New passenger safety rules adopted

Energy efficiency regulations in force

Inert gas systems amendments agreed

Revised IGC Code draft finalised

COVER STORY
Current and future trends affecting shipping
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Much has been said, recently, about the need for sustainable growth both in the wider context and within shipping. But sustainability cannot only be ensured by the efforts of designers of ships and operators in the shipping industry.

Let us take a look at the stringent emission control standards for sulphur oxides as an example. MARPOL has already decided targets for sulphur reduction. These would require fuel with low sulphur content. But, the fact is that the shipping industry cannot produce low-sulphur fuel. Only the oil and refinery industries can generate the necessary amount of low sulphur fuel and this needs extensive investment, not in the shipping industry but in the oil and refinery industries. If the world community requires sulphur control in emissions from ships, we need to ensure that sufficient investment is made now to produce low-sulphur fuel in time for the impending implementation of the MARPOL requirement.

If low-sulphur fuel cannot be provided, the remaining options are on-board scrubbers or alternative fuel, such as LNG. LNG is promising but the logistics to provide LNG at terminals is a challenge.

This sort of discussion clearly indicates that, when it comes to the sustainability of the maritime transportation system, you cannot provide an answer only from discussion within the shipping industry. We need policy discussions among a wide range of stakeholders and policy makers.

The world relies on a safe, secure, efficient and clean international shipping industry. And, the comprehensive regulatory framework developed, and maintained, by IMO creates the conditions in which shipping can achieve those objectives.

Governments, along with the shipping and maritime industries and the world community, should work together to make the necessary investments, and take actions to bolster the future of the maritime transportation system and ensure that shipping continues to be environmentally friendly, properly supported and protected from security risks.
Some extracts of the responses received:

“I have found the publication well structured and informative”.  
– Efthimios Mitropoulos (Past Secretary General of IMO)

“The review of the … discussions at the diplomatic conferences are very rewarding. The book is written in a lively way and with a personal engagement which is unusual for us jurists …” (translation)  
– Mans Jacobsson (Past Director of IOPC Fund)

“… a very readable account, in an elegantly produced volume, of the floating supply line upon which we all depend, but regrettably only recognize when it goes wrong… There may be things here that will make some participants grit their teeth (if they have any left)”.  
– Michael Gray, Lloyd List

“An account of the national and international responses to the problems of oil pollution… Few come well out of the story. The sound of vested clashing interests is loud enough… to be heard even amidst the cacophony of sound and fury that accompanies pictures of pristine beaches covered in oil”.  
– Ian Middleton, Seatrade

“Many thanks –, the contents of which I look forward to scan as I am in my old age not able to read from cover to cover”. (translation)  
– Arnold Mærsk Mc Kinney Møller (1913–2012)

“I offer my sincerest congratulations. Works like your book is much needed especially in the tough time we are faced with…”  
– Mohammed Souri (Past Chairman National Iranian Tanker Company)

“… not only a very good account of the drama around pollution liability but a history of tanker shipping… which I do not think you find elsewhere. I have handed it over to my children…”  
– Hans Laurin (Laurin Maritime AB)

“Thank you for sending a copy of your splendid book. It looks refreshingly different and is presented in a much more appealing way than the rather turgid legal tomes that have been written on this subject in the past!”  
– Karen Purnell (ITOPF)
New rules for passenger safety agreed by IMO

At its 91st session (26 to 30 November 2012), IMO’s Maritime Safety Committee (MSC) agreed that rules to require passenger safety drills to take place prior to, or immediately upon, departure should be made mandatory, in the wake of the Costa Concordia incident.

The Committee approved draft amendments to chapter III (Life-saving appliances and arrangements) of the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS) to require musters of newly embarked passengers prior to or immediately upon departure, instead of “within 24 hours”, as stated in the current regulations, for a ship engaged on a voyage where passengers are scheduled to be on board for more than 24 hours. The draft amendments will now be circulated for consideration, with a view to adoption, at the next session, MSC 92, in June 2013. They could enter into force at the end of 2014.

The Committee also agreed a revised circular on recommended operational measures, prior to the adoption of any mandatory measures following the analysis of the official marine accident investigation report into the loss of the Costa Concordia. The revised recommended measures (which will update MSC.1/Circ.1446, agreed at the last session) include:

- additional guidance on common elements to be included in passenger muster and emergency instructions; recommending that the nationality of each person on board is recorded; guidance on lifeboat loading for training purposes; and that companies owning and/or operating passenger ships and the ship’s Master should take steps to ensure that changes to the voyage plan are consistent with Company policies.

The recommended voluntary measures agreed at the last session remain in place, including:

- carrying additional lifejackets, to be readily accessible in public spaces, at the muster/assembly stations, on deck or in lifeboats, so that in the event of an emergency passengers need not return to their cabins to retrieve the lifejacket stored there;
- reviewing the adequacy of the dissemination and communication of the emergency instructions on board ships;
- carrying out the muster for embarking passengers prior to departure from every port of embarkation, if the duration is 24 hours or more;

Passenger musters will be required immediately on departure.
• limiting access to the bridge to those with operational or operationally-related functions, during any period of restricted manoeuvring, or while manoeuvring in conditions that the master or company bridge procedures/policy deems to require increased vigilance (e.g. arrival/departure from port, heavy traffic, poor visibility); and
• ensuring that the ship’s voyage plan has taken into account IMO’s Guidelines for voyage planning, and, if appropriate, Guidelines on voyage planning for passenger ships operating in remote areas.

The action plan for long-term work on passenger ship safety, agreed at the last session was also updated, to include additional items on the review of SOLAS regulation III/27, to add the nationality of all persons on board (current regulations already require a count of all passengers and information on their names and gender, distinguishing between adults, children and infants; and information on any passengers requiring special assistance, for search and rescue purposes). Also included in the action plan is a review of resolution A.893(21) Guidelines for voyage planning.

The MSC also adopted amendments to SOLAS regulation III/17-1 to require ships to have plans and procedures to recover persons from the water, as well as related Guidelines for development of plans and procedures for recovery of persons from the water. Also, a related MSC resolution on Implementation of SOLAS regulation III/17-1 to ships other than those engaged in international voyages was adopted. The amendments had been drafted previously and approved at the last session. The Committee also agreed to include “Passenger Ship Training” on the provisional agenda of the Sub-Committee on Standards of Training and Watchkeeping (STW 45).

SOLAS amendments on lifeboat safety enter into force

Amendments to SOLAS aimed at preventing accidents during lifeboat launching entered into force on 1 January 2013.

The amendments, adopted in May 2011, add a new paragraph 5 to SOLAS regulation III/1, to require lifeboat on-load release mechanisms not complying with new International Life-Saving Appliances (LSA) Code requirements 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.

The SOLAS amendment is intended to establish new, stricter, safety standards for lifeboat release and retrieval systems, and will require the assessment and possible replacement of a large number of lifeboat release hooks.

Information submitted by flag States on their assessments of existing lifeboat hooks is available on the Global Integrated Shipping Information System (GISIS), on the IMO website.
Energy efficiency regulations enter into force

New regulations aimed at improving the energy efficiency of international shipping entered into force on 1 January 2013. The amendments to the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships (MARPOL) were adopted in July 2011. They add a new chapter 4 Regulations on energy efficiency for ships to MARPOL Annex VI, to make mandatory the Energy Efficiency Design Index (EEDI), for new ships, and the Ship Energy Efficiency Management Plan (SEEMP) for all ships. Other amendments to Annex VI add new definitions and the requirements for survey and certification, including the format for the International Energy Efficiency Certificate.

