

**Note by the International Maritime Organization to the forty-eighth session of the  
Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice (SBSTA 48)  
Bonn, Germany, 30 April to 11 May 2018**

**Agenda item 10(c)  
Emissions from fuel used for international aviation and maritime transport**

**ADOPTION OF THE INITIAL IMO STRATEGY ON REDUCTION OF  
GHG EMISSIONS FROM SHIPS**

**SUMMARY**

IMO's Marine Environment Protection Committee (MEPC) has for some time now been considering actions to address greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from ships engaged in international trade. It met for its seventy-second session (MEPC 72) from 9 to 13 April 2018, at IMO Headquarters in London, with the participation of more than 100 Member States, three associate members, two United Nations bodies including UNFCCC, eight intergovernmental organizations and 47 non-governmental organizations.

During this meeting, the Committee adopted resolution MEPC.304(72) on *Initial IMO Strategy on reduction of GHG emissions from ships*.

The vision set out in the text of this important Initial Strategy confirms IMO's commitment to reducing GHG emissions from international shipping and, as a matter of urgency, to phasing them out as soon as possible in this century.

The Initial Strategy, and its adopting resolution, is set out in annex to this submission.

**Context**

1 International shipping plays an essential role in the facilitation of world trade as the most cost-effective and energy-efficient mode of mass cargo transport, making a vital contribution to international trade and being a key pillar of the development of a sustainable global economy.

2 The International Maritime Organization (IMO) was established by Governments as a specialized agency under the United Nations to provide the machinery for intergovernmental cooperation in the field of regulation of ships engaged in international trade. IMO is responsible for the global regulation of all aspects of international shipping and has a key role in ensuring that lives at sea are not put at risk, including security of shipping, and that the environment is not polluted by ships' operations – as summed up in IMO's mission statement: **Safe, secure and efficient shipping on clean oceans**.

3 This document provides an update of previous submissions by IMO to SBSTA.

## **Adoption of the Initial IMO Strategy on Reduction of GHG emissions from ships**

4 MEPC 69 welcomed the Paris Agreement on Climate Change and recognized it as a major achievement by the international community. It also unanimously recognized IMO's own role in mitigating the impact of GHG emissions from international shipping and acknowledged the current efforts and the measures already introduced by IMO to enhance the energy efficiency of ships.

5 MEPC 70, having considered several submissions and established the Working Group on the Reduction of GHG emissions from international shipping, approved a *Roadmap for developing a Comprehensive IMO strategy on reduction of GHG emissions from ships*, which foresaw an initial GHG reduction strategy to be adopted in 2018. The Roadmap contains a list of activities, including further IMO GHG studies and significant intersessional work, with relevant timelines.

6 IMO Assembly - the Organization's supreme body - adopted during its 30th session in December 2017 a strategic direction entitled "Respond to Climate Change".

7 Following two sessional and three intersessional meetings of the working group on reduction of GHG emissions from ships, the *Initial IMO Strategy on Reduction of GHG emissions from ships* was adopted by MEPC 72 in line with the timeline stipulated in the Roadmap.

8 The Initial Strategy envisages for the first time a reduction in total GHG emissions from international shipping which, it says, should peak as soon as possible and to reduce the total annual GHG emissions by at least 50% by 2050 compared to 2008, while, at the same time, pursuing efforts towards phasing them out entirely.

9 The climate change strategy for international shipping includes a specific reference to "a pathway of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions reduction consistent with the Paris Agreement temperature goals".

10 Levels of ambition also include reviewing with the aim to strengthen the energy efficiency design requirements for ships with the percentage improvement for each phase to be determined for each ship type, as appropriate and reduction of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions per transport work, as an average across international shipping, by at least 40% by 2030, pursuing efforts towards 70% by 2050, compared to 2008.

11 The reviews of these levels of ambition should take into account updated emission estimates, emissions reduction options for international shipping, and the reports of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), as relevant.

12 The Initial Strategy represents a framework for further action, setting out the future vision for international shipping, the levels of ambition to reduce GHG emissions and guiding principles; and includes candidate short-, mid- and long-term further measures with possible timelines and their impacts on States. The strategy also identifies barriers and supportive measures including capacity building, technical cooperation and research and development (R&D).

13 During MEPC 72, the UN Secretary-General Mr. António Guterres stated: "I call on nations to adopt an ambitious Initial Strategy at the IMO that would support the modernization of the shipping sector in a manner consistent with the ambitions of the Paris Agreement".

14 IMO Secretary-General Kitack Lim said the adoption of the Initial Strategy was another successful illustration of the renowned IMO spirit of cooperation and would allow future IMO work on climate change to be rooted in a solid basis. He presented the text as “the result of fruitful negotiations involving many Member States with a variety of shared and different interests to find a compromise solution that represents a strong middle ground”.

15 IMO Member States agreed to keep the Initial Strategy under review, with a view to adoption of a Revised Strategy on reduction of GHG emissions from ships in 2023.

### **Future work**

16 The adoption of the Initial IMO Strategy on Reduction of GHG emissions from ships is a historic milestone in the Organization’s continuous contribution to global efforts to limit and reduce GHG emissions. This strategy should send a strong signal to the shipping sector as a whole to stimulate investment in the development of low- and zero-carbon fuels and innovative energy-efficient technologies.

17 Continuing the momentum of work on this important issue, MEPC 72 agreed to hold the fourth meeting of the Intersessional Working Group on Reduction of GHG emissions from ships (ISWG-GHG 4) later in 2018. This working group has been tasked with developing a programme of follow-up actions to the Initial Strategy; further consider how to progress reduction of GHG emissions from ships; and report to the next session of the MEPC (MEPC 73), which will meet in London, 22-26 October 2018.

