally. In this respect, she outlined progress within the EC to ensure the development and competitiveness of shipping, through coordination among all sectors engaged in maritime affairs and, principally, through the EU’s Integrated Maritime Policy and its related action plan.

Mrs. Damanaki also referred to particular elements of those instruments such as the need for coordinated surveillance over piracy or illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing.

A further focus area was the need to raise the profile of the seafaring profession and attract new entrants to the shipping industry, as envisaged within IMO’s “Go to Sea” campaign and this year’s theme for World Maritime Day, “2010: Year of the Seafarer”, the objectives of which are shared by the EC.

Mr. Mitropoulos and Mrs. Damanaki agreed on the need for uniform and effective compliance with existing international standards and further harmonization of standards globally.

The visit of Mrs Hedegaard provided an opportunity to consolidate a good working relationship, following a first meeting between the two at the United Nations Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen, in December 2009.

Mr. Mitropoulos and Commissioner Hedegaard reflected on the current status of international negotiations leading up to the next United Nations Climate Change Conference, in Cancún, Mexico, and on the good progress being made by IMO’s Marine Environment Protection Committee in developing a global regulatory framework for the limitation or reduction of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from international shipping, through the introduction of appropriate technical, operational and market-based measures. The remaining work included finalization of the aforementioned technical and operational measures and approval of relevant amendments to the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships (MARPOL 73/78), in September/October 2010, followed by their formal adoption in July 2011, at which time the Committee’s work plan on market-based measures is also scheduled to be completed.

Mr. Mitropoulos paid tribute to the continuing strong support of the EU Members for IMO’s work on GHGs, and sought Mrs. Hedegaard’s good offices in promoting, among other States also, similar support for the ratification of all of IMO’s environment-related conventions and for the adoption of the anticipated IMO regulatory framework on GHGs.

Mrs. Hedegaard reiterated the preference for global solutions to global problems and, accordingly, her willingness to co operate with IMO in seeking the early introduction of all appropriate measures to limit or reduce GHG emissions from international shipping.

These productive meetings have confirmed the desire on both sides to continue and enhance the existing co-operation between IMO and the EU in responding effectively to the challenge of climate change in the international shipping sector. Both sides agreed to maintain an open line of communication to foster further collaboration on all issues of mutual interest.
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BLG agrees safety requirements for NGHP carriers

Draft Interim Guidelines for the construction and equipment of ships carrying natural gas hydrate pellets (NGHP) in bulk were agreed by the Sub-Committee on Bulk Liquids and Gases (BLG), when it met for its 14th session, to address the shipping safety requirements for this new method of transporting natural gas.

Natural gas hydrate pellets are artificially formed pellets of “natural gas hydrate”, which is a crystalline solid consisting of molecules of natural gas (mainly methane), each surrounded by a cage of water molecules. They do not require as low a temperature as liquefied natural gas (LNG) for transportation and storage (LNG requires -160 deg C; gas hydrate pellets require -20 deg C).

The interim guidelines are intended to provide information on the appropriate application of the requirements of the International Code for the Construction and Equipment of Ships Carrying Liquefied Gases in Bulk (IGC Code) to natural gas hydrate pellets carriers, covering issues such as risk-assessment and cargo-handling.

It was noted that the interim guidelines should be reviewed once the Sub-Committee has completed its ongoing revision of the IGC Code.

MARPOL Annex VI guidelines agreed

The Sub-Committee agreed draft amendments to the 2009 Guidelines for monitoring the worldwide average sulphur content of residual fuel oils supplied for use on board ships (resolution MEPC.183(59)), for submission to the Marine Environment Protection Committee in October 2010 (MEPC 61), with a view to their adoption, taking into account the updated ISO standard (ISO:8217) Specification of marine fuels, fourth edition, which is expected to be published in July 2010. The guidelines are intended to assist in the implementation of the revised MARPOL Annex VI Regulations on the prevention of air pollution from ships, which were adopted in 2008 and enter into force on 1 July 2010.

A correspondence group was set up to develop or finalize other relevant guidance, including: draft guidelines for certification of marine diesel engines fitted with selective catalytic reduction (SCR); draft guidelines on the provision of reception facilities, as required by regulation 17.2 of MARPOL Annex VI and draft guidelines called for under paragraph 2.2.5.6 of the revised NOx Technical Code 2008 (NOx reducing devices).

BWM guidance agreed

The Sub-Committee agreed a Framework for determining when a Basic Approval granted to one ballast water management system may be applied to another system that uses the same Active Substance or Preparation and finalized a Guidance Document for Administrations on the type-approval process for ballast water management systems in accordance with the Guidelines for approval of ballast water management systems (G8). The framework and guidance document are intended to assist in the uniform implementation of the International Convention for the Control and Management of Ships’ Ballast Water and Sediments, 2004 (BWM Convention).

The two documents will be submitted to MEPC 61 in October 2010 for approval.

Rules for bio-fuels and blends to be further developed

The Sub-Committee agreed on the need to develop new guidelines to control the shipment of bio-fuel/petroleum oil blends, to eventually replace the existing interim guidelines on the carriage of bio-fuel blends that permit the continued carriage of blends with up to 15 per cent bio-fuel on MARPOL Annex I (Regulations for the prevention of pollution by oil) ships (applicable to blends using fatty acid methyl ester (FAME), ethanol (ethyl alcohol) and vegetable oil). The interim guidelines, which are applicable up to July 2011, apply only to bio-fuel blends; bio-fuels are carried in accordance with MARPOL Annex II (Regulations for the control of pollution by noxious liquid substances carried in bulk).

