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by IMO Secretary-General

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IMO's Design and Equipment Sub-Committee discussed whether existing measures should apply to the new breed of construction vessels for the offshore wind-farm industry. See p.11

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It is not too many years ago that the search for speed in ship design was all-important. A containership with a 20 knot service speed would be trumped by another with a 21 knot service speed, and so on. But the escalating price of fuel eventually brought this race to an abrupt halt. Now, operators are slow-steaming their ships.

Today, commercial, regulatory and environmental imperatives dictate that fuel efficiency is the new holy-grail for naval architects and marine engineers alike. The challenge is to mitigate the impact of rising fuel prices, meet impending international regulations and make sure that shipping improves even further on its already excellent record as the most environment-friendly mode of transportation.

Nobody in the shipping community can be unaware of the breakthrough adoption, in July 2011 at IMO’s Marine Environment Protection Committee, of mandatory technical and operational measures to reduce greenhouse emissions from international shipping. The new regulations will make mandatory the Energy Efficiency Design Index, or EEDI. The regulations will apply to new ships and are expected to enter into force on 1 January 2013.

I would encourage the shipping industry to see this as a wonderful opportunity. I firmly believe that we are on the brink of a new era in energy efficiency and environmental performance – and that shipping can help lead the way forward.

The regulations that make EEDI mandatory are non-prescriptive: which means that, as long as the required energy-efficiency level is attained, ship designers and builders are free to use the most cost-efficient solution or solutions for each particular ship. I see this as a green light for innovation, imagination and blue-sky thinking; and there is already ample evidence to suggest that naval architects also share this view.

Ship designers and engineers are already developing a set of design innovations that they can draw on to meet these new challenges. Propeller technology continues to move forward, for example; hull features such as ducts, bulbs and fins are all being actively explored with excellent results; and aerodynamic superstructures are also increasingly utilized.

On the machinery side, engineers are far more willing than ever before to consider alternatives to the conventional solutions; thus we see increasing use of diesel electric propulsion, electronic engine controls, waste-heat recovery and alternative fuels such as LNG. Even highly unconventional technologies, such as kites and rotors, are now attracting serious interest.

When you add all of this to the ship-design challenges presented by, for example, the opening up of Arctic waters to more general cargo traffic; the increasing demand for special-purpose ships for wind farm construction; the march of oil and gas exploration into ever more inhospitable areas; as well as the need for innovative design solutions to meet other regulatory imperatives such as the requirement for ballast water, and to design ships for safe recycling, it is impossible to avoid the conclusion that these are exciting times to be in shipping.

Yet many in the shipping industry today are finding it almost impossible to operate profitably, or even to break even. The shipping industry may need to face an adjustment period, in which old, outmoded and inefficient ships are replaced by with new generation ships. A new breed of energy-efficient, environment-friendly, safe and profitable ships could benefit everybody, not just in shipping, but in the wider world community.

The shipping industry is one that thrives on creativity and innovation; and it is in tough times such as these that those qualities must come to the fore.
The outcome of a UK-hosted conference on Somalia has been welcomed by IMO Secretary-General Koji Sekimizu. The conference, held at Lancaster House, London on Thursday 23 February, saw a wide-ranging examination of the many problems currently afflicting Somalia, including piracy. Convened by UK Prime Minister David Cameron, it dealt with issues such as security, local stability, counter-terrorism, humanitarian aspects, the political process and international co-operation.

Mr. Sekimizu was part of a United Nations delegation to the London event headed by United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon. Speaking after the event, Mr. Sekimizu said, “Mention of the word ‘Somalia’ in a maritime context leads almost exclusively to thoughts of piracy. But, as this conference so clearly highlights, piracy is just one manifestation of the widespread and deep-rooted problems that beset that country and its people.”

A comprehensive and detailed communiqué adopted by the conference called for, among other things, full implementation of the IMO-led Djibouti Code of Conduct and the adoption of an Exclusive Economic Zone. It also welcomed current work on international guidance on the use of private armed security companies.

Mr. Sekimizu said: “On the issue of piracy, the Conference agreed that piracy cannot be solved by military means alone and reiterated the importance of supporting local communities to tackle the underlying causes of piracy and improving effective use of Somali coastal waters through regional maritime capacity-building measures. I will re-double my efforts to ensure that IMO will provide further support to signatory states of the Djibouti Code of Conduct, including Somalia, within the Djibouti Code of Conduct Trust Fund, and accelerate the process of implementation by the IMO.”

Since first raising the issue of Somalia-based piracy with the UN Security Council in 2005, IMO has worked to strengthen the protection of persons, ships and cargoes in piracy-infested areas and also preserve the integrity of shipping lanes of strategic importance and significance.

Mr. Sekimizu said, “While not diminishing in any way the importance of immediate, preventative measures, an ever-greater emphasis must now be placed on tackling the problem across broader fronts.”

Mr. Sekimizu underlined that capacity building in Somalia and neighbouring countries should be enhanced through co-operation between IMO and the UN, UN specialized agencies and other relevant international organizations, building on IMO’s existing capacity-building activities under the Djibouti Code of Conduct.

IMO will continue with its own capacity-building programme in the region, in support of core objectives under IMO competence, for example the enhancement of maritime safety, the development of search and rescue facilities, and of maritime situational awareness capabilities.

Mr. Sekimizu further said, “Co-operation between and among States, regions and organizations holds the key for a lasting solution to Somalia’s problems. Piracy is a symptom; and, while a symptom can be treated and its effects can be alleviated, real progress can only be made by addressing the cause, which requires significant efforts of capacity building.”

Mr. Sekimizu went on to say: “While addressing the root-causes of piracy, we must not forget the seafarers currently held hostage by pirates. It is imperative that they are released and returned safe to their families.”

The problems in Somalia clearly extend well beyond piracy (pic: World Food Programme).
Titanic remembered by IMO Secretary-General

IMO Secretary-General Koji Sekimizu issued a video message to mark the anniversary on Saturday 14 April of the sinking of the Titanic, remembering all those who lost their lives in the tragic accident, recalling the improvements to passenger ship safety introduced as a result of that incident and acknowledging the need for continual improvement and enhancement of safety at sea.