The regulations apply to all ships of 400 gross tonnage and above. However, under regulation 19, the Administration may waive the requirements for new ships up to a maximum of 4 years.

The EEDI is a non-prescriptive, performance-based mechanism that leaves the choice of technologies to use in a specific ship design to the industry. As long as the required energy-efficiency level is attained, ship designers and builders would 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 ships. Ships are required to keep on board a ship-specific Ship Energy Efficiency Management Plan (SEEMP).

Other MARPOL amendments which entered into force on 1 January 2013:

**Annex VI Emissions**
Amendments to MARPOL Annex VI designate certain waters adjacent to the coasts of Puerto Rico (United States) and the US Virgin Islands (United States) as the US Caribbean Sea Emission Control Area for the control of emissions of nitrogen oxides (NOx), sulphur oxides (SOx) and particulate matter under regulations 13 and 14 of MARPOL Annex VI. Another amendment makes old steamships exempt from the requirements on sulphur content of fuel oil used on board ships in both the North American and United States Caribbean Sea ECAs. The new US Caribbean Sea ECA takes effect 12 months after entry into force, that is, 1 January 2014.

**Annex IV Sewage**
Amendments to MARPOL Annex IV Prevention of pollution by sewage from ships include the possibility of establishing Special Areas, the actual designation of the Baltic Sea as a Special Area under Annex IV, and the introduction of stricter discharge requirements for passenger ships while in a Special Area.

**Annex V Garbage**
The revised MARPOL Annex V Regulations for the prevention of pollution by garbage from ships has entered into force, following a comprehensive review to bring the Annex up to date.

The main feature of the revision is the prohibition of the discharge of all garbage into the sea, except as expressly provided otherwise in the Annex. The discharges permitted in certain circumstances include food wastes, animal carcasses, cargo residues, and water containing cleaning agents or additives used for washing deck and external surfaces or cargo holds.

Cargo residues and cleaning agents and additives must only be considered for discharge if they are not harmful to the marine environment. The changes also include the updating of definitions; the introduction of an “en route” requirement for the discharge of garbage at sea; and the regrouping of the garbage categories for the purpose of the garbage record book.
Piracy and lives lost
IMO Secretary-General sets ambitious targets

Speaking at the opening of IMO’s Sub-Committee on Fire Protection, IMO Secretary-General Koji Sekimizu (above) told delegates that halving lives lost at sea and eradicating pirate attacks, as well as ensuring the release of all hostages can, and should, be legitimate targets, for the Organization and for shipping in the years to come.

Mr Sekimizu said that, despite the difficulty in obtaining precise and reliable data for lives lost at sea, an ambitious, but achievable target would be to aim for a 50 per cent reduction, to no more than 500 lives lost annually, by 2015. He said that the matter could be addressed at the IMO Symposium on Future Ship Safety in June, and went on to identify a number of mechanisms that could help the target to be reached, specifically:

- implementation of the Torremolinos Protocol through the Cape Town Agreement, to improve fishing vessel safety
- IMO’s Technical Cooperation activities in the field of domestic ferry safety
- the Secretary-General’s own initiative for an “Accident Zero” campaign, in conjunction with the International Association of Marine Aids to Navigation and Lighthouse Authorities (IALA).

He added that, in the first instance, IMO should consider establishing a mechanism for the collection and collation of statistics on lives lost to enable formal, official figures to be produced.

With regard to piracy attacks and hostage taking, Mr Sekimizu said that 2012 had been an encouraging year, having witnessed a sharp reduction in successful piracy incidents off the coast of Somalia and in the Indian Ocean. However, 12 ships and 159 people were, at the time of speaking, still in the hands of Somali pirates.

He said that complete eradication of piracy off the coast of Somalia and the release of all hostages would be more ambitious targets, but, nevertheless, should be the aim. He identified continuous protection by navies in the Gulf of Aden, consistent application of Best Management Practices (BMP), and proper handling of armed security guards under national policies, taking into account discussions at IMO and the International Organization for Standardization (ISO), as key factors in achieving the first of these.

With regard to the release of hostages, Mr Sekimizu said that the release of all hostages as soon as possible should be a clear target and that more should be done towards this end.

He also said he would accelerate capacity building under the Djibouti Code of Conduct. He urged IMO Member Governments that had been active in providing naval vessels to maintain naval protection forces until the risk of piracy attack had been sufficiently eliminated from the Indian Ocean and the Gulf of Aden, and to urge shipping industry leaders to ensure continuous implementation of the BMP.

On a wider front, he confirmed his support for the initiatives of the UN and the international community to help Somalis re-establish law and order and revive their own livelihood and economy, and for countries in western Africa to enhance their maritime security and aim for piracy-free waters in that region, too.

IMO Council endorses evolutionary Sub-Committee restructuring

The IMO Council, at its 109th session, endorsed, in principle, a restructuring of IMO’s Sub-Committees, in order to better address the technical and operational issues covered by IMO regulations, as part of a review and reform process initiated by Secretary-General Mr. Koji Sekimizu aimed at ensuring the Organization meets current challenges as a forward-looking, efficient and cost-conscious Organization.

IMO’s main technical Committees, the Maritime Safety Committee (MSC) and the Marine Environment Protection Committee (MEPC) were invited to consider the proposals, which could see the number of Sub-Committees reduced from nine to seven, potentially saving four meeting weeks per biennium.

Under the proposals:

- The Sub-Committee on Bulk Liquids and Gases (BLG) would be renamed the Sub-Committee on the Environment, and would be tasked with dealing exclusively with environment-related matters, to allow the MEPC to delegate preliminary technical/scientific discussions to a sub-committee;
- The Sub-Committee on Dangerous Goods, Solid Cargoes and Containers (DSC) would be renamed as the Sub-Committee on Cargoes (to include both wet and dry cargoes), in order to address all cargo issues in one sub-committee;
- The Sub-Committee on Radiocommunications, Search and Rescue (COMSAR) and the Sub-Committee on Navigation (NAV) would be amalgamated, into a combined single sub-committee, reflecting the fact that there is increasing commonality in
IMO and shipping industry bodies urge continued application of anti-piracy measures

IMO, the International Chamber of Shipping (ICS), BIMCO, the Oil Companies International Marine Forum (OCIMF), the International Association of Independent Tanker Owners (INTERTANKO), the International Association of Dry Cargo Shipowners (INTERCARGO), the International Parcel Tankers Association (IPTA), and the International Shipping Federation (ISF), have collectively expressed their welcome for the recent decrease in the number of attempted and successful attacks against ships by Somalia-based pirates operating in the Gulf of Aden and the western Indian Ocean.

This decrease, they said, may be attributed to a combination of factors, including: the presence of naval forces disrupting pirate operations; implementation of self-protection measures on board merchant ships and better situational awareness of where the threats are; coupled with more effective action ashore in Somalia by the Somali authorities and the international community.

The above-mentioned Organizations have said they remain convinced that the only long-term solution to piracy is to establish effective government and implement the rule of law ashore in Somalia. However, until that is achieved, there can be no room for complacency.

Any reduction in the level of protection of merchant ships could lead to a resurgence of pirate activities. Piracy must continue to be suppressed through the visible presence of and robust action by, the world’s navies, consistent with international law.