A cut-off limit of 25 per cent bio-fuel for Band 1 carriage under MARPOL Annex I conditions was agreed for the planned guidelines, while bio-fuel blends with an excess of 25 per cent bio-fuels would be treated as Annex II products.

The Sub-Committee also noted discussions on the development of mandatory provisions to prohibit the blending of MARPOL cargoes on board during a sea voyage and that a possible draft text would be further

“The two documents will be submitted to MEPC 61 in October 2010 for approval.”
discussed at the next meeting of the Working Group on the Evaluation of the Safety and Pollution Hazards of Chemicals (ESPH), which reports to the BLG Sub-Committee. The MSC and MEPC agreed in 2009 that such practices should be prohibited and mandatory provisions should be developed.

**Biofouling guidelines progressed**

The Sub-Committee continued its development of draft Guidelines for the control and management of ships’ biofouling to minimize the transfer of invasive aquatic species, the aim of which is to provide a consistent approach to biofouling management.

It was agreed that the guidelines should focus on commercial vessels and recreational vessels greater than 24m in length and that additional guidance for small recreational craft of less than 24m in length should be developed as a stand-alone document (with appropriate cross-references in both). The biofouling correspondence group was instructed to develop the guidelines further.

**Chemical products evaluated**

The Sub-Committee reviewed the regular report of the ESPH Working Group and agreed with the evaluation of 13 new products for inclusion in the International Bulk Chemicals Code (IBC Code). It also approved 43 cleaning additives for inclusion in the list of cleaning additives that can be used for tank cleaning as they are readily biodegradable, in accordance with MARPOL Annex II, regulation 13. The Sub-Committee endorsed the decision of the ESPH Working Group that “shale oils” should be regarded as MARPOL Annex I (Regulations for the prevention of pollution by oil) cargo.

“It was agreed that the guidelines should focus on commercial vessels and recreational vessels greater than 24m in length”
Guidelines agreed for lifeboat release mechanisms

Draft guidelines to ensure release mechanisms for lifeboats are replaced with those complying with new, stricter safety standards have been agreed by the 53rd session of the Sub-Committee on Ship Design and Equipment (DE) in order to reduce the number of accidents involving lifeboats, particularly those which have occurred during drills or inspection.

The draft Guidelines for evaluation and replacement of lifeboat on-load release mechanisms are for submission to the Maritime Safety Committee (MSC). The Sub-Committee recommended that Administrations and shipowners be strongly urged to use the guidelines to evaluate existing lifeboat on-load release mechanisms at the earliest available opportunity, in advance of the entry into force of the new SOLAS and LSA Code amendments.

The Sub-Committee also agreed draft amendments to the Revised recommendation on testing of life-saving appliances concerning test procedures for lifeboat hooks, for submission to the MSC.

This new package of amendments and guidelines addressing lifeboat release mechanisms follows intensive work within the DE Sub-Committee and by the MSC, over a number of years, to address the significant number of serious injuries and fatalities which had been occurring during lifeboat drills and inspections.

Liferaft launching from passenger ships

The Sub-Committee agreed to a draft MSC circular on Determination of the required safe working load of liferaft launching appliances on passenger ships, for submission to MSC 88 in December 2010 for approval.

Standard colour for lifeboats agreed

The Sub-Committee agreed to draft amendments to the LSA Code to require lifeboats to “be of international or vivid reddish orange, on all parts where this will assist detection at sea” and to delete reference to allowing “a comparably highly visible colour”, as permitted in amendments set to enter into force on 1 July 2010.

The proposed amendments to the LSA Code paragraph 1.2.2.6 will be submitted to MSC 88 in December 2010 for approval, with a view to adoption.

Standards for recovery systems further developed

The Sub-Committee continued its work on developing performance standards for recovery systems for all ships with a view to finalizing its considerations by the 2012 target date set by the MSC.

The aim is to ensure that all ship types will eventually have the necessary capability to serve effectively as rescue assets and to have means to rescue people from the water or from survival craft, particularly when a professional rescue service is not available, whether “at all” or “not in due time”.

Mandatory Code for polar waters

A correspondence group was established to further develop the draft International Code of safety for ships operating in polar waters (Polar Code), which would cover the full range of design, construction, equipment, operational, training, search and rescue and environmental protection matters relevant to ships operating in the inhospitable waters surrounding the two poles. The move to develop a mandatory Code follows the adoption by the IMO Assembly, in 2009, of Guidelines for ships operating in polar waters (Resolution A.1024(26)).

During discussion on the development of the mandatory Code it was noted that there was overwhelming support to develop a risk-based Code with functional requirements supported by prescriptive provisions; the Code should contain both

“LSA Code amendments require lifeboats to be of international or vivid reddish orange, on all parts where this will assist detection at sea”
mandatary and recommendatory parts and that, apart from common requirements, there should also be separate requirements for the Arctic and Antarctic; the Code would apply in polar waters only and ships not trading in polar regions would not need to comply with its requirements; and the Code should be made mandatory under SOLAS and/or MARPOL.