Mr Sekimizu said, “One hundred years ago, Titanic struck an iceberg, while on her maiden voyage between Europe and the United States. Within a few hours, more than 1,500 people had perished in the freezing waters of the North Atlantic, transforming what was then the world’s most celebrated ship into a name forever associated with disaster.

“The Titanic disaster prompted the major shipping nations of the world, at that time, to take decisive action to address maritime safety. It led to the adoption of the first international convention on safety of life at sea, SOLAS, in 1914.

The International Maritime Organization can trace its own roots back to the Titanic disaster. In its aftermath, the requirement for an international standard-setting body to oversee maritime safety became apparent; and safety at sea remains the core objective of IMO.

“Today, in 2012, although much updated and revised, SOLAS is still the most important international treaty instrument addressing maritime safety. It now forms part of a comprehensive regulatory framework covering almost every aspect of ship design, construction, operation and manning. The spirit and determination of all those who have laboured to create this framework should be acknowledged and given credit.

“Over 100 years, we have seen tremendous improvements in the safety record of shipping.

“But new generations of vessels bring fresh challenges and, even today, accidents still occur, reinforcing the need for continual improvement. Our efforts to promote maritime safety and, in particular, to avoid such disasters befalling passenger ships will never end.

“On the 100th anniversary of that disaster, let us remember those who lost their lives in the freezing waters of the North Atlantic on that fateful night of 14 April 1912 and reflect on the dangers and perils still associated with sea voyages today.

“I urge IMO Member Governments, and the shipping industry as a whole, to refresh our determination to improve and enhance the safety of passenger ships, today and in the future.”

The video can be viewed at http://youtu.be/rlgpeyFpYRY
Limits of liability for maritime claims raised

Amendments to increase the limits of liability in the 1996 Protocol to the Convention on Limitation of Liability for Maritime Claims (LLMC Convention) were adopted by IMO’s Legal Committee, at its 99th session (16-20 April 2012).

The LLMC Convention sets specified limits of liability for two types of claims against shipowners – claims for loss of life or personal injury, and property claims (such as damage to other ships, property or harbour works). Taking into account the experience of incidents, as well as inflation rates, the limits set in the 1996 Protocol have, in recent years, been seen to be inadequate to cover the costs of claims, especially those arising from incidents involving bunker fuel spills.

The new limits are expected to enter into force in June 2015, under the tacit acceptance procedure.

The Convention provides for a virtually unbreakable system of limiting liability. Shipowners and salvors may limit their liability except if “it is proved that the loss resulted from his personal act or omission, committed with the intent to cause such a loss, or recklessly and with knowledge that such loss would probably result.”

**New limits**

Under the amendments to the 1996 Protocol, the limits are raised as follows:

- The limit of liability for claims for loss of life or personal injury on ships not exceeding 2,000 gross tonnage is 3.02 million Special Drawing Rights (SDR) (up from 2 million SDR).
- For larger ships, the following additional amounts are used in calculating the limitation amount:
  - For each ton from 2,001 to 30,000 tons, 1,208 SDR (up from 800 SDR)
  - For each ton from 30,001 to 70,000 tons, 906 SDR (up from 600 SDR)
  - For each ton in excess of 70,000 tons, 604 SDR (up from 400 SDR).

- The limit of liability for property claims for ships not exceeding 2,000 gross tonnage is 1.51 million SDR (up from 1 million SDR).
- For larger ships, the following additional amounts are used in calculating the limitation amount:
  - For each ton from 2,001 to 30,000 tons, 1,208 SDR (up from 800 SDR)
  - For each ton from 30,001 to 70,000 tons, 906 SDR (up from 600 SDR)
  - For each ton in excess of 70,000 tons, 302 SDR (up from 200 SDR).

**Background**

The general question of limitation of liability for maritime claims was dealt with in the International Convention Relating to the Limitation of the Liability of Owners of Seagoing Ships, which was signed in Brussels in 1957, and came into force in 1968. IMO, which began operations in 1959, then adopted a new convention in 1976, which raised the limits, in some cases by 300%. The compensation limits of the 1976 Convention were raised by means of the Protocol adopted in 1996, and now revised in 2012.
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DE rules on recovery of persons from the water

New draft SOLAS requirements for the recovery of persons from the water on all ships, as well as related Guidelines for development of plans and procedures for recovery of persons from the water, were agreed by the Sub-Committee on Ship Design and Equipment (DE) at its 56th session.

The draft new SOLAS regulation III/17-1 would require all ships to be provided with plans and procedures to recover persons from the water, taking into account the Guidelines.

The Sub-Committee also agreed a draft MSC resolution on Implementation of SOLAS regulation III/17-1 to ships other than those engaged in international voyages, aimed at encouraging the implementation of such plans and procedures on non-SOLAS ships.

The development of the draft new regulation and guidelines stemmed from the Organization’s comprehensive work on large passenger ship safety and is aimed at ensuring all ships have the capability to effectively serve as a rescue asset and have the right equipment to be able to rescue persons from the water and from survival craft. This new requirement will enhance safety at sea and also provide support to search and rescue coordinators in all types of rescue operations and, particularly, in those situations where there is insufficient dedicated search and rescue capacity or access to helicopters and specialized rescue craft is limited.

Noise levels on board ships

The draft revised Code on noise levels on board ships was agreed by the Sub-Committee, for submission to the MSC for approval.

The Code, which sets out mandatory noise level limits for machinery spaces, control rooms, workshops, accommodation and other spaces on board ships, updates and revises the previous version published in 1973.

A related draft new SOLAS regulation II-1/3.12 was also agreed, to require new ships to be constructed to reduce onboard noise and to protect personnel from the noise, in accordance with the Code.

Mandatory code for ships in polar waters

The Sub-Committee continued its work on the development of a mandatory Code for ships operating in polar waters (Polar Code), which is intended to cover the full range of shipping-related matters relevant to navigation in waters surrounding the two poles – ship design, construction and equipment; operational and training concerns; search and rescue; and, equally important, the protection of the unique environment and eco-systems of the polar regions.