The Organizations therefore urge shipowners, shipping companies, ship operators, masters and crews to continue to take all appropriate and recommended measures to protect their ships and those on board from pirates and armed robbers, through sustained and full implementation of the relevant IMO guidance and industry-developed Best Management Practices for protection against Somalia-based piracy (BMP 4).
Concern expressed over reported iron fertilization incident

Parties to the international treaties which regulate the dumping of wastes and other matter at sea have issued a statement of concern regarding the deliberate ocean fertilization activity that was recently reported to have been carried out in July of 2012 in waters off the west coast of Canada.

The Contracting Parties to the Convention on the Prevention of Marine Pollution by Dumping of Wastes and Other Matter, 1972 (London Convention) and to the 1996 Protocol thereto (London Protocol), meeting in London from 29 October to 2 November 2012, expressed “grave concern” regarding this activity, reportedly conducted by the Haida Salmon Restoration Corporation, and which involved the deliberate introduction into surface waters of 100 metric tonnes of iron sulphate.

The statement refers to an agreement made in 2008 that ocean fertilization activities, other than legitimate scientific research, should not be allowed. It goes on to point out that legitimate scientific research is defined as those proposals that have been assessed and found acceptable under the 2010 “Assessment Framework for Scientific Research Involving Ocean Fertilization.” This, it says, should be used to determine, with utmost caution, whether a proposed ocean fertilization activity constitutes legitimate scientific research or is contrary to the aims of the Protocol or Convention. The statement also strongly re-emphasises the point that economic interests should not influence the design, conduct and/or outcomes of any proposed ocean fertilization activity.

In the statement, the Parties recognized the actions of the Government of Canada in investigating this incident and stressed that ocean fertilization has the potential to have widespread, long-lasting, and severe impacts on the marine environment, with implications for human health.

The full text of the statement can be found on the IMO website.

The Parties have been reviewing the issue of ocean fertilization since 2007 and have developed options that would establish a global, transparent and effective control and regulatory mechanism for ocean fertilization activities and other activities falling within the scope of the London Convention and Protocol that have the potential to cause harm to the marine environment.

A working group on ocean fertilization which met during the recent meeting of Parties (29 October to 2 November 2012) carried out more work on the various options, developing draft text for each, for further consideration at future meetings.
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SOLAS amendments on inert gas systems agreed

Draft amendments to SOLAS to require the installation of inert gas systems on board new oil and chemical tankers of 8,000 dwt and above, carrying low-flashpoint (below 60°C) cargoes, were agreed by the FP Sub-Committee at its 56th session, for submission to MSC 92 in June, for approval with a view to subsequent adoption.

The draft amendments to SOLAS regulations II-2/4.5.5 and II 2/16.3.3 will require an inert gas system to be fitted on new oil and chemical tankers of 8,000 dwt and above, when transporting low-flashpoint cargoes (cargoes having a flashpoint less than 60°C). Oil tankers above 20,000 dwt were already required to install such systems but the new regulations will lower the required threshold to 8,000 dwt and above.

Related draft amendments to the International Code for Fire Safety Systems (FSS Code) were also agreed, resulting in a complete replacement of chapter 15 (inert gas systems).

The development of the draft amendments follows intensive work in recent years aimed at preventing explosions on oil and chemical tankers transporting low-flashpoint cargoes, following recommendations by an Inter-Industry Working Group (IIWG), which was established to study incidents of fires and explosions on chemical and product tankers.

Additional means of escape from machinery spaces

The Sub-Committee agreed draft amendments to SOLAS mandating additional means of escape from machinery spaces, for submission to MSC 92, for approval with a view to subsequent adoption.

The draft amendments to regulation II-2/13.4 require two means of escape to be provided from the main workshop within a machinery space and from a machinery control room located within a machinery space. At least one of these escape routes shall provide a continuous fire shelter to a safe position outside the machinery space.

All inclined ladders/stairways with open treads in machinery spaces being part of or providing access to escape routes are to be fitted with steel shields attached to their undersides, to provide escaping personnel protection against heat and flame from beneath.

Ships carrying gas-powered vehicles

Draft SOLAS amendments to add new requirements for ships carrying, as cargo, vehicles with engines fuelled by hydrogen and compressed natural gas were agreed by the Sub-Committee, for submission to MSC 92 for approval and subsequent adoption.

The new regulation II-2/20-1 Requirement for vehicle carriers carrying motor vehicles with compressed hydrogen or natural gas for their own propulsion, sets additional requirements for ships with vehicle and ro-ro spaces intended for the carriage of motor vehicles with compressed hydrogen or compressed natural gas in their tanks as fuel.

The requirements include, for new ships: electrical equipment and wiring of a certified safe type for use in explosive methane and air mixtures; fans designed to avoid a possibility of ignition of hydrogen and air mixtures; and whenever a vehicle carrier carries, as cargo, one or more motor vehicles with either compressed hydrogen or compressed natural gas in their tanks as fuel, at least two portable gas detectors shall be provided.

Existing vehicle carriers will also be required to comply with the requirement for portable gas detectors from the date of entry into force of the regulation.

The Sub-Committee agreed to further consider a draft MSC circular on Recommendation on safety measures for existing ro-ro cargo ships (vehicle carriers) carrying motor vehicles with compressed hydrogen or natural gas in their tanks for their own propulsion at its next session.

Fire resistance of ventilation ducts

The Sub-Committee agreed draft amendments to SOLAS regulations II-2/3 and II-2/9.7, relating to the requirements for the fire resistance of ventilation ducts, for submission to MSC 92 for approval with a view to subsequent adoption.

“Funding has been allocated to Indonesia to accelerate implementation activities”
The amendments add new definitions for fire dampers (“a device installed in a ventilation duct which, under normal conditions, remains open allowing flow in the duct, and is closed during a fire, preventing flow in the duct to restrict the passage of fire”) and smoke dampers (“a device installed in a ventilation duct which, under normal conditions, remains open allowing flow in the duct, and is closed during a fire, preventing flow in the duct to restrict the passage of smoke and hot gases”).

Regulation 9.7, introducing new requirements for ventilation ducts, fire dampers and duct penetrations, was rewritten completely. The Sub-Committee also agreed to establish a correspondence group to progress the work on the development of SOLAS amendments and associated guidance on air-quality management for ventilation of closed vehicle spaces, closed ro-ro spaces and special category spaces.

**Interpretations agreed**

The Sub-Committee agreed the following interpretations, to be submitted as draft MSC circulars to MSC 92 for approval:

- Unified interpretations of the SOLAS chapter II-2 and the FSS and International Code for the Application of Fire Test Procedures (FTP Code);
- Unified interpretations of the 2000 High-Speed Craft (HSC) Code, as amended by resolutions MSC.175(79) and MSC.222(82);
- Interpretation of the Revised Guidelines for the approval of equivalent water-based fire extinguishing systems for machinery spaces and cargo pump-rooms (MSC/Circ.1165); and

**Fire protection of on-deck container cargoes agreed**

The Sub-Committee, recognizing that the existing means of fire safety for high container stacks may not be fully adequate when the ship carries five or more tiers of containers on or above the weather deck, prepared draft amendments to SOLAS regulations II-2/2 and II-2/10 for submission to MSC 92.

The draft amendments add a new regulation II-2/10.7.3, to require at least one water mist lance for all new ships designed to carry containers on or above the weather deck, and to require mobile water monitors for new ships designed to carry five or more tiers of containers on or above the weather deck.

The regulation defines a water mist lance as consisting of a tube with a piercing nozzle which is capable of penetrating a container wall and producing water mist inside a confined space (container, etc.) when connected to the fire main.