Performance standards for cargo oil tank coatings in crude oil tankers agreed

The Sub-Committee finalized the draft Performance standard for protective coatings for cargo oil tanks of crude oil tankers and the draft Performance standard for alternative means of corrosion protection for cargo oil tanks of crude oil tankers, for submission to the MSC for adoption, alongside the adoption of a draft new SOLAS regulation on Corrosion protection of cargo oil tanks of crude oil tankers making the performance standards mandatory, which was approved by the MSC at its last session. The regulation would require all cargo oil tanks of crude oil tankers to be protected against corrosion.

Coatings in dedicated seawater ballast tanks

A draft MSC circular on Unified Interpretation of the Performance Standard for protective coatings (PSPC) for dedicated seawater ballast tanks in all types of ships and double-side skin spaces of bulk carriers adopted by resolution MSC.215(82), based on the relevant IACS unified interpretations, was agreed by the Sub-Committee.

Ship bottom inspections

The Sub-Committee agreed draft Guidelines for the assessment of technical provisions for the performance of an in-water survey in lieu of bottom inspection in dry-dock to permit one dry-dock examination in any five-year period for passenger ships other than ro-ro passenger ships, for submission to MSC 87 for approval.

Passenger ship tenders

The Sub-Committee developed draft Guidelines for passenger ship tenders, intended for ship-carried tenders used for transferring more than 12 passengers from a stationary passenger ship to shore and back. The guidelines will be further developed at DE 54, with input to relevant sections of the guidelines from the Sub-Committees on Fire Protection (FP); Radiocommunications and Search and Rescue (COMSAR); Safety of Navigation (NAV); Stability and Load Lines and on Fishing Vessels’ Safety (SLF); and Standards of Training and Watchkeeping (STW).

A correspondence group was established to further develop the draft Polar Code, which would cover the full range of design, construction, equipment, operational, training, search and rescue and environmental protection matters relevant to ships operating in waters surrounding both poles.

“The regulation would require all cargo oil tanks of crude oil tankers to be protected against corrosion”
COMSAR initiates GMDSS review

A scoping exercise to establish whether there is a need for a review of the elements and procedures of the Global Maritime Distress and Safety System (GMDSS) was initiated by the Sub-Committee on Radiocommunications and Search and Rescue (COMSAR) at its 14th session.

The aim was to determine which elements of the system may need to be updated or amended. The GMDSS was introduced by means of amendments to SOLAS that were adopted in 1988 and entered into force in 1992 with a phase-in period lasting until 1999.

Issues identified for review include:

- **Function** - including relevance of existing functional requirements, requirements for both SOLAS and non-SOLAS vessels and whether existing sea areas should be maintained in current form;

- **Regulation and administration** - including capacity building, legacy issues (modernising all ships, not just newbuildings), survey and inspection, harmonization of global regulatory bodies, training and certification and the impact of e-navigation;

- **Existing, new and emerging technologies** - including possible integration of technologies such as cell phones, satellite phones, Long-Range Identification and Tracking (LRIT), automatic identification of ships, selection and use of relevant technology; and

- **Equipment** – including performance and technical standards and carriage requirements as well as assessing how the needs of non-SOLAS vessels can be better accommodated within the GMDSS.

The Joint IMO/ITU Expert Group was instructed to further discuss the issues at its next meeting later in the year. Member Governments and international organizations in consultative status were also invited to submit proposals on the issue to COMSAR 15.

**Piracy procedures agreed by COMSAR**

A draft guideline on operational procedures for the promulgation of maritime safety information on acts of piracy and piracy counter-measure operations, for broadcast through the World-Wide Navigational Warning Service (WWNWS), was agreed.

The draft guideline, which will be submitted to the Maritime Safety Committee for adoption, aims to assist naval and military authorities operating in waters off the coast of Somalia to protect ships from piracy and armed robbery attacks.

The draft guideline provides specific guidance for naval and military authorities involved in the gathering and interpretation of information on acts of piracy and piracy counter-measure operations, as well as providing guidance for NAVAREA or National Coordinators within the WWNWS, who are responsible for originating the broadcasts.

**Revised performance standards for EGC**

The Sub-Committee agreed draft revised performance standards for Enhanced Group Call (EGC) equipment, for submission to the MSC. They update the performance standards previously issued in 1989 (resolution A.664(16)).

**Persons rescued at sea**

The Sub-Committee held a fruitful exchange of views on measures to protect the safety of persons rescued at sea. Interested delegations agreed to hold informal consultations aimed at devising arrangements that would adequately address the issue of such persons being disembarked at a place of safety within a reasonable time following the rescue operation. The outcome of these consultations will be reported to a future session.

**Revised International SafetyNET Manual**

The Sub-Committee agreed the revised International SafetyNET Manual, for submission to the MSC for approval. The International SafetyNET Manual was first produced in 1994 with a second edition published in 2003.

The Manual describes the structure and operation of the International SafetyNET Service, which is an international automatic direct-printing satellite-based service for the promulgation of navigational and meteorological warnings, meteorological forecasts, search and rescue (SAR) information and other urgent safety-related messages - Maritime Safety Information (MSI) - to ships. It has been developed as a safety
service of the Inmarsat C EGC system to provide a simple and automated means of receiving MSI on board ships at sea.

The 2010 edition has been developed in close cooperation with the International Hydrographic Organization (IHO) and the World Meteorological Organization (WMO).

**IAMSAR Manual amendments agreed**

The Sub-Committee agreed draft amendments to the International Aeronautical and Maritime Search and Rescue (IAMSAR) Manual, for submission to the MSC for approval. The amendments include references to vessel tracking systems and services, including the Automatic Identification System (AIS), LRIT, Vessel Monitoring Systems (VMS) and Vessel Traffic Services (VTS) which are all valuable sources of vessel position data and can be displayed to provide a surface picture, which itself can assist in the identification and location of suitable rescue vessels.