A working group during the session further developed the technical parts of the draft Code and the Sub-Committee agreed with the group’s recommendation to forward relevant sections to the Sub-Committees on Radiocommunications, Search and Rescue (COMSAR); Fire Protection (FP); Safety of Navigation (NAV); Stability, Load Lines and Fishing Vessel Safety (SLF); and Training and Watchkeeping (STW) for their review and input.

In relation to environmental aspects of the Code, the Sub-Committee noted that the working group had been divided as to whether the environmental protection provisions should be elaborated as a part of the Code, or as amendments to the relevant annexes of MARPOL and other appropriate IMO instruments, and decided to keep any decision on environmental requirements to be included in the Code in abeyance pending further consideration by the Marine Environment Protection Committee (MEPC).

The Correspondence Group on Development of a Mandatory Polar Code was re-established to continue the work, taking into account the outcome of other bodies meeting in the interim.

The new guidelines are designed to ensure all ships can play an effective role in rescuing people from the sea.
The SOLAS amendment, which is expected to enter into force on 1 January 2013, is intended to establish new, stricter safety standards for lifeboat release and retrieval systems, aimed at preventing accidents during lifeboat launching, and will require the assessment and possible replacement of a large number of lifeboat release hooks.

**Road map for SOLAS chapter III revision**

The Sub-Committee agreed a road map for the review of SOLAS chapter III on life-saving appliances and arrangements, with a view to completing a comprehensive review of the chapter and developing draft amendments to SOLAS chapter III and LSA Code.

Firstly, the Sub-Committee intends to develop draft goal-based guidelines on a framework of requirements for ships’ life-saving appliances, so that the revised SOLAS chapter III and the LSA Code can be developed, based on a goal-based approach, consisting of the development of Tier I – Goals; Tier II – Functional requirements; and Tier III – Verification of conformity.

**Lifeboat exterior colour**

The Sub-Committee agreed a draft unified interpretation concerning lifeboat exterior colour, to clarify that a “highly visible colour”, as required by the LSA code, only includes colours of strong chromatic content, i.e. pure achromatic colours such as white and all shades of grey should not be accepted as “comparable” colours.

This is applicable to the exterior of rigid watertight enclosure of totally enclosed lifeboats and the exterior of the canopy of partially enclosed lifeboats.

**Offshore wind-farm vessels**

The Sub-Committee agreed to consider the application of existing IMO instruments to offshore wind farm vessels (i.e. offshore wind farm construction vessels (OWFCV) and offshore wind farm service craft (OWFSC)) and to further clarify the application of relevant requirements concerning industrial personnel transported by sea.

**Reducing noise for marine life**

The Sub-Committee considered a proposed framework concerning the development of non-mandatory, technical guidelines to minimize underwater noise that might have an impact on marine life and agreed to move forward with developing guidance on the matter.

A correspondence group was established to work intersessionally to further develop a draft MSC resolution on Requirements for periodic servicing and maintenance of lifeboats, launching appliances and on-load release gear, and to prepare associated draft amendments to SOLAS chapter III to make the MSC resolution mandatory.

There has been intensive work in the Sub-Committee over a number of years to address the problem of accidents with lifeboats, including the development and approval of relevant guidelines as well as the adoption of related amendments to SOLAS chapter III.

In May 2011, IMO adopted a new paragraph 5 of SOLAS regulation III/1 to require lifeboat on-load release mechanisms not complying with new International Life-Saving Appliances (LSA) Code to be replaced no later than the first scheduled dry-docking of the ship after 1 July 2014 but, in any case, not later than 1 July 2019.
MEPC adopts energy-efficiency implementation guidelines

An important series of guidelines to support the uniform implementation of mandatory measures to increase energy efficiency and reduce emissions of greenhouse gases (GHGs) from international shipping was adopted by the MEPC, when it met for its 63rd session from 27 February to 2 March 2012, paving the way for the regulations to be smoothly and uniformly implemented by Administrations and the shipping industry.

The MEPC also continued its intensive discussion on market-based measures for GHG emissions from international shipping.

During the busy session, the MEPC also adopted amendments to the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships (MARPOL) relating to regional arrangements for port reception facilities; and adopted guidelines related to the implementation of the revised MARPOL Annex V (Garbage) and the Hong Kong Convention for the recycling of ships.

The MEPC also granted basic and final approval to a number of ballast water management systems that make use of active substances.

Guidelines for implementation of energy efficiency measures adopted

The MEPC adopted four sets of guidelines intended to assist in the implementation of the mandatory regulations on energy efficiency for ships in MARPOL Annex VI, which are expected to enter into force on 1 January 2013:

- 2012 Guidelines on the method of calculation of the attained Energy Efficiency Design Index (EEDI) for new ships;
- 2012 Guidelines for the development of a Ship Energy Efficiency Management Plan (SEEMP);
- 2012 Guidelines on survey and certification of the Energy Efficiency Design Index (EEDI); and
- Guidelines for calculation of reference lines for use with the Energy Efficiency Design Index (EEDI).

The guidelines will support Member States in their uniform implementation of the amendments to MARPOL Annex VI Regulations for the prevention of air pollution from ships, adopted in July 2011, which make mandatory the Energy Efficiency Design Index (EEDI), for new ships, and the Ship Energy Efficiency Management Plan (SEEMP) for all ships.

The EEDI is a non-prescriptive, performance-based mechanism that leaves the choice of technologies to use in a specific ship design to the shipping industry. As long as the required energy-efficiency level is attained, ship designers and builders will be free to use the most cost-efficient solutions for the ship to comply with the regulations.

The SEEMP establishes a mechanism for operators to improve the energy-efficiency of all ships, including existing vessels.

The MEPC also agreed an updated work plan for the development of further guidelines and the development of energy-efficiency frameworks for those ships not covered by the current EEDI regulations.

Linked to the implementation of energy-efficiency measures was a draft MEPC resolution on the Promotion of technical co-operation and transfer of technology relating to the improvement of energy efficiency of ships. It was agreed to discuss the draft further at the next session.