Mobile water monitors are water-discharge devices of portable or wheeled type, consisting of inlet fitting(s), monitor waterway, swivel fittings, discharge nozzle and a shut-off device.

The Sub-Committee also agreed a draft MSC circular on Guidelines for the design, performance, testing and approval of mobile water monitors used for the protection of on deck cargo areas of ships designed and constructed to carry five or more tiers of containers on or above the weather deck, for submission to MSC 92 for approval, in principle, with a view to final approval at MSC 93 in conjunction with the adoption of the associated amendments to SOLAS regulation II-2/10.

**Fire protection issues related to fibre-reinforced plastic**

The Sub-Committee reviewed a number of submissions relating to fire safety aspects in relation to the use of fibre-reinforced plastic (FRP) on ships and established a correspondence group on the development of guidelines for use of FRP within ship structures. The group will review available fire testing results and research and methodologies with regard to FRP composite structures in ships, as well as the current regulations and relevant applications of FRP composite structures.

Draft amendments to MARPOL on inert gas systems would apply to smaller chemical tankers.
Guidance on the implementation of revised Radio Regulations requirements agreed

A draft MSC circular on Guidance on the validity of radiocommunication equipment installed and used on ships, to remind shipowners that timely action is required to ensure that radiocommunication equipment complies with revised Radio Regulations, was agreed by the COMSAR Sub-Committee when it met for its 17th session.

The guidance notes that revised frequencies and channelling arrangements for the maritime HF and VHF bands are contained in appendices 17 and 18 to the Radio Regulations (RR) – Edition 2012, applicable from 1 January 2017, following changes made by the World Radiocommunication Conference 2012.

While these changes do not affect the global maritime distress and safety system (GMDSS), they do affect the use of other frequencies that would be used by services such as port operations and vessel traffic services.

The guidance notes that radiocommunication equipment should be updated so that, following the first radio survey after 1 January 2017, it meets the revised channelling arrangements. Replacement of operating hardware may be necessary.

Review and modernization of the GMDSS continues

The Sub Committee continued its work on the review of the GMDSS and re-established the Correspondence Group to further the work and submit a report in 2014.

The plan for the modernization of the GMDSS 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.

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 probability 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.

IMO position for WRCs approved

The Sub-Committee approved the preliminary draft IMO position for the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) World Radiocommunication Conferences (WRC-15), with a view to further developing it at the next meeting of the Joint IMO/ITU Experts Group on Maritime Radiocommunication Matters, to be held in October 2013, with a view to final approval of the IMO position by MSC 94 in December 2014.

IMO’s draft position highlights concerns relating to the need of interference-free operation of distress and safety services, as well radionavigation; the future need for spectrum allocations for the maritime mobile service, such as broadband communications when entering and leaving ports; and additional spectrum allocations for the maritime-mobile satellite service, which may be used to support future GMDSS and e-navigation requirements.

Meanwhile the Sub-Committee instructed the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO)/IMO Joint Working Group on Search and Rescue to consider the matter of broadband public protection and disaster relief, in relation to IMO’s draft WRC position.

Liaison with ITU and CIRM

The Sub Committee approved the draft liaison statement to ITU-R Working Party 5A, 5B, 5D and Joint Task Group 4-5-6-7 on “IMO’s concerns in relation to the wide range of frequency bands identified by ITU-R for future assessment of the suitability for IMT” and the draft liaison statement to ITU-R WP 4A and the Comité International Radio-Marin (CIRM) on “Matters Related to WRC-15 Agenda item 1.8”.

E-navigation strategy implementation plan reviewed

The Sub-Committee reviewed aspects of the draft e-navigation strategy implementation plan related to radiocommunications and search and rescue and forwarded comments to the Correspondence Group on e-navigation, which reports to the Sub-Committee on Safety of Navigation (NAV 59), which is coordinating the e-navigation work. In relation to the possible use of shore-based long-range identification and tracking (LRIT) infrastructure for the exchange...
of e-navigation information, the Sub-Committee agreed that further detailed analysis and study of the proposal was required in order to determine if the existing IT infrastructure established for LRIT could contribute to the implementation of e-navigation.

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.

**Radiocommunication and SAR aspects of Polar Code reviewed**

The Sub-Committee endorsed advice on radiocommunication and search and rescue related provisions for inclusion in the Polar Code, to be submitted to the Sub-Committee on Ship Design and Equipment (DE), which is coordinating the development of the Code. The Polar Code will include mandatory requirements covering both Arctic and Antarctic waters to ensure safety of life and protection of the marine environment in these sensitive and remote sea areas.

On specific matters, the Sub-Committee agreed that survival craft do not require tracking systems, but all survival craft require locating systems that will allow the responding SAR assets to find them during a distress situation. It recommended that the Polar Operations Manual should be used to provide practical operational guidance on how to operate locating devices.

The Sub-Committee agreed that in relation to the minimum time the equipment should continue to operate, operators of ships in polar areas should use a risk-based approach to consider the particular circumstances of their operation and the likelihood that they may affect the time to rescue beyond the five day minimum period.

The Sub-Committee agreed that the minimum design temperatures for all communication equipment must be appropriate for the minimum temperatures anticipated during operation, taking into account that -30°C ambient temperature could be surpassed.

With regard to communications, the Sub-Committee noted that long-range communications for polar waters may be limited. Planned satellite systems which are not part of GMDSS, but that might serve ships operating within polar waters include: Iridium Next (United States) – a low earth orbit system with global coverage to provide high-speed data, internet and other maritime communications services; PCW (Canada) – a high earth orbit with coverage in other than the European area of the Arctic to provide voice, internet and video conferencing services; and Cascade (Canada) – a store-and-forward communications payload with global coverage which will provide digital broadband courier services.
LRIT status update

The Sub-Committee was updated on the status of the LRIT system. Currently, 98 of 162 SOLAS Contracting Governments, including eight non-metropolitan territories and two special administrative regions, were part of the LRIT system, and 63 Data Centres (DCs) were operating in the system, while 11 new DCs have partially been tested or were pending testing; and five existing DCs were undergoing or were required to undergo additional testing to start providing services to other SOLAS Contracting Governments.

The Sub-Committee approved a draft MSC resolution on Operation of the International LRIT Data Exchange after 2013, for submission to MSC 92 for adoption. The resolution agrees that the European Maritime Safety Agency (EMSA) should continue hosting, maintaining and operating the IDE at EMSA premises in Lisbon, Portugal, beyond 2013, until advised otherwise; and that the United States should continue hosting, maintaining and operating the disaster recovery site of the IDE at the United States Coast Guard Operations System Center (OSC), subject to their national procurement regulations, beyond 2013, until advised otherwise.

The Sub-Committee also endorsed a draft revised version of COMSAR.1/Circ.54 on Audits of LRIT Data Centres and of the International LRIT Data Exchange conducted by the LRIT Coordinator.

Guidance on AIS devices agreed

The Sub-Committee endorsed a draft Safety of Navigation (SN.1) circular providing information to seafarers on the display of AIS-SART, AIS Man Overboard (MOB) and EPIRB-AIS devices, for submission to the MSC for approval.

The circular notes that AIS-SARTs (AIS-search and rescue transmitters) are part of the GMDSS and have been able to be used as an alternative to radar (X-band) search and rescue transponders (SARTs) on SOLAS ships since 1 January 2010. EPIRB-AIS devices are 406 MHz distress-alerting devices that contain an additional AIS transmitter developed using the same AIS-SART technology, where the AIS component is used as an aid in locating that EPIRB-AIS. AIS Man Overboard (MOB) devices are now available as locating aids for persons at risk in the water. Once such a situation has been determined as being an emergency, AIS MOB devices may be used as an aid in locating that person.