Further amendments add a new appendix on search planning for 121.5 MHz beacon alerts, which might be received by a high-flying aircraft. The appendix gives comprehensive guidance on methods that will help define and reduce beacon search areas, which may be very large. The amendments follow recommendations to improve SAR services in the light of lessons learned from three accidents involving passenger aircraft that ditched into the sea in 2009.

**Warning on non-406 MHz devices**

The Sub-Committee agreed a draft MSC circular on commercially available locating, tracking and emergency notification devices, highlighting the limitations of non-406 MHz locating, tracking and emergency notification devices, which have become widely available.

The advice, to be issued by the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) and IMO, notes that these devices are not compliant with internationally accepted performance standards and operational criteria for global distress alerting and therefore may be ineffective in emergency situations. It says that States may require providers of non-406 MHz emergency notification devices and services to establish user databases and confirm they have systems in place to ensure that potential users can alert the relevant SAR authorities at any time, within five minutes of a confirmed distress situation, with positive confirmation of receipt by the responsible SAR authority.

**Medical assistance for yacht racing**

The Sub-Committee endorsed a draft MSC circular, giving guidance on the issue of medical assistance at sea with respect to yacht racing. The guidance contains recommendations for the organization of medical assistance for offshore racing to ensure that the telemedical assistance service (TMAS) can provide the best possible telemedical assistance, together with the Maritime Rescue Coordination Centre (MRCC) in charge of a SAR operation.

**ITU maritime radiocommunication matters**

The Sub-Committee finalized the draft IMO position on matters relating to maritime services on the agenda for the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) World Radiocommunications Conference, to be held in 2012 (WRC-12).

The Sub-Committee also agreed liaison statements to the ITU-R Working Party 5B on Recommendation ITU-R M.493-13 Digital Selective Calling System for use in the Maritime Mobile Service and MMSI Numbering Systems for Hand-Held VHF DSC Radios; the implementation of resolution 355 (WRC-07) Content, formats and periodicity of the maritime-related service publications; and specifications of “man overboard” devices.

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More work needed despite GHG progress, MEPC concludes

IMO’s Marine Environment Protection Committee (MEPC) has concluded that more work needs to be done before it completes its consideration of the proposed mandatory application of technical and operational measures designed to regulate and reduce emissions of greenhouse gases (GHGs) from international shipping.

Meeting at the Organization’s London headquarters, the Committee’s 60th session agreed to establish an intersessional Working Group to build on the significant progress that had been made during the meeting on technical and operational measures to increase the energy efficiency of ships. The Working Group will report back to the Committee’s next session (MEPC 61), in September 2010.

Although the meeting was able to prepare draft text on mandatory requirements for the Energy Efficiency Design Index (EEDI) for new vessels and on the Ship Energy Efficiency Management Plan (SEEMP) for all ships in operation, the Committee noted that, among other things, issues concerning ship size, target dates and reduction rate in relation to the EEDI requirements all required finalization.

The Committee agreed on the basic concept that a vessel’s attained EEDI shall be equal or less (e.g. more efficient) than the required EEDI, and that the required EEDI shall be drawn up based on EEDI baselines and reduction rates yet to be agreed. The Committee noted guidelines for calculating the EEDI baselines using data from existing ships in the Lloyd’s Register Fairplay database.

The Committee agreed to establish an Expert Group on market-based measures to undertake a feasibility study and impact assessment of the various proposals submitted for a market-based instrument for international maritime transport – again, reporting back to MEPC 61.

**MARPOL Amendments**

Among other items on a full agenda, the Committee adopted amendments to the MARPOL Convention to formally establish a North American Emission Control Area, in which emissions of sulphur oxides (SO₂), nitrogen oxides (NOₓ) and particulate matter from ships will be subject to more stringent controls than the limits that apply globally.

Another new MARPOL regulation, to protect the Antarctic from pollution by heavy grade oils, was also adopted. These amendments are expected to enter into force on 1 August 2011.

**Implementation of the BWM Convention**

The MEPC addressed issues relating to the implementation of the International Convention for the Control and Management of Ships’ Ballast Water and Sediments, 2004 (BWM Convention) and adopted a resolution that requests Administrations to encourage the installation of ballast water management systems on new ships, in accordance with the application dates contained in the Convention.

The resolution also urges countries that have not already done so to ratify the Convention, which will enter into force twelve months after the date on which not fewer than 30 States, the combined merchant fleets of which constitute not less than 35 per cent of the gross tonnage of the world’s merchant shipping, have become Parties to it. To date, it has been ratified by 22 countries representing 22.65 per cent of the gross tonnage of the world’s merchant shipping.

The Committee decided to grant “basic approval” to eight ballast water management systems that make use of active substances and “final approval” to four.
such systems, after consideration of the reports of the tenth, eleventh and twelfth meetings of the Joint Group of Experts on the Scientific Aspects of Marine Environment Protection (GESAMP) Ballast Water Working Group, which met in September, October and December 2009, respectively.