MBM discussion continues

The MEPC continued its intensive consideration of proposed market-based measures (MBMs), which would complement the technical and operational measures already adopted. Further debate will continue at the next session (MEPC 64, 1-5 October 2012). The MBM proposals under review range from a contribution or levy on all CO2 emissions from international shipping or only from those ships not meeting the EEDI
requirements, via emission trading systems, to schemes based on a ship’s actual efficiency, both by design (EEDI) and operation (SEEMP).

The Committee considered undertaking an impact assessment of the MBM proposals and considered, in detail, the methodology and criteria it should be based on. Towards the end of the meeting, the Chairman presented draft terms of reference for the impact assessment, which will continue to be considered at the next session in October.

**NOX technical code amendments**

The MEPC adopted amendments to the NOX Technical Code 2008, relating to engines not pre-certified on a test bed and to NOX-reducing devices.

**Regional port reception arrangements**

The MEPC adopted amendments to MARPOL Annexes I, II, IV, V and VI which are aimed at enabling small island developing States to comply with requirements for port States to provide reception facilities for ship waste through regional arrangements. Parties participating in a regional arrangement must develop a Regional Reception Facilities Plan and provide particulars of the identified Regional Ships’ Waste Reception Centres; and particulars of those ports with only limited facilities. The amendments are expected to enter into force on 1 August 2013.

A resolution containing Guidelines for the Development of a Regional Reception Facilities Plan was also adopted.

**Sewage treatment equipment**

An MEPC resolution was adopted on the development of technical onboard equipment in relation to the designation of the Baltic Sea as a Special Area under MARPOL Annex IV Prevention of pollution by sewage from ships, which calls for the development, without delay, of proven, adequate and cost-effective technical onboard equipment to make it possible to meet the discharge standards for passenger ships operating in special areas under that Annex.

This follows the adoption by MEPC 62 of amendments to MARPOL Annex IV to include the provisions establishing “Special Areas” under MARPOL Annex IV and designating the Baltic Sea as a Special Area under this Annex. Those amendments are expected to enter into force on 1 January 2013.

**MARPOL Annex V guidelines adopted**

The MEPC adopted the 2012 Guidelines for the Implementation of MARPOL Annex V and 2012 Guidelines for the Development of Garbage Management Plans. The guidelines are intended to assist in the implementation of the revised MARPOL Annex V Regulations for the prevention of pollution by garbage from ships, which was adopted at MEPC 62 in July 2011 and is expected to enter into force on 1 January 2013.

**Ship recycling – guidelines adopted**


These guidelines, along with the 2011 Guidelines for the development of the Inventory of Hazardous Materials and the 2011 Guidelines for the development of the Ship Recycling Plan, that were adopted by MEPC 62, are intended to assist ship-recycling facilities and shipping companies to commence 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 established a correspondence group to further develop the draft text of Guidelines for Survey and Certification under the Hong Kong Convention and Guidelines for Inspection of Ships under the Hong Kong Convention.
Ballast water management
The MEPC granted basic approval to three, and final approval to five ballast water management systems that make use of active substances, after considering the reports of the 18th, 19th and 20th meetings of the Joint Group of Experts on the Scientific Aspects of Marine Environment Protection (GESAMP) Ballast Water Working Group, which took place 2011.

The MEPC also adopted the revised Guidelines on design and construction to facilitate sediment control on ships (G12), one of the 14 sets of guidelines developed to assist in the implementation of the International Convention for the Control and Management of Ships’ Ballast Water and Sediments, 2004 (BWM Convention). The revised Guidelines (G12) update the previous version adopted in 2006.

With regard to the availability of ballast water management systems, the MEPC noted that there were now 21 type-approved systems available. While some delegations expressed concerns regarding the implementation of the BWM Convention, due to lack of approved technologies, limited shipyard capacity, time availability and the costs involved, other delegations were of the view that there are sufficient ballast water treatment technologies and shipyard capacity and encouraged shipowners to start installing ballast water management systems on their ships in order to avoid possible bottlenecks at a later stage.

The Committee noted that there was consensus regarding the need for additional information on the implementation pace, availability of technologies and shipyard facilities and invited Member States to provide updated information regarding the status in their respective countries. A template was agreed to provide this information.

The MEPC reiterated the need for those countries that had not already done so to ratify the BWM Convention, at their earliest possible opportunity, to achieve its entry into force. To date, 33 States, with an aggregate merchant shipping tonnage of 26.46 per cent of the world total, have ratified the Convention. The Convention 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 percent of the gross tonnage of the world’s merchant shipping, have become Parties to it.

Amendments to the IBC Code
The MEPC approved draft amendments to chapters 17, 18 and 19 of the International Code for the Construction and Equipment of Ships carrying Dangerous Chemicals in Bulk (IBC Code), subject to MSC 90’s concurrent decision, with a view to adoption at MEPC 64.

Oil pollution manuals approved
The MEPC approved a number of guidance manuals developed by the OPRC HNS Technical Group: IMO/IPIECA Guidance on sensitivity mapping for oil spill response; Guideline for oil spill response in fast currents; Operational guide on the use of sorbents; and Oil spill waste management decision support tool.

Polar Code – environmental aspects discussed
The Committee reviewed progress in the Sub-Committee on Ship Design and Equipment (DE) in developing the draft text of the mandatory Code for ships operating in polar waters (Polar Code), which is intended to cover the full range of shipping-related matters relevant to navigation in waters surrounding the two poles and the protection of the unique environment and eco-systems of the polar regions. It was noted that the intention was to develop an environmental protection chapter in the draft Polar Code. Member States and international non-governmental organizations in consultative status were invited to submit relevant proposals related to environmental provisions proposed to be included in the Polar Code to the next MEPC session in October 2012, with a view to providing additional guidance to the DE Sub-Committee for its next session in March 2013.

The MEPC agreed that the Polar Code should be made mandatory through the adoption of appropriate amendments to the relevant annexes of International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS), MARPOL, and other relevant environmental instruments.

“MEPC agreed that the Polar Code should be made mandatory”

The Code covering carriage of chemicals in bulk is being amended

Member States and NGOs were invited to submit environmental proposals related to the Polar Code
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COMSAR finalises GMDSS revision plan

A draft timetable to bring the Global Maritime Distress and Safety System (GMDSS) up to date and allow modern technologies to be incorporated into the system was agreed by the Sub-Committee on Radiocommunications and Search and Rescue (COMSAR) when it met for its 16th session.