However, in order to protect the integrity of the VHF data link used by AIS, AIS devices, including AIS-MOB devices, are not intended to be used to routinely locate or track people not in an emergency situation.

Draft IAMSAR amendments agreed

The Sub-Committee endorsed draft amendments to the IAMSAR Manual volume II, including proposed amendments to the Suggested format for alert information from a commercial locating, tracking and emergency notification service provider to an RCC, for approval by MSC 95 in 2015 and consequential inclusion in the 2016 edition of the IAMSAR Manual.


The Sub-Committee also endorsed a draft COMSAR circular giving guidance “on the use of the graph in figure N.14, appendix N of IAMSAR Manual, Volume II”, relating to clarification on survival times for people in the water, included in the graph.

Updated list of publications to be held by a MRCC agreed

The Sub-Committee agreed updates to the List of IMO documents and publications which should be held by a Maritime Rescue Coordination Centre (MRCC) (SAR.7/Circ.11), to include information on where to obtain the publications.

Updates to WWNWS and MSI information resolutions agreed

The Sub-Committee agreed updates to the IMO/IHO World-Wide Navigational Warning Service Guidance Document (Resolution A.706(17), as amended) and to the Recommendation on the promulgation of Maritime Safety Information (resolution A.708(17), as amended), as part of an editorial update following completion of a holistic review of all World-Wide Navigational Warning Service documentation.
Revised IGC Code agreed by BLG

The draft revised *International Code for the Construction and Equipment of Ships Carrying Liquefied Gases in Bulk* (the IGC Code) was agreed by the Sub-Committee on Bulk Liquids and Gases (BLG) when it met for its 17th session.

The revised Code has been developed following a comprehensive five-year review and is intended to take into account the latest advances in science and technology. It will be submitted to MSC 92 in June, for approval, with a view to adoption at MSC 93 in 2014.

The IGC Code was first adopted in 1983, to provide an international standard for the safe carriage by sea of liquefied gases (and other substances listed in the Code) in bulk, by prescribing the design and construction standards of ships carrying such cargoes, and the equipment they should carry. The IGC Code was made mandatory under the SOLAS convention for new ships built after 1986. Various amendments have been adopted since then, but the new draft represents the first major revision of the IGC Code. Provisions of the revised IGC Code will apply to new ships, unless expressly stated otherwise.

Parallel work continued during the session to develop the new international code of safety for ships using gases or other low-flashpoint fuels (IGF Code), which included preparation of draft amendments to SOLAS to make the IGF Code mandatory. Once finalized, both the draft IGF Code and SOLAS amendments will be put forward to the MSC for approval and adoption as a package. The draft IGF Code focuses on liquid natural gas as fuel but is also intended to cover other low-flashpoint fuels.

A correspondence group was re-established to continue the work on finalizing the draft IGF Code and related SOLAS amendments.

**BWM convention guidance on sampling and analysis agreed**

The Sub-Committee finalized a draft circular on Guidance concerning ballast water sampling and analysis for trial use, for approval by MEPC 65.

The circular provides general recommendations on methodologies and approaches to sampling and analysis to test for compliance with the D-1 and D-2 standards of the International Convention for the Control and Management of Ships’ Ballast Water and Sediments, 2004 (BWM Convention). It includes a discussion of the principles of sampling, accompanied by a list of recommended methods and approaches for analysis and sampling protocols available for compliance testing; and background information on sampling and analysis methodologies and approaches.

The Sub-Committee agreed that the length of the trial period should be two to three years following
entry into force of the Convention, but encouraged Member States to begin using the sampling and analysis procedures for scientific and research purposes and to report their findings to the Sub-Committee.

The Sub-Committee also agreed a draft revised MEPC resolution regarding information reporting on type-approved ballast water management systems (MEPC.175(58)), for consideration by MEPC 65, with a view to adoption. The revised resolution expands on the information Member States are invited to submit to the Organization, when approving a ballast water management system, including providing the test results of each land-based and shipboard test run and the protocol according to which testing was undertaken, with specific details on the testing.

In addition, draft amendments to the Guidance for Administrations on the type-approval process for ballast water management systems in accordance with Guidelines (G8) (BWM.2/Circ.28) were agreed, to expand on the information needed for type approval, for approval by MEPC 65.

A further draft circular relating to implementation of the BWM Convention provides Options for ballast water management for offshore support vessels in accordance with the BWM Convention, for approval by MEPC 65.

NOx technical Code amendments and MARPOL Annex VI guidelines agreed

The Sub-Committee agreed draft amendments to the NOx Technical Code, 2008, concerning use of dual-fuel engines, for approval by MEPC 65 with a view to subsequent adoption.

It also agreed draft guidelines, as required by regulation 13.2.2 of MARPOL Annex VI, in respect of non-identical replacement engines not required to meet the Tier III limit; and a draft unified interpretation on the “time of the replacement or addition” of an engine for the applicable NOx Tier standard for the supplement to the IAPP Certificate.

Draft amendments to the IBC Code relating to inerting agreed

The Sub-Committee agreed draft consequential amendments to the IBC Code, relating to cargo tank venting and gas-freeing arrangements, relating to the development of measures to prevent explosions on oil and chemical tankers transporting low-flashpoint cargoes, for consideration and subsequent approval by MEPC 65 and MSC 92. MSC 92 will consider draft amendments to SOLAS to require the installation of inert gas systems on board new oil and chemical tankers of 8,000 dwt and above, carrying low-flashpoint (below 60°C) cargoes, developed by the Sub-Committee on Fire Protection (FP).

Revised Guidelines for Oil Discharge Monitoring and Control Systems agreed

The Sub-Committee agreed draft amendments to the Revised Guidelines and Specifications for Oil Discharge Monitoring and Control Systems for Oil Tankers (resolution MEPC.108(49)), to include requirements for bio-fuel blend containing 75 per cent or more of petroleum oil. The amendments will be submitted to the MEPC for adoption.

Guidance on evaluating Biofouling Guidelines agreed

The Sub-Committee agreed a draft MEPC circular on Guidance for evaluating the 2011 Guidelines for the control and management of ships’ biofouling to minimize the transfer of invasive aquatic species for approval by MEPC 65, and encouraged Member Governments and interested organizations to submit information on the application of the 2011 Biofouling Guidelines to the BLG Sub-Committee.

The 2011 Biofouling Guidelines provide a globally consistent approach to managing biofouling by providing useful recommendations on general measures to minimize the risks associated with biofouling for all types of ships, while the aim of the guidance is to assist Member States and observers who wish to collect information needed to undertake future reviews of the Guidelines, to do so in a more consistent way. The draft Guidance identifies the types of performance measures that could help to assist in evaluating the different recommendations in the Guidelines.

Black carbon emissions discussed

The Sub-Committee discussed the report of a correspondence group relating to the impact on the Arctic of emissions of black carbon from international shipping and agreed on the need for further work on the topic. The correspondence group was re-established to develop a technical definition for black carbon emissions from international shipping as the basis for any future measurement methods; and to further consider measurement methods and possible control measures.

Review of safety criteria guidelines in chapter 21 of the IBC Code continued

The Sub-Committee continued its review of safety criteria guidelines in chapter 21 of the International Code for the Construction and Equipment of Ships carrying Dangerous Chemicals in Bulk (IBC Code), to address inconsistencies in chapters 17 and 18. It is intended to complete the review process by 2014.