**Ship recycling**

The Committee continued its work on developing Guidelines for safe and environmentally sound ship recycling, and commenced the development of Guidelines for the development of the Ship Recycling Plan. Guidelines for the authorization of ship recycling facilities, for ship inspection and for survey and certification will also be developed in due course. Once adopted, the guidelines will assist ship-recycling facilities and ship operators to begin introducing voluntary improvements to meet the requirements of the Hong Kong International Convention for the Safe and Environmentally Sound Recycling of Ships, which was adopted in May 2009.

The MEPC also agreed that there would be a need, in future, to develop guidance concerning the recycling of flag-less and non-Party ships by Parties to the Convention. The Committee agreed a timetable for the development of the guidelines and the intersessional correspondence group was re-established to progress the work and report to MEPC 61.

**Garbage Special Areas**

The MEPC agreed to establish 1 May 2011 as the date on which the discharge requirements for the Wider Caribbean Region Special Area under MARPOL Annex V Regulations for the prevention of pollution by garbage from ships will take effect.

This Special Area, which includes the Gulf of Mexico and the Caribbean Sea, was designated as a Special Area under MARPOL Annex V in July 1991. Most countries in the region have now given notice that adequate reception facilities are provided in most relevant ports, so that the Special Area status can now be made effective.

In Annex V Special Areas, disposal of all garbage into the sea, including plastics, is prohibited. Other special areas under Annex V are: the Baltic Sea (effective since October 1989); the North Sea (February 1991); the Antarctic area (south of latitude 60 degrees south) (March 1992); the “Gulfs” area (August 2008); the Mediterranean Sea (May 2009); the Black Sea (not yet effective); and the Red Sea (not yet effective).

The MEPC is carrying out a review of MARPOL Annex V and received the interim report of an intersessional correspondence group on the subject. The final report, including proposed draft amendments to the Annex and its Guidelines, is expected to be submitted to MEPC 61.

**MARPOL Annex III Revision**

The Committee approved proposed amendments to replace the text of MARPOL Annex III Regulations for the prevention of pollution by harmful substances carried by sea in packaged form, with a view to subsequent adoption by MEPC 61.

The amended text is aimed at bringing the Annex up to date with the mandatory International Maritime Dangerous Goods Code, specifying that goods should be shipped in accordance with relevant provisions.

“In Annex V Special Areas, disposal of all garbage into the sea, including plastics, is prohibited”

**Announcement**

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2010 Fire Test Procedures

Code text agreed

The draft text of the 2010 International Code for Application of Fire Test Procedures (FTP Code), was agreed by the Sub-Committee on Fire Protection (FP), when it met for its 54th session

The draft 2010 FTP Code provides the international requirements for laboratory testing, type-approval and fire test procedures for products referenced under SOLAS Chapter II-2.

It updates and amends the 1996 FTP Code, following a thorough revision, taking into account the continual development of materials for use in the construction of ships and improvement of marine safety standards.

The draft 2010 FTP Code will be submitted to the MSC in December 2010 with a view to adoption, along with the relevant SOLAS amendments to make it mandatory.

The Sub-Committee also agreed draft Guidelines for the design, construction and testing of fixed hydrocarbon gas detection systems on double-hull oil tankers incorporating modifications, for submission to MSC for approval, and draft amendments to the Guidelines for the application of plastic pipes on ships (resolution A.753(18)), for submission to MSC 88.

Fire integrity of ro-ro spaces

The Sub-Committee agreed draft amendments to tables in SOLAS regulation II-2/9, to improve the fire integrity of bulkheads and decks of ro-ro spaces on passenger and cargo ships, for submission to MSC 88 for approval.

Amendments to FSS code agreed

The Sub-Committee agreed a number of draft amendments to the International Fire Safety Systems (FSS) Code, for submission to MSC 88 for approval. The draft amendments relate to fixed gas and water-spraying fire-extinguishing systems for vehicle, ro-ro, container and general cargo spaces; the testing and approval of fixed high-expansion foam systems; and alternative extinguishing systems for control stations.

Also agreed for submission to the MSC were: draft Guidelines for testing and approval of fixed high-expansion foam systems; draft Scientific methods on scaling of test volume for fire test on water-mist fire-extinguishing systems; draft amendments to the Revised Guidelines for the approval of equivalent water-based fire-extinguishing systems for machinery spaces and cargo pump-rooms (MSC/Circ.1165), concerning redundant means of pumping, and ceiling and bilge nozzles; and draft Revised Guidelines for the approval of fixed water-based local application fire-fighting systems for use in Category A machinery spaces (MSC/Circ.913).

Draft interpretations of chapter 12 of the FSS Code were also agreed, for submission to MSC 88 for approval.

New passenger ship requirements

The Sub-Committee agreed two draft circulars, for submission to the MSC for approval, aimed at assisting in the implementation of requirements for new passenger ships which were adopted in 2006 and enter into force on 1 July 2010. The amendments focus on designing passenger ships for improved survivability so that, in the event of a casualty, persons can stay safely on board as the ship proceeds to port.

Draft Interim clarifications of SOLAS chapter II-2 requirements regarding interrelation between the central control station, navigating bridge and safety centre are intended to assist in the implementation of SOLAS regulation II-2/23 Safety centre on passenger ships, which requires passenger ships constructed on or after 1 July 2010 to have a safety centre that provides a space to assist with the management of emergency situations. Means of communication between the safety centre, the central control station, the navigation bridge, the engine control room, the storage room(s) for fire extinguishing system(s) and fire equipment lockers must be provided.