The draft work plan, including the timetable, for the “Revision and modernization of the Global Maritime Distress and Safety System” will be submitted to the Maritime Safety Committee for approval.

Evolving technology will continue to drive change in the maritime communications system. The Sub-Committee agreed on the many reasons for a review, including the fact that the GMDSS – which was adopted by means of amendments to SOLAS in 1988 and fully implemented by 1999 – needs to be modernized to include new technologies, otherwise ship operators may find themselves carrying obsolete equipment for the sole purpose of meeting a SOLAS requirement. The benefits that are expected to emerge include enhancement of safety and security in general, and navigation safety in particular, environmental protection and general communications for the industry.

The plan envisages a fully comprehensive review of the GMDSS requirements, contained in SOLAS Chapter IV (Radiocommunications), to take place over a three-year period (2013–2015), followed by a further two-year period (2015-2017) for the GMDSS modernization plan, to be succeeded by the development of legal instruments, revision/development of relevant performance standards and an implementation period.

A correspondence group was set up to begin the review of the GMDSS, after the approval of the Work Plan by the Maritime Safety Committee.

The GMDSS revision plan is designed to ensure ships do not carry out-moded equipment just to comply with regulations.
Sub-Committee on Radiocommunications and Search and Rescue (COMSAR) | 16th Session | 12 – 16 March 2012

Under the current SOLAS chapter IV, incorporating the GMDSS requirements, all passenger ships and all cargo ships of 300 gross tonnage and upwards on international voyages are required to carry equipment designed to improve the chances of rescue following an accident, including satellite emergency position indicating radio beacons (EPIRBs) and search and rescue transponders (SARTs) for the location of the ship or survival craft. Regulations in Chapter IV cover undertakings by contracting governments to provide radiocommunications services as well as ship requirements for carriage of radiocommunications equipment. The Chapter is closely linked to the Radio Regulations of the International Telecommunication Union.

Guidance to prospective GMDSS service providers

The Sub-committee agreed a draft MSC circular on Guidance to prospective GMDSS satellite service providers, for approval by the MSC. The guidance provides additional information to complement that provided in resolution A.1001(25) Criteria for the provision of mobile satellite communication systems in the Global Maritime Distress and Safety System (GMDSS).

E-navigation strategy – gaps identified

The Sub-Committee progressed its work in relation to the development of an e-navigation strategy implementation plan and agreed a final draft list of gaps which are relevant to radiocommunications and search and rescue, for the benefit of the work of the Sub-Committee on Standards of Training and Watchkeeping (STCW 43), for further revision of the total list of identified gaps from the training perspective, and the Sub-Committee on Safety of Navigation (NAV 58), for final consideration.

The gap analysis identifies areas which the e-navigation strategy should address, for example the possible lack of bandwidth and unclear assignment of adequate bandwidth for potential e-navigation communication needs.

E-navigation is the harmonized collection, integration, exchange, presentation and analysis of marine information on board and ashore by electronic means to enhance berth-to-berth navigation and related services for safety and security at sea and protection of the marine environment.

LRIT status update

The Sub-Committee was updated on the status of the Long-Range Identification and Tracking of ships (LRIT) system. As of 9 March 2012, 97 of 161 SOLAS Contracting Governments, including 10 non-metropolitan territories and two special administrative regions, were part of the LRIT system and 66 Data Centres (DCs) were operating in the system.

The transfer of operations of the International LRIT Data Exchange from the United States to the European Maritime Safety Agency (EMSA) had been completed on 18 October 2011. EMSA had established a primary and a secondary IDE site (the first hosted at EMSA headquarters, in Lisbon, Portugal and the second at EMSA’s Business Continuity Facility in Porto, Portugal). The United States had established the disaster recovery site of the IDE (hosted at the United States Coast Guard Operations System Center (OSC)) and would continue providing Domain Name Service (DNS) management for the IDE (imo-ide.org).

The Sub-Committee noted, with appreciation, the financial support offered by Canada to some African developing countries to help them fulfil their LRIT obligations and that some African countries had already joined or were in the process of joining the South Africa National Data Centre (NDC).

Following discussion of a number of technical and other issues relating to the LRIT system, the Sub-Committee agreed the following for submission to the MSC for approval:

- draft amendments to the Revised performance standards and functional requirements for the long-range identification and tracking of ships (resolution MSC.263(84));
- draft amendments to the LRIT Technical documentation (Parts I and II) MSC.1/Circ.1259/Rev.4 and MSC.1/Circ.1294/Rev.2), including the additional draft amendments to be implemented during a future modification testing phase of the LRIT system;
- draft amendments to the Continuity of service plan for the LRIT system (MSC.1/Circ.1376);
- a draft MSC resolution amending resolution MSC.298(87) on Establishment of a Distribution Facility;
- a draft COMSAR circular listing the audits conducted so far by the LRIT Coordinator; and
- a draft MSC circular on Principles and guidelines relating to the review and audit of the performance of LRIT Data Centres and of the International LRIT Data Exchange.

The Sub-Committee agreed that there was a need for the preparation of guidance for coastal States and port States on use of the LRIT system and invited Member Governments and international organizations to submit comments and proposals to COMSAR 17.

Amendments to IAMSAR Manual agreed

The Sub-Committee endorsed draft amendments to the International Aeronautical and Maritime Search and Rescue (IAMSAR) Manual, which is jointly published by IMO and the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), for approval by the MSC for inclusion in the 2013 edition of the Manual, which will incorporate the 2011 and 2012 amendments.

The 2012 draft amendments include those relating to inclusion of reference to the LRIT system; updates to the section on cold water survival including information on personal factors that can influence survival time in cold water; updated maps; a new section on communications planning for mass rescue operations; action to be taken by a Rescue Coordination Centre (RCC) on receiving covert alerts to shore for vessel security incidents involving acts of violence against ships (i.e. piracy, armed robbery against ships or any other security incident directed toward the ship or any other security incident directed against ships or any other security incident directed toward shore for vessel security incidents involving acts of piracy, armed robbery against ships or any other security incident directed toward shore).