New products evaluated for IBC Code

The Sub-Committee approved the report of the Evaluation of Safety and Pollution Hazards (ESPH) Working Group, including the evaluation of two new substances and their consequential inclusion in the IBC Code; the evaluation of cleaning additives; and the evaluation of three new mixture products for List 3 of the MEPC.2/Circular.

OSV Chemical Code further progressed

The Sub-Committee continued its work on developing the draft Code for the Transport and Handling of Limited Amounts of Hazardous and Noxious Liquid Substances in Bulk in Offshore Support Vessels (OSV Chemical Code) and re-established the correspondence group to further the work.

“...a globally consistent approach to managing biofouling...”
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Current and future trends affecting shipping

By Efthimios E Mitropoulos, Secretary-General Emeritus, IMO

Every year, the winner of IMO’s prestigious International Maritime Prize is invited to submit a paper on a subject of his or her choice for publication in IMO News. Here, 2012 winner Mr. Efthimios E. Mitropoulos, IMO Secretary-General Emeritus, shares his views on some of the current and future trends affecting shipping. The views expressed are those of the author and do not represent IMO position or policy.

Shipping, we all know, is a service industry. With the exception of the cruise liner sector and passenger ships on domestic service, it is there in order to serve the needs of trade. The bigger the needs of the latter, the more shipping finds itself in demand, the more it prospers – provided, of course, that there exists, at any given time, a reasonable and manageable ratio between supply of shipping tonnage and demand for shipping services.

As shipping does not, and cannot, dictate the demand for its services, going to banks to secure funds before going to shipyards to order newbuildings should be a process characterized by elements of due prudence and diligence. It follows that to have, as recently happened, so grossly over-ordered new ships, mainly with borrowed money and with little reference to the levels of demand needed to profitably employ them, does not make commercial sense.

As shipping is a global industry with few barriers to entry except money, the effect of any excessive speculation on the supply and demand ratio is felt across its entire domain – a feature that has the potential to severely damage even those shipowners, who have a reputation for being conservative.

No matter, however, how dire the times may occasionally be (as they certainly are at present), one thing should always be remembered, thus setting the tone of cautious optimism when it comes to ponder the future of shipping: that it is an industry that serves the needs of an ever growing world population and the needs of an ever increasing appetite for development. The combination of both drives international trade up and this means increased demand for shipping services, given the industry’s unrivalled superiority in mass transportation of goods and people.

For almost half a century, shipping aimed at satisfying the needs of a steadily increasing world trade volume by generally adhering to four trends:

* a trend to build ever bigger ships – to take advantage of the economies of scale – a trend, which, of necessity, led ports to grow commensurately;

* a trend to standardize the design, construction and equipment of ships – to reduce the building time and to easily supply them with spare parts wherever they might be in the world;

* a trend to build specific ships for specific trades; and

* a trend to introduce principles of automation for, among others, ship propulsion, manoeuvring and cargo handling.

Shipping is a truly global industry.
Addressing a recent meeting on “Designing and defining the future of shipping: Engineering change in the merchant fleet”, organized by the Royal Academy of Engineering, Dr. Martin Stopford identified six trends in today’s sea transport:

1. Cargo growth;
2. Revenue trend;
3. Systems development;
4. Regional growth;
5. Economies of scale; and
6. Energy efficiency – a trend, which has influenced IMO’s recent work on climate change and led to the design of the so-called “eco-ships”.

At the same time, he identified another six pressures of change:

1. Market forces;
2. Factor cost inversion (under which he drew the conclusion that while, in the past, ships used to cost more than bunkers, today bunkers cost more than ships);
3. Regulatory re-direction;
4. Intranet of objects;
5. New roles for people (under which he underlined the warning of the 2010 BIMCO/ISF study concerning the recurrent shortages of some categories of ship officers and the possibility that existing shortages are likely to intensify over the next decade); and
6. The framework of change.

In their presentations, they covered such issues as:

- Future designs (with specific emphasis on fuel efficient ships);
- New engines and energy-saving devices; and
- New regulation in shipping – more specifically:
  - Regulation requiring cleaner fuels and reduced emissions/ discharges; and
  - Goal-based regulations allowing the option to “choose”, taking into account the need to manage commercial and technical risks.

Technological innovations through the centuries have enabled shipping to maintain its status as the lifeblood of the world economy as more than 90 per cent of international trade is transported by ships. Merchant shipping is the most economical and environmentally friendly way to move mass quantities of cargo as, even at the peak of a shipping cycle, the freight paid to the shipper is a small fraction of the value of the cargo carried.

But, while we try, successfully I would observe, to introduce into shipping as many as possible of the marvels of today’s galloping technology, we should not forget those who will make use of them on board ship and make sure that they, the seafarers, are, in tandem, educated and trained to efficiently man technologically advanced vessels. Designing and constructing state-of-the-art ships should go hand-in-hand with training seafarers properly.

This being so, we should also remember that the industry’s evolution is not solely based on the advances of technology. The increasing interconnectivity and interdependence of our global village means that decisions taken in one country or region may have wider social, economic and political ramifications elsewhere and possibly the world over. The status of the global economy dictates the cyclicity of the shipping markets as contractions in activity and demand are followed by expansion and so on. At the same time, the globalization of the world economy has opened new trading routes and/or expanded existing ones as the volume of transported cargoes has grown steadily.

As almost half of the global population lives in countries whose economies are going through a multi-year expansion, I am optimistic that shipping, a sine qua non for the world economy, will weather the current storm and expand again. As in every crisis, there are winners and losers, survival of the fittest applies very much in shipping as well, with the winners being those who, having been able to detect the winds of change and to identify and embrace the evolving industry trends, will not just survive the cycle but will also take advantage of the opportunities it presents and grow.

As for IMO, I am more than confident that, as long as it keeps pace with developments in shipping and the wider environment in which it operates, it will continue doing what it does best – that is, serving the industry, from the safety, security and environmental protection points of view, with unrivalled efficiency and effectiveness – an Organization making those who have had the good fortune to serve it, like myself, profoundly proud of having associated their lives with it. As Lloyd’s List recently observed “we live in a changing world in which the commercial challenges are as real as the environmental ones”. In dealing with the
latter, IMO is second to none.

Without wishing to compromise the integrity and clarity of my crystal ball, this is how I envisage things, with an impact on shipping, to evolve over the coming two to three decades (although, I should be the first to admit that, in this rapidly changing world, it would be risky to predict even things that may happen tomorrow):

• Population and economic growth will drive energy demand higher, with the world shifting towards lower-carbon fuels and making more efficient use of the energy sources available;

• The centre of economic activity will continue shifting towards Asia (which, as things stand at present, is destined to continue to be an engine for growth for decades to come) and with China, India, Brazil and South Africa predicted to play a more dominant role than at present in global trade;

• While China’s economic development currently depends on oil imported from abroad and the International Energy Agency predicting that, by 2035, a quarter of Iraqi oil will be heading to that country, who can predict today how the economies of the Asian region and the Pacific rim and the demand for shipping and the structure of shipping routes will be affected once the reserves of oil and gas that scientists say exist in the South

“Technological innovations through the centuries have enabled shipping to maintain its status as the lifeblood of the world economy as more than 90 per cent of international trade is transported by ships”
China Sea (an area more than five times that of France) start being exploited?