Interim Explanatory Notes for the assessment of passenger ship systems’ capabilities after a fire or flooding casualty relate to requirements relevant to the safe return to port for passenger ships. The Explanatory Notes are intended to outline the process of verification and of approval of ship’s design by the Administration and to support safe engineering design with guidance on: availability of essential systems after a flooding casualty; availability of essential systems to support a ship’s safe return to port after a fire casualty; and availability of essential systems to support a ship’s evacuation and abandonment after a fire casualty.
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The New Panama Canal  
– a better way to go

By Alberto Alemán Zubieta, Administrator/CEO Panama Canal Authority

Panama made history in 2006, when Panamanians embarked on a landmark project that will bring about a sea-change in the shipping and maritime industry for years to come.

On October 22, 2006, in a national referendum, 76 per cent of Panamanian voters approved the Panama Canal Expansion Program. Since then, the Panama Canal Authority (ACP), the autonomous government agency in charge of managing and operating the waterway, has been moving full steam ahead on this historic project, executing it on time and on budget.

Challenges and opportunities
The global economic environment, in particular world trade pre-2007, was quite different from today’s situation. Back in 2006, the global economy was growing at a rate of four per cent and most industries, the maritime sector included, were registering double-digit growth. Myriad infrastructure projects were on the table and investment capital was being raised to finance developments especially designed to support and facilitate trade.

In 2008, all the above changed and recession hit major markets and raised questions about the viability of some of these new projects, and several were canceled or put on hold.

Nevertheless, in the midst of the crisis and financial uncertainty, five major multilateral agencies, from different regions of the world, demonstrated their trust and confidence in the Expansion Program presented by Panama and the ACP, and committed to finance US$2.3 billion of the US$5.25 billion project.

The financing package – which includes a 20-year amortization period with a 10-year grace period – was negotiated with the European Investment Bank, the Japan Bank for International Cooperation, the Inter-American Development Bank, the International Finance Corporation and the Corporación Andina de Fomento. This package was truly unprecedented.

Dealing with a recession requires innovative, resourceful thinking and it is important to keep in mind that cycles are inherent to economic activity, but temporary in nature. At times when pessimism and risk aversion dominate the business environment, it is better to focus on the medium-to-long-term economic and trade growth that will come after the crisis has subsided. This period offers an opportunity to re-evaluate and execute infrastructure improvements.

An economic vision for Panama
Periods of crisis create opportunities when coupled with vision and leadership. Vision is necessary to see beyond the immediate situation, and leadership is essential to remain focused and take the appropriate measures to mitigate short-term risk, while continuing long-term programmes. This is precisely what the ACP has done with the execution of its Expansion Program.

This project will build a new lane of traffic along the waterway through the construction of a new set of locks on the Pacific and Atlantic ends of the Canal, which will double capacity by 2014 and allow more traffic, tonnage and the passage of wider ships.

To accomplish this, the ACP will widen and deepen the Canal’s entrances at the Atlantic and Pacific, as well as the navigational channel at Gatun Lake. One lock complex will be located on the Pacific side to the southwest of the existing Miraflores Locks. The other lock complex will be located to the east of the existing Gatun Locks on the Atlantic side of the Canal.

The new locks will allow the transit of containerships with a capacity of 12,600 TEUs. Once the new locks are operational, there will be a shift to larger vessels, impacting trade patterns and transforming the logistics of world trade.

The expansion will bring growth
opportunities to all of the existing market segments and routes. With expansion, we expect to increase our market share to 50 per cent in our main route, which joins Northeast Asia and the U.S. East Coast. The market share in this trade lane grew from 15.1 per cent in 2000 to 43 per cent in 2009 under the existing Canal.

The Canal expansion will also continue to open the waterway to new market segments and routes. For instance, LNG vessels that are too large to use the present locks will likely be deployed in the expanded Canal to shorten distances in trade lanes such as Peru to the U.S. Gulf Coast and Trinidad and Tobago to Chile. Dry and liquid bulkers will benefit by deploying larger vessels and maximizing their utilization capacity; and the cruise segment will be able to carry more passengers by deploying its mega-ships through the expanded Canal.

For the Republic of Panama, the Expansion Program will be instrumental in strengthening the country’s position as the transportation and logistics hub of the Americas. This can be achieved through maximizing both modern and highly efficient trans-shipment terminals, and Panamanian ports (previously ranked number one in volume among the ports in the Latin American and Caribbean regions by Container Management) located at the Atlantic and the Pacific entrances of the waterway. These ports are outfitted with state-of-the-art equipment and Post-Panamax cranes. Today, there are 54 cranes installed in the Panamanian ports and terminals, a significant number when compared to the 222 cranes available in the whole Latin American region.

In 2009, local container terminals handled a total of 4.2 million TEUs. Around 83 per cent of the total throughput (in TEUs) handled at Manzanillo International Terminal, Panama Ports Company, and the Colon Container terminals is trans-shipped to the Latin American and Caribbean consumer markets in smaller feeder ships. The expansion will promote the establishment of new services that connect the West Coast of South America with the U.S. East Coast and Europe, impacting the local trans-shipment terminals’ volume in these routes.

According to our projections, container traffic through the waterway will triple by 2025, to reach approximately 36 million TEUs from the 12 million TEUs registered in fiscal year 2009 (October 2008–September 2009). This growth is expected to have a positive impact on container traffic at the local terminals, as 60 per cent of the vessels that call at Panamanian ports transit the waterway. During the first years of the expanded Canal, the waterway is expected to service Post-Panamax vessels carrying 8,000 TEUs on average. The deployment of larger ships, in addition to stimulating the local trans-shipment activities, would provide shipping lines with the opportunity to maximize vessel utilization and boost profits.