“The gap analysis identifies areas the e-navigation strategy should address, such as the possible lack of bandwidth”
against a ship); suggested format for alert information from a commercial locating, tracking and emergency notification service provider to an RCC; updates to examples of action cards for man overboard situations, MEDEVAC, basic communication plan structure and on-scene coordination.

**Guidance on smart phones agreed**

The Sub-Committee agreed a draft COMSAR circular on Guidance on Smartphone and Other Computer Devices, for approval by the MSC. The circular notes that applications for “Smart Phones” and other computer devices have been developed and are available for download that relate to Search and Rescue (SAR). Such applications offer users a facility to raise a SAR alert. However, there are potential safety concerns about the use of such applications where the application relies on e-mail as a form of notification.

Administrations are advised to contact the sponsor/owner of the SAR application and request removal of their country from the application and any advertising material, including websites, that list regions that receive email alerts. It is also recommended that Administrations review the arrangements they have with any other providers to ensure that their search and rescue operational requirements are adequately addressed.

**Social media and distress notification**

The Sub-Committee noted a submission which commented on an expectation by the general public that SAR authorities monitor their well-being during an emergency and the need for the development of guidance for SAR authorities in case social media were being used for distress alerting. The Sub-Committee invited the ICAO/IMO Joint Working Group to develop guidance and information on the use of social media for SAR alerting and the expectation that they would not be monitored as a primary means of distress notification, for incorporation into the 2016 edition of the IAMSAR Manual.

**Cold water survival agreed**

The Sub-Committee agreed the revised and updated Guide for cold water survival, for approval by the MSC.

**Progress on Central American MRCCs**

The Sub-Committee noted progress made in the development of a technical co-operation project aimed at the establishment of search and rescue coordination centres in Central America.

Two meetings at IMO Headquarters had been held, with representatives from the seven Central American countries (Belize, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and Panama) and IMO assessment missions had been undertaken by SAR specialists from Chile in December 2011. A SAR regional meeting on the development of a multilateral agreement for the Central American region was held in Panama City, Panama, on 8 and 9 February 2012. A second regional meeting is provisionally scheduled to take place in October 2012.

**Liaison with ITU**

The Sub-Committee approved liaison statements to the International Telecommunication Union (ITU-R Working Party 5B) on Work Plan adopted for revision of Recommendation ITU-R M.493-13; Regarding Recommendation ITU-R M.493-13; and Use of the frequency range 9200–9500 MHz for maritime radionavigation.
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Mandatory IMO audit scheme progressed at FSI

Significant progress towards making the Voluntary IMO Member State Audit Scheme mandatory was made by the Sub-Committee on Flag State Implementation (FSI) when it met for its 20th session.

The Sub-Committee agreed the text of the draft IMO Instruments Implementation Code (III Code), which sets the audit standard and is intended to be used to determine the extent to which Contracting Governments give full and complete effect to the provisions of key IMO international treaties. Draft amendments to the relevant IMO instruments to make the III Code and auditing mandatory were also agreed.

The draft text of the III Code and the amendments will be submitted to the Marine Environment Protection Committee (MEPC 64, in October 2012) and the Maritime Safety Committee (MSC 91, in December 2012), for consideration.

It is intended that the III Code should be adopted by the IMO Assembly, at its twenty-eighth session, in late 2013. Subsequently, the amendments to the treaty instruments could be adopted, to make the auditing and Code mandatory.


Reports on completed audits analysed

A study of five consolidated audit summary reports, based on 45 audits completed under the Voluntary IMO Member State Audit Scheme, was reviewed by the Sub-Committee. It was agreed to establish a working/drafting group at the next session to review the reports and to make recommendations to the Committees in the light of the findings.

Code for Recognized Organizations agreed

The draft Code for Recognized Organizations (ROs) and related draft treaty amendments to make it mandatory were agreed for submission to MEPC 64 and MSC 91, as appropriate, with a view to approval, subject to clarification or approval from the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) with regard to referencing its standards in the RO Code.

The proposed draft amendments would make the Code mandatory under SOLAS, the Load Lines Protocol 1988 and MARPOL (Annexes I and II).

Containing criteria against which ROs (which may be authorized by flag States to carry out surveys and issue certificates on their behalf) are assessed and authorized/recognized, and give guidance for subsequent monitoring of ROs by Administrations.

The new Code would replace the Specifications on the Survey and Certification Functions of Recognized Organizations acting on behalf of the Administration (resolution A.789(19)) and Guidelines for the authorization of Organizations acting on behalf of the Administration (A.739(18)).

Lessons learned from casualties agreed

The Sub-Committee approved the text of Lessons Learned for Presentation to Seafarers, for release on the IMO website, developed by the Correspondence Group on Casualty Analysis and reviewed by the regular meeting of the Working Group on Casualty Analysis, during the session.

A series of incidents, some fatal, involving lifting appliances was reviewed by the working group and the Sub-Committee agreed to the group’s recommendation to forward the incident reports (on the general cargo ship BBC Atlantic; the open-hatch bulk carrier Star Java; the cargo ship Knud Lauritzen; the hopper/dredger/sand carrier Sand Falcon; and the diving support vessel Wellservices) to the ship Design and Equipment (DE) Sub-Committee for consideration (subject to the MSC’s endorsement).

The Correspondence Group on Casualty Analysis was re-established to continue its work analysing casualty investigation reports submitted to IMO. In particular, the correspondence group was invited to consider the safety issues identified in the marine safety investigation reports into the explosions, fire and loss of life following the very serious marine casualty on Deep Water Horizon, in 2010.

The correspondence group was also invited to review the marine safety investigation reports into ro-ro ferry vehicle-deck fires, in order to identify improvements that can be made to the fire protection standards applied to ro-ro passenger ships constructed before 1 July 2010 (which could remain in service for the next 20 years or more) to enhance their survivability and safe return to port in the event of a vehicle-deck fire. Specific reports to be considered included the investigations into the accidents involving the ro-ro ferries Al Salaam Boccaccio 98, Und Adriyatik, Commodore Clipper, Lisco Gloria and Pearl of Scandinavia. While the reports into the first two incidents had already been considered in detail, the...
reports into the latter three were due to be considered at FSI 21.