- And with the United States becoming the fastest growing oil and gas producing country in the world, with the potential of surpassing Saudi Arabia by 2020, who can predict the geopolitical developments of the US also becoming energy self-efficient? Or, when this boom (combined with rising production from Canadian oil sands and tight oil and an expected resurgence in Mexico’s oil industry) could make North America self-sufficient in energy in a couple of decades.

In such changing circumstances, should we worry about the future of the corresponding shipping sector? I think not, as demand for shipping services from newly discovered huge oil and gas reserves off Brazil and the east coast of Africa and around Madagascar – not to mention the wealth in energy resources hidden in the deep arctic waters – will create new opportunities and challenges for the industry to move in and exploit.

Among those, one should include the “revolution” (as a recent environment summit held in London branded it) from the “arrival” of shale gas, the impact of which on the energy industry will, it was agreed, be monumental. Drawing a parallel between the “arrival” of shale gas, the impact of which (as a result of the United States. What we were then seeing, in the 1920s, the Summit noted that, thanks to shale, gas is poised to take over from coal as a global fuel for power generation as well as for transport. Putting aside the associated huge geopolitical consequences, it was recognized that the impact of shale gas on LNG shipping meant more cargoes once new exporters entered the game. And what about other sectors and ship types? Speaking at the Nor-Shipping Conference last year, I referred to container trades, which, at the time, were facing their shortest ever cycle while, in the dry bulk markets, we could not be over-excited either – things have not changed much since. And, although one should differentiate among rates for VLCCs, Aframaxes and product carriers, one could not ignore the sluggish tanker market that had seen rates falling dramatically and earnings struggling to rise above operating costs.

Observing, at the Oslo Conference that, in defiance of the many negative trends in the world economy, the shipping industry had hit the record numbers of 85,000 ships (each of more than 100 gross registered tons), totalling one billion gross tons, worth almost 1 trillion US dollars, I wondered whether it was wise to place post the 2004 to 2007 euphoric period, so many orders for new buildings, as growth in the supply side of shipping seemed set to outpace growth in short-term demand and fleet utilization to drop below the levels usually regarded as comfortable.

Two years ago, placing the expansion of the world fleet within the relatively slower growth of world trade and the resulting widening gap between supply of, and demand for, tonnage, I wondered how long this imbalance would last and when would the recovery in shipping commence. The consensus view, at that time, was an average three years. If that estimate was correct, then, in 2014 we should move into the recovery stage – in which case, we should be able to see the green shoots of improving markets as from the middle of next year. Let us hope so!

Whatever the future has in store for shipping, whichever the developments, changes, demands and challenges from inside and outside the industry, one thing is, in my view, for certain: IMO will always be there to add, from its perspective, its contribution to the shaping of the industry; to respond to any emerging needs so that the global regulatory regime it has so successfully been producing over the almost 65 years of its existence continues unabatedly serving well the good causes of safety and security at sea and the protection of the marine and atmospheric environment from pollution from ships; to be the point of reference and the constant that provides the guarantees for, and the framework within which, the shipping industry continues to thrive in the service of mankind. The Organization is built on sound foundations and its structure is strong enough to withstand the force of any adversities that may come its way. It has a clear mission statement and well-thought, well-balanced policies and strategies. It is and will remain relevant.

In conclusion, I cannot bring this article to a close without any reference to my beloved theme of seafarers. As I have said many times, the world cannot do without shipping and shipping cannot do without seafarers.

I was thinking about them recently while watching on TV the waves of the Atlantic Ocean lashing the east coast of the United States. What we were then seeing, in the comfort of our living rooms, while relaxng at home at the end of a working day in the company of our family and friends, the ferocity with which the elements were beating and destroying property and beloved beaches and landmarks our American friends have grown up enjoying, admiring and taking for granted, these, and those of the tsunami that struck Japan in
“Whatever the future has in store for shipping... one thing is for certain: IMO will always be there to add its contribution to the shaping of the industry, to respond to any emerging needs”

2011, are the same elements that seafarers conscientiously go out to sea to face, the same elements that batter their ships, sometimes without respite for several days, the same elements that occasionally win the battle with dire circumstances for human lives, property and the environment. This is what seafarers have to endure, far away from those they hold dear, for prolonged periods of time, so that we can have our daily bread, keep ourselves warm in the winter and provide electricity for our children to study and become useful members of society.

And while we lament the casualties left behind and mourn the lives lost in the fiercest storm to sweep the US coast in the last seventy years, let us also focus our minds and turn our thoughts and prayers to those for whom hurricanes of the severity of Sandy are none other than rules of the game they play throughout their professional life.

And let us not cease, for a single moment, to work tirelessly to make the seafarers’ life, at sea and in retirement, safer, more secure and more comfortable. That is why I herald the coming into force of the Maritime Labour Convention with enthusiasm and great expectations.
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 IMO Awards for Exceptional Bravery at Sea 2012 go to Canadian and Chilean rescuers

Canadian and Chilean rescuers have been presented with the International Maritime Organization (IMO) Award for Exceptional Bravery at Sea 2012, during a special ceremony held on 26 November 2012 at IMO Headquarters in London.

Sergeant Janick Gilbert (posthumously), Master Corporal Max Lahaye-Lemay and Master Corporal Marco Journeyman, crew members of the Royal Canadian Air Force’s 424 (Transport and Rescue) Squadron, were nominated by the Government of Canada, in recognition of the exceptional bravery which was displayed by them, in saving the lives of two Inuit hunters stranded in an open boat in icy waters near Igloolik, Nunavut.

Master Corporal Max Lahaye-Lemay and Master Corporal Marco Journeyman accepted their certificates in person, while Mrs. Mélisa Lesquir, Sergeant Gilbert’s widow, and his mother Mrs. Diane Pageau Gilbert, accepted his certificate on his behalf, and received the medal for the joint winners (below). They were accompanied at the ceremony by His Excellency Mr. Gordon Campbell, High Commissioner of Canada to the United Kingdom.
Able Seaman César Flores, a rescue swimmer in the aerial detachment of the Chilean Navy, was nominated by the Government of Chile, in recognition of the exceptional bravery which he displayed in rescuing seven survivors from the motor launch Rosita V, in Locos islet, Moraleda Channel, in extremely dangerous weather, and at considerable risk to his own life.

Able Seaman Flores received his certificate and award in person (above). He was accompanied by His Excellency, Mr. Tomás E. Müller Sproat, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary and Permanent Representative of Chile to IMO.

Certificates to highly commended nominees

In addition to the Award itself, certificates were also presented to the following “highly commended” nominees or their representatives:

Mr. Guangling Li, Counsellor (Maritime), Embassy of the People’s Republic of China, received certificates on behalf of:

- Mr. Wang Haijie, diver of the rescue vessel Bei Hai Jiu 116, Bei Hai Rescue Bureau, nominated by China, for rescuing four fishermen trapped under water in the cabin of the capsized fishing vessel Liao Dan Yu 26628; and
- The crew of the rescue ship Dong Hai Jiu 116, Donghai Rescue Bureau, nominated by China, for saving the 12 crew members of the stranded container ship Jade in very difficult weather conditions, with the rescue boat capsizing in the process.
- Coxswain Adrian Johannes Gunter, Crewman Leon Pretorius and Crewman Quentin Diener, volunteer crewmen of the rescue boat Queenie Paine, Station 33, Witsand, National Sea Rescue Institute of South Africa, were nominated by South Africa, for the risky search and rescue operation of the four crew members of the catamaran yacht Gulliver, in dangerous weather conditions. They were at the ceremony to receive their certificates, accompanied by Mr. Ntuli Dumisani Alternate Permanent Representative of the Republic of South Africa to IMO.