A timely, reliable and efficient service

For the shipping industry, the Panama Canal has always been a valuable shortcut that offers a timely, safe, reliable and efficient service to vessels of all nations. And, since the expansion was announced, the industry and many port terminals have taken note of the new locks’ dimensions, and are executing programmes to take advantage of the expanded Canal in terms of new ship design, as well as port terminal improvements and investments to accommodate larger vessels. Several of these ports are deepening their drafts and expanding their terminals in anticipation of the future demands of world commerce.

Currently, 67 per cent of the cargo that transits the waterway has an origin or destination in the United States. Considering the strategic importance of U.S. ports for Canal trade, the ACP has signed and renewed Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) with the main ports on the U.S. East and Gulf Coasts since 2003, including the port authorities of Virginia, New York/New Jersey, Georgia, South Carolina, Houston, Miami, New Orleans, Massachusetts, Philadelphia, Maryland, Tampa, Everglades, Manatee and Palm Beach. These MOUs allow for the exchange of information and the joint promotion of the ‘all-water route,’ the route from Asia to the U.S. East and Gulf Coasts via the Panama Canal.

In preparation for an expanded Canal, most of the above ports are already drafting plans, allocating resources and making

Artist’s impression of the planned new locks.
progress in terms of increasing their drafts and improving their infrastructure and services. These ports are making sure that they will be able to receive increased Post-Panamax traffic and become more profitable into the future.

Reducing CO₂ emissions

One attribute that needs to be widely recognized is the waterway’s role in contributing to the reduction of both CO₂ emissions and global warming.

Expansion will surely contribute to the decrease of the world’s environmental pollution levels as larger vessels will be able to transit faster through this green route, thus reducing the global emissions of CO₂ that result from the use of vessels offering smaller economies of scale, which are deployed in longer alternate routes.

Transportation and logistics hub of the Americas

In the world of shipping and logistics, Panama stands apart.

The country offers shippers a unique connectivity that links them to many routes in the world. Panama ranked 28th as the most connected country to global shipping networks, according to the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development’s Liner Shipping Connectivity Index 2009. When compared to the Latin American and Caribbean countries, Panama ranked number one in connectivity in the region.

Moreover, Panama has successfully maximized its geographic location, and has developed a cluster of service activities around the waterway such as rail transportation, bunkering, ship chandler services, ship repair and maintenance, launch and pilot services, trans-shipment ports, the Free Trade Zone, cruise ship tourism, container repair and maintenance, air hub and merchant marine services, among others.

In total, the cluster is comprised of 29 business activities and all are expected to benefit from the increase in traffic that will be brought by expansion. Thus, the benefits of the Canal expansion will not only come from direct income generated by the waterway, but also from the greater level of economic activity that will be produced by the entire network of service activities.

According to the Global Competitive Index (GCI) 2009-2010, the Republic of Panama is ranked as the 59th most competitive country among a list of 133 countries. When compared to other countries in Latin America and the Caribbean, Panama ranks as the sixth most competitive economy – it is fast becoming the gateway to the Americas. Indeed, Panama is committed to developing its economy further to become the most competitive economy in Latin America.

Several multinational organizations have already chosen Panama as the best place for consolidating their regional operations to serve Latin American and Caribbean markets. The establishment of these operations is proof of the companies’ interest in facilitating business transactions and capitalizing on the greater trade opportunities that will be available in the coming years.

Aside from the Canal and the ports system, Panama’s position as a transportation and logistics hub includes a variety of elements that add value for shippers. Among these, is a trans-isthmic railroad that connects the Atlantic with the Pacific and has an installed capacity of 500,000 TEUs per year. Another is the Colon Free Zone, the main commercial distribution center for the hemisphere, that serves mainly the Caribbean and Latin American markets, and which registers more than US$16 billion in transactions per year.

The sea and land connectivity are complemented by Panama’s airport infrastructure that provides direct flights to 45 destinations in 24 countries. In addition, Panama’s competitive banking system with US$64 billion in assets and 74 international and local bank facilities serves the needs of domestic and international businesses.

Given the various positive developments in Panama and the Panama Canal, and inspired by our vision for a better tomorrow for all Panamanians, the ACP will continue to work hand-in-hand with our customers, the shipping industry and the International Maritime Organization in providing a safe, reliable and efficient service well into the future.
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The 2009 GMDSS Manual provides, in a single comprehensive publication, an explanation of the principles on which the GMDSS is based; the radiocommunication and satellite communication requirements and recommendations for its implementation; the operational performance standards and technical specifications to be met by GMDSS equipment; the procedures for and method of operation of the various terrestrial and satellite services which form the GMDSS; and the Master Plan for the GMDSS.

The 2009 edition includes:

- Description of the development and the concepts of the GMDSS
- Description of the components of the GMDSS, the carriage requirements and the operational procedures
- Excerpts from the relevant SOLAS regulations for the GMDSS
- Supporting resolutions and circulars relevant to the GMDSS
- The IMO performance standards and related ITU-R Recommendations giving the technical details of the radio equipment required
- The current GMDSS Master Plan giving details of the coastal infrastructure and services provided by member administrations, including maps of shore-based facilities for the GMDSS
- Extracts from the new 2008 ITU-R Radio Regulations giving the radio regulatory background.