The Sub-Committee also noted information provided by the Italian delegation to the Sub-Committee on Stability, Load Lines and Fishing Vessel Safety (SLF 54), regarding the accident to the Italian cruise ship Costa Concordia, which occurred on 13 January 2012, and noted that a casualty investigation was being carried out by the Italian Coast Guard, the outcome of which would be submitted to IMO as soon as available.

Meanwhile, the Sub-Committee strongly urged Member States to submit to IMO their reports of investigations, particularly into very serious casualties under the mandatory part of the Code of International Standards and Recommended Practices for a Safety Investigation into a Marine Casualty or Marine Incident (Casualty Investigation Code). This will assist the Working Group on Casualty Analysis in determining if there are potential trends or recurring contributing factors, and to promote appropriate action, where necessary.

**Mandatory reports under MARPOL reviewed**

The Sub-Committee considered the summary analysis of the reports submitted for 2010 in relation to the MARPOL Convention, by 34 Parties to MARPOL and noted that the rate of reporting in 2010 remained low at 22.7 per cent (MARPOL has 151 Parties). Six further reports were received after the 30 September deadline, giving a rate of reporting of 26.7 per cent. The Sub-Committee urged all Parties to MARPOL to submit mandatory reports on time.

Learning lessons from marine casualties is a key function of the FSI Sub-Committee.

“The Sub-Committee strongly urged Member States to submit casualty investigation reports to IMO”
Legal Committee to develop guidelines on crimes at sea

The Committee agreed to develop guidelines on the collation and preservation of evidence following an allegation of a serious crime having taken place on board a ship or following a report of a missing person from a ship; and guidelines on the pastoral and medical care of victims.

The decision to include this as a new output on the Committee’s agenda follows the adoption by the IMO Assembly of a resolution on the subject (A.1068(27)), which invited States to submit proposals to the Committee.

During discussion on the guidelines to be developed, delegations expressed the views that:

- the guidelines should cover all types of ships, not only passenger ships;
- they should take into account the fact that more than one State might have jurisdiction;
- they should ensure co-operation between States with the primary investigative role and other interested States and investigative agencies such as specialist police units;
- the rights of suspects should be respected in line with human rights conventions and should take into account issues such as due process;
- possible overlap with the Code of International Standards and Recommended Practices for a Safety Investigation into a Marine Casualty or Marine Incident (Casualty Investigation Code) should be avoided; and
- no liability should be attributed by the guidelines to the master, officers or crew should it be found that any evidence be lacking or contaminated through inexperience in collecting evidence.

The issue should also be brought to the attention of the Maritime Safety Committee (MSC), given possible implications for training.

Liability issues from offshore oil exploration

At the IMO Council’s request, the Committee revisited the issue of liability and compensation connected with transboundary pollution damage from offshore oil exploration and exploitation activities. It recognized that bilateral and regional arrangements are the most appropriate way to address the matter and agreed that there was no compelling need to develop an international regime on the subject.

The Committee agreed, accordingly, to inform the Council that it wished to further analyse the liability and compensation issues, with the aim of developing guidance to assist States interested in pursuing bilateral or regional arrangements, without, however, revising the Organization’s strategic plan.

The debate on the issue follows the much publicized Deepwater Horizon incident on the Montara offshore oil platform, located in the Australian Exclusive Economic Zone, in which a well blew out, leading to a significant oil spill.

Delegations were invited to submit documents on this subject to the Committee’s next session, under the agenda item “Any other business.”

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Legal Committee to develop guidelines on crimes at sea

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IMO does not have a remit to “tame” technology. IMO does, however, provide a forum to discuss and assess new technologies and to assist Member Governments in their careful consideration of the technologies which should be applied and the adoption of minimum performance standards and so on. It must be recognised, however, that e-navigation development is based on identified user needs rather than technology-driven.

It has been stated that the major challenge for the implementation of e-navigation is the human element. How is IMO taking this into account?

The role of the STW Sub-Committee is very important in developing the e-navigation strategy and in ensuring that training and the human element considerations are taken into account. It is this Sub-Committee that has the remit to review all aspects of e-navigation from the human element perspective, including training issues.

The adoption of e-navigation technologies might require a fundamental regulatory shift in the maritime industry, balancing rules, safety and innovation. Is IMO ready to tame the fast pace of technology?

Everyone seems to agree that training will be crucial for the safe implementation of new e-navigation technology. Are the newly implemented Manila Standards for Training and Competences in line with e-navigation users’ needs?

The Manila amendments were adopted in 2010 and were therefore up-to-date at that point. Clearly, training needs relating to e-navigation need to be considered, which is why the STW Sub-Committee has a key role to play in this work.

What do you think of the progress made on e-navigation so far?

The work is progressing quite well. The lead body is the Sub-Committee on Safety of Navigation (NAV), which will next meet from 2-6 July 2012. The e-navigation concept is being developed in cooperation with the Sub-Committees on Radiocommunications, Search and Rescue (COMSAR) and Standards of Training and Watchkeeping (STW). At its recent session in March, The COMSAR Sub-Committee agreed on a final draft list of gaps which are relevant to radiocommunications and search and rescue and of benefit to the work of STW. They also agreed upon further revision of the total list of identified gaps from the training perspective and the NAV for final consideration. The gap analysis identifies areas that the e-navigation strategy should address, for example the possible lack of bandwidth and unclear assignment of adequate bandwidth for potential e-navigation communication needs.

Rigidity in rules sometimes prevents manufacturers from being able to make further developments. What do you think of the balance between sets of rules and technical possibilities?

It is important to note that, in the process of developing the e-navigation strategy, it is not just the Member Governments that have a platform at IMO but industry too. Industry is represented by the international non-governmental organisations, which have a consultative status at IMO and this enables it to be fully involved in the development process.

What, in your mind, will be the first features to be implemented for e-navigation?

It is too early to say. This will be something for the Member Governments of IMO to decide when the implementation strategy plan for e-navigation is discussed.

Is the integration of AIS Aids to Navigation essential?