Letters of commendation have been sent to the following:

- The crew of the search and rescue helicopter B-7137; Nanhai No.1 Rescue Flying Service;
- the crew of the Chang Hang Hong Tu;
- the crew of the Jin Guang Ling; and the
- crew of the fishing boat Min Ping Yu 61597. All nominated by China;
- Warrant Officer Samuel Fourel of the Lezardrieux Naval Unit, Brittany Regional Gendarmerie, nominated by France;
- Captain José Eric González Ramos of the vessel Bourbon Artabaze;
- Captain Rubén Daniel Vargas Cobos of the vessel Árbol Grande, all nominated by Mexico;
- The crews of the container ships MOL Summer, MSC Carole, Zhong He and Cap Scott, as well as the crew of the bulk carrier Violet, nominated by Papua New Guinea, China and Bulgaria, following the coordinated rescue of 246 passengers from the sunken passenger ship Rabaul Queen;
- Captain Ely C. Sinoy and the crew of the Daio Azalea, nominated by the Philippines;
- Lieutenant Commander Brian P. Hopkins, Lieutenant Junior Grade Andrew P. Lund, Chief Aviation Survival Technician Randall J. Rice; and Second Class Aviation Maintenance Technician Alejandro M. Delgado, crew of the US Coast Guard helicopter CG 6004, Air Station Cape Cod, nominated by the United States of America.
An Action Plan to address key concerns surrounding the safety of domestic ferries in the Pacific Island Countries and Territories (PICTs) was adopted by a forum on the subject, organized by IMO and held in Suva, Fiji, from 30 October to 2 November 2012.

Recent losses of domestic ferries worldwide, including the sinking of the Rabaul Queen in Papua New Guinea in February 2012, have increased awareness of the need to consider a more holistic approach to domestic ferry safety. The Pacific Forum provided an opportunity for PICTs, development partners and key organizations and the maritime industry as a whole, to collaborate in discussion. The intention now is to develop regional support to address specific national solutions, thus ensuring that domestic ferry safety policies, procedures and activities will be effective, sustainable and relevant to local situations.

The Pacific Forum focused on a number of broad issues related to domestic ferry operation including safety programmes, vessel-specific concerns, legislative, regulatory and compliance matters, seafarer training and certification, operational issues, search and rescue and safety awareness activities.

Current and emerging domestic ferry safety issues were discussed at the Forum, as well as concerns and trends from international, regional and national perspectives. The goal was to identify outcomes that can be put into practice by national Maritime Administrations and the maritime industry, resulting in safer ferry operations throughout the region.

Through the Action Plan, participants in the Forum hope to sensitize the authorities in the region to the need for urgent measures to be taken to address their core concerns.

The Pacific forum followed the success of the Regional Forum on Domestic Ferry Safety held in Bali, Indonesia, on 6 and 7 December 2011. It was organized by IMO under its Integrated Technical Co-operation Programme, in collaboration with the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC). It was funded by the IMO Technical Co-operation Fund, SPC, the Australian Maritime Safety Authority and industry organizations in the region.

The Pacific Forum was attended by forty-five participants from the public sector (administrators and policy makers) and private sector (shipowners, operators, maritime training institutions) that have responsibility for the implementation, enforcement and application of national requirements related to the safety of domestic ferries in their countries. Fifteen countries from the Pacific Islands region were represented at the Forum.

IMO Secretary-General highlights key issues during visit to Chile

IMO Secretary-General Koji Sekimizu visited Chile in December 2012, taking the opportunity to highlight a number of important issues on the Organization’s current agenda.

On 5 December, Mr Sekimizu spoke about IMO’s commitment to sustainable maritime development at the Exponaval conference in Valparaiso, drawing on the outcomes of both the UN Climate Change Conference in Rio de Janeiro and the 2012 World Fair in Yeosu, Republic of Korea, to establish a blueprint for future developments in this regard.

Then, he moved on to a special conference in Punta Arenas on Search and Rescue in the Antarctic region, and the Polar Code. Here, drew attention to the unique difficulties faced by ships operating in the Arctic and Antarctic environments. Poor weather and the relative lack of good charts, communication systems and other navigational aids pose challenges for mariners. The remoteness of the areas makes rescue or clean-up operations difficult and costly. Cold temperatures may reduce the effectiveness of numerous components of the ship, ranging from deck machinery and emergency equipment to sea suctions. When ice is present, it can impose additional loads on the hull, propulsion system and appendages.

Mr Sekimizu spoke about the Polar Code being developed by IMO to 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, particularly in the context of increased tourism to these regions, and drew attention to Chile’s own tremendous contribution to the development of search and rescue facilities and techniques in the region.

Thereafter, Mr Sekimizu visited Antarctica (right) to view how the infrastructure in the region is developing.
Black and Caspian Sea states support maritime profiles to boost capacity-building

Heads of maritime administrations from the Black and Caspian Sea countries have expressed their strong support for the development of country maritime profiles, to identify capacity-building needs which can then be addressed more effectively through IMO’s technical co-operation programme.

The inaugural meeting of the Heads of Maritime Administrations from the Black and Caspian Sea States was held in Batumi, Georgia, on the Black Sea coast on 16 and 17 December 2012. It adopted a resolution calling on the States represented at the meeting to submit to IMO the completed country maritime profile, identifying the needs for technical assistance, at their earliest convenience, to serve as the bases for the preparation of the Integrated Technical Co-operation Programme (ITCP) for the 2014/2015 biennium.

The meeting, organized by IMO, was attended by representatives of Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Georgia, Iran, Romania, Turkey and Ukraine; as well as representatives from the Black Sea Association of Maritime Institutions, European Commission, World Maritime University and the Black Sea MoU on Port State Control.

The resolution adopted by the meeting also called on IMO’s development partners (European Commission, European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, UNDP) to acknowledge and respond to the direct relationship between IMO’s regulatory and technical co-operation work and the promotion of sustainable development and, accordingly, to give increased priority to the maritime sector within national and multilateral development aid programmes.

The inaugural meeting aimed to encourage States to strengthen national maritime administrations, develop and update the national maritime policies, build capacity at a regional level through partnerships and in cooperation with IMO. It requested the regional partners in co-operation with IMO to intensify their efforts to provide technical assistance in implementing IMO instruments and to make adequate provision for that purpose within their capacity-building programmes in future.

A range of technical assistance projects have already had positive outcomes in the region to date, including an array of workshops and training courses for the implementation of the various IMO conventions; assistance in the development of national and regional contingency plans to deal with oil pollution; and national and regional activities related to the IMO Convention on ballast water management, to assist countries in developing capacity, with a view to ratification and harmonized implementation of the International Convention for the Control and Management of Ships’ Ballast Water and Sediments, 2004, recognizing the serious impacts from the introduction of marine invasive species in the Black Sea.

It is anticipated that the development of country profiles will serve to enhance even further capacity-building in the region, in order to address the particular issues facing the Black and Caspian Seas, such as the risk associated with increased vessel traffic, the movement of oil through pipelines, and the threat of invasive species. IMO instruments addressing these matters, including the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea, 1974, as amended, the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships (MARPOL), the Protocol on Preparedness, Response and Co-operation to Pollution Incidents by Hazardous and Noxious Substances, 2000 and the Ballast Water Management Convention, are seen as the prime instruments used for the protection of the Black and Caspian Seas’ sensitive resources, and are essential components for ensuring their sustainability not only in the present but also for future generations.
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