The GMDSS – an integrated communications system using satellite and terrestrial radiocommunications and intended to ensure that no matter where a ship is in distress, aid can be dispatched – was adopted in 1988 under chapter IV of the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS) and was fully implemented in February 1999.
IMO AT WORK

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Singapore organizes VIMSAS workshop

In March, Singapore conducted a five-day experiential workshop on the implementation of the Voluntary IMO Member State Audit Scheme (VIMSAS) for 24 maritime officials from 13 IMO member States. As the first of a series of programmes that will constitute Singapore’s contribution to IMO’s Integrated Technical Cooperation Programme for 2010-2011, the Workshop aimed at sharing, with IMO member States from the Asian and African regions, Singapore’s experience in the implementation of mandatory IMO instruments and the audit process that Singapore went through, with particular focus on the implementation, preparation and follow-up processes of VIMSAS.

In addition to discussions with officers from Singapore’s Maritime and Port Authority (MPA), participants visited MPA’s Port Operations Control Centre and Hydrographic Department and an oil-spill response company to observe, first-hand, the implementation of IMO rules and regulations.

Through the sharing of experiences and best practices, the Workshop helped identify implementation gaps in the participating countries’ administrations and provided practical pointers to help prepare for the audit.

The Workshop followed Singapore’s successful participation in the VIMSAS audit in 2008. Based on its experience in the audit, Singapore took the view that it would be useful to share the experience with member States. Singapore has also earlier nominated auditors for the audit scheme, as well as led audit teams, and participated in a total of four audits of member States in different capacities.

IMLI looks to Asia and Pacific

In March, IMO hosted a briefing for diplomats from selected countries in Asia and the Pacific region, intended to encourage candidates from those regions to enrol in academic programmes at the International Maritime Law Institute (IMLI), especially the LL.M. programme leading to a degree in international maritime law.

Over the past twenty years, 517 lawyers from 115 States, territories and land areas from both the developing and developed world have completed studies in the Institute’s programmes and courses. 108 students from 24 Asian and Pacific countries have successfully completed the LL.M. programme. The Nippon Foundation offers 10 IMLI scholarships every year and is giving preference to candidates from the Asian and Pacific region in their selection process.

The briefing was attended by representatives of Bangladesh, Cook Islands, Indonesia, Maldives, Malaysia, Mongolia, Myanmar, The Philippines, Sri Lanka and Thailand.

Candidates from Asia and the Pacific region are being encouraged to enrol in academic programmes at IMLI.
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REMPEC holds regional workshop on MARPOL implementation

In May, the Regional Marine Pollution Emergency Response Centre for the Mediterranean Sea (REMPEC) organized a regional workshop on MARPOL implementation. Its primary objective was to familiarize senior government officials from Mediterranean countries with the MARPOL Convention and, in particular, Annexes II and III, relating to the control of pollution by noxious liquid substances in bulk, and the prevention of pollution by harmful substances carried by sea in packaged form.

Participants from 19 countries attended, namely Albania, Algeria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Cyprus, Egypt, France, Greece, Israel, Italy, Lebanon, Malta, Montenegro, Morocco, Slovenia, Spain, Syria, Tunisia and Turkey.

The workshop was held within the framework of the EU-funded ‘SafeMed II’ project which is being implemented by REMPEC in ten Mediterranean countries.

Secretary-General lays Lebanese foundation

IMO Secretary-General Mitropoulos has participated in a ceremony marking the laying of the foundation stone for the new Maritime Sciences and Technology Institute (MARSATI), in Batroun, Lebanon.

In addition to eight regular classrooms, the institute, when completed, will have facilities to provide specialized fire-prevention and medical training. It will provide continuing professional development for those already in the industry, and education and training for new recruits to the maritime workforce. A faculty of ten instructors will enable up to 80 students each year to pass through the establishment having either upgraded or renewed their qualifications.

Speaking at the ceremony, Mr Mitropoulos drew attention to the IMO Council’s adoption of ‘2010: Year of the Seafarer’ as the theme for this year’s World Maritime Day, chosen to provide the maritime community with the opportunity to pay tribute to seafarers for their unique contribution to society and in recognition of the risks they shoulder in the execution of their duties in an often hostile environment. He added that, following the January 2010 opening, in Port Said, of a new branch of the Arab Academy for Science, Technology and Maritime Transport, the establishment of MARSATI in Lebanon was yet another positive development in the Year of the Seafarer and a welcome boost to the ongoing “Go to Sea!” campaign, which IMO launched in November 2008, in association with the International Labour Organization, the ‘Round Table’ of shipping industry organizations and the International Transport Workers’ Federation.

Mr. Mitropoulos also held meetings with His Excellency the President of the Republic of Lebanon, Mr. Michel Sleiman, and with His Excellency the Prime Minister, Mr. Saad Hariri.

Manila conference agreement signed

A formal agreement confirming the holding of the Diplomatic Conference to revise the STCW Convention in Manila, Philippines, in June 2010, has been signed. A delegation from the Philippines, including Administrator Verdan (host of the conference), Mr. Louie U. Delos Santos (Technical Assistant, Maritime Industry Authority), Mr. Noel Fernandez (Philippines Embassy) and Mr. Neil Ferrer (Chairman of the Maritime Safety Committee) completed the formalities with (from left) Koji Sekimizu, Olga Bosquez, Secretary-General Mitropoulos and Gaetano Librando from the IMO Secretariat.