This is one aspect. At its last session, the NAV Sub-Committee established a correspondence group to compose the first draft of a policy for Automatic Identification Systems (AIS) aids to navigation and to submit a report for consideration and review by NAV 58 in July 2012.

IMO NEWS | ISSUE 2 | 2012
The industry is currently concerned about the shortcomings brought about by ECDIS implementation. How can we “sell” e-navigation to industry stakeholders already worried about ECDIS?

As mentioned above, industry has a platform at the IMO via the international non-governmental organisations, which have a consultative status at the IMO, so industry can be fully involved in the development process. Industry bodies should, therefore, bring their concerns to IMO via the Maritime Safety Committee and the relevant Sub-Committees.

How do e-navigation and ECDIS work together and does e-navigation have an influence upon the ECDIS mandate?

All relevant aspects will be considered as part of the e-navigation architecture. The e-navigation strategy implementation plan aims to integrate existing and new navigational aids, in particular, electronic aids to navigation, in an all-embracing, transparent, user-friendly, cost-effective and compatible system. This will contribute to enhanced navigational safety and will have a positive effect on environmental protection and maritime safety in general, while simultaneously reducing the burden on the navigator.

A core element of the e-navigation concept is enhanced communication between sea and land. How will IMO convey this to the stakeholders who are not normally represented at IMO, for example port authorities, shipping companies and national waterways administrations?

Yes, the concept embraces ship and shore-based elements. The current overarching e-navigation architecture, as agreed by the NAV Sub-Committee, provides the shipboard and the shore-based parts connected through different links. It also identifies the concept of the Maritime Service Portfolio (MSP) which defines and describes the set of operational and technical services and their level of service provided by a stakeholder in a given sea area, waterway, or port, as appropriate.

Other important stakeholders include the International Association of Marine Aids to Navigation and Lighthouse Authorities (IALA), which is addressing these issues through its own e-navigation committee and providing relevant information to IMO.

The International Hydrographic Office (IHO), which has 80 Member States and is usually represented by the national Hydrographer, or Director of Hydrography, is also very much involved in the e-navigation project. It was expected that the Maritime Safety Committee (MSC) would agree in May 2012 to use the IHO S-100 Geospatial Standard for Hydrographic Data as the baseline for creating a framework for data access and services within the scope of SOLAS, for exchange of real-time information and data. It is also proposed to establish an IMO/IHO Harmonisation Group on Data modelling to consider matters related to the framework for data access and information services within the scope of SOLAS, using as a baseline IHO’s S-100 standard. Port authorities and national waterways can make their views known via their own national authorities known via their own national authorities which attend IMO meetings as IMO Member Governments. It is the responsibility of the Member Governments to ensure that they consider all aspects when they bring their views and comments to IMO for discussion. Shipping companies are represented by the international non-governmental organizations which have consultative status at IMO, so they should work through those bodies to present their views at IMO.

E-navigation, in essence, the fully computerized bridge. Will IMO take note of this and adapt the rules and regulations to a software-driven environment, which, as with software ashore, is subject to continuous technical maintenance?

Maintenance of key systems is always an important part of technology and the e-navigation system will include elements relating to maintenance. IMO has already recognised the problem and issued relevant guidance regarding maintenance of ECDIS software, procedures for updating ship-borne navigation and communication equipment, including operating anomalies identified within ECDIS.

The term “navigation”, understood as the nautical processes to control a vessel from harbour A to harbour B, appears too narrow for the concept of e-navigation. What other processes of carriage at sea, for example cargo, machinery control or administration are affected by this concept?

E-navigation could provide operational benefits, such as making available, in advance, detailed information on vessel arrival, cargo manifests and passenger lists etc., or the ability to ease throughput and thereby effectively increase capacity in ports, fairways and waterways. So there could be broader outcomes from e-navigation.

Has the grounding of the Costa Concordia had any influence upon e-navigation in your opinion?

I cannot give an opinion on this. It is not appropriate to make any comments on the Costa Concordia incident before the full investigation report has been submitted to IMO.

If you were to send out a message to our readership, what would it be?

E-navigation has the potential to make a huge contribution to enhanced navigational safety and will have a positive effect on environmental protection and maritime safety in general, while simultaneously reducing the burden on the navigator. However, it must be developed in a coordinated and structured manner, taking into account all the relevant issues. All stakeholders will have the opportunity to contribute to this process, via their national delegations attending IMO or via the relevant international industry bodies.

BIOGRAPHY

Mr. Gurpreet Singhota is Deputy Director/Head, Operational Safety Section, Maritime Safety Division, IMO. He is Secretary of the Sub-Committee on Safety of Navigation (NAV) with responsibility for both the NAV and the Sub-Committee on Radiocommunications Search and Rescue (COMSAR) including the development of an e-navigation strategy implementation plan. Mr. Singhota is a Master Mariner with 14 years of sea-going experience, including six years of command experience on a variety of vessels including super tankers, bulk carriers, chemical tankers, cadet training ships etc.
The recent training of 15 maritime law-enforcement officers from the western Indian Ocean region at NATO’s Maritime Interdiction Operational Training Centre (NMIOTC) in Crete marks a new era of cooperation between NATO and IMO.

The training, which was developed and funded as part of the IMO’s regional counter-piracy programme, the Djibouti Code of Conduct, was the first phase of a programme aimed at creating small, skilled law-enforcement teams within the maritime law-enforcement forces of the region.

Starting with a course in March 2012 to train the trainers, follow-up courses are already scheduled in 2012, in which those trainers will return to NMIOTC with their core national teams to use NMIOTC’s skills and facilities to produce effective maritime interdiction teams. This pattern will be repeated for those regional countries seeking to develop their maritime law-enforcement capability.

At the same time, IMO will also be running other courses for these teams in boat-handling and, for team leaders, the legal aspects of conducting arrests at sea and the protection of evidence. Much of this will be done through the regional training coordination mechanism established through the Djibouti Regional Training Centre portal: www.edumar.org.

Philip Holihead, Head of IMO’s counter-piracy implementation unit, said: “We are very pleased with the results and positive response that the first course has generated, and are confident that it will mark the start of a long and fruitful partnership to help the regional countries to counter the threat of piracy.”