18 IMO, celebrating in 2018 its 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary as the global regulator of international shipping, is entrusted with the matters on reduction of GHG emissions from ships; it will continue its endeavours to reduce environmental impacts from international maritime transport, a vital industry to world trade and sustainable development, and keep relevant bodies of the UNFCCC informed of its progress.

\*\*\*

## ANNEX

### RESOLUTION MEPC.304(72)

Adopted on 13 April 2018

#### INITIAL IMO STRATEGY ON REDUCTION OF GHG EMISSIONS FROM SHIPS

THE MARINE ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION COMMITTEE

RECALLING Article 38(e) of the Convention on the International Maritime Organization (the Organization) concerning the functions of the Marine Environment Protection Committee (the Committee) conferred upon it by international conventions for the prevention and control of marine pollution from ships,

ACKNOWLEDGING that work to address greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from ships has been undertaken by the Organization continuously since 1997, in particular, through adopting global mandatory technical and operational energy efficiency measures for ships under MARPOL Annex VI,

ACKNOWLEDGING ALSO the decision of the thirtieth session of the Assembly in December 2017 that adopted for the Organization a strategic direction entitled "Respond to Climate Change",

RECALLING the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development,

1 ADOPTS the *Initial IMO Strategy on reduction of GHG emissions from ships* (hereinafter the Initial Strategy) as set out in the annex to the present resolution;

2 INVITES the Secretary-General of the Organization to make adequate provisions in the Integrated Technical Cooperation Programme (ITCP) to support relevant follow up actions of the Initial Strategy that may be further decided by the Committee and undertaken by developing countries, particularly Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and Small Island Developing States (SIDS);

3 AGREES to keep the Initial Strategy under review, with a view to adoption of a Revised IMO Strategy on reduction of GHG emissions from ships in 2023.

\*\*\*

## **Annex**

### **INITIAL IMO STRATEGY ON REDUCTION OF GHG EMISSIONS FROM SHIPS**

#### **Contents**

- 1 INTRODUCTION
- 2 VISION
- 3 LEVELS OF AMBITION AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES
- 4 LIST OF CANDIDATE SHORT-, MID- AND LONG-TERM FURTHER MEASURES WITH POSSIBLE TIMELINES AND THEIR IMPACTS ON STATES
- 5 BARRIERS AND SUPPORTIVE MEASURES; CAPACITY BUILDING AND TECHNICAL COOPERATION; R&D
- 6 FOLLOW-UP ACTIONS TOWARDS THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE REVISED STRATEGY
- 7 PERIODIC REVIEW OF THE STRATEGY

## 1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 The International Maritime Organization (IMO) is the United Nations specialized agency responsible for safe, secure and efficient shipping and the prevention of pollution from ships.

1.2 The Strategy represents the continuation of work of IMO as the appropriate international body to address greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from international shipping. This work includes Assembly resolution A.963(23) on *IMO policies and practices related to the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions from ships*, adopted on 5 December 2003, urging the Marine Environment Protection Committee (MEPC) to identify and develop the mechanisms needed to achieve the limitation or reduction of GHG emissions from international shipping.

1.3 In response to the Assembly's request, work to address GHG emissions from ships has been undertaken, including inter alia:

- .1 MEPC 62 (July 2011) adopted resolution MEPC.203(62) on *Inclusion of regulations on energy efficiency for ships in MARPOL Annex VI* introducing mandatory technical (EEDI) and operational (SEEMP) measures for the energy efficiency of ships. To date more than 2,700 new ships have been certified to the energy efficiency design requirement;
- .2 MEPC 65 (May 2013) adopted resolution MEPC.229(65) on *Promotion of technical co-operation and transfer of technology relating to the improvement of energy efficiency of ships*, which, among other things, requests the IMO, through its various programmes (ITCP<sup>1</sup>, GloMEEP project<sup>2</sup>, MTCC network<sup>3</sup>, etc.), to provide technical assistance to Member States to enable cooperation in the transfer of energy efficient technologies, in particular to developing countries; and
- .3 MEPC 70 (October 2016) adopted, by resolution MEPC.278(70), amendments to MARPOL Annex VI to introduce the *data collection system for fuel oil consumption of ships*, containing mandatory requirements for ships to record and report their fuel oil consumption. Ships of 5,000 gross tonnage and above (representing approximately 85% of the total CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from international shipping) are required to collect consumption data for each type of fuel oil they use, as well as other, additional, specified data including proxies for "transport work".

1.4 This Initial Strategy is the first milestone set out in the *Roadmap for developing a comprehensive IMO Strategy on reduction of GHG emissions from ships* (the Roadmap) approved at MEPC 70. The Roadmap identifies that a revised Strategy is to be adopted in 2023.

### Context

1.5 The Initial Strategy falls within a broader context including:

- .1 other existing instruments related to the law of the sea, including UNCLOS, and to climate change, including the UNFCCC and its related legal instruments, including the Paris Agreement;

---

<sup>1</sup> Integrated Technical Cooperation Programme <http://www.imo.org>

<sup>2</sup> Global Maritime Energy Efficiency Partnerships <http://glomeep.imo.org/>

<sup>3</sup> Global Maritime Technology Cooperation Centres Network <http://gmn.imo.org/>

- .2 the leading role of the Organization for the development, adoption and assistance in implementation of environmental regulations applicable to international shipping;
- .3 the decision of the thirtieth session of the Assembly in December 2017 that adopted for the Organization a Strategic Direction entitled “Respond to climate change”; and
- .4 the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

### **Emissions and emission scenarios**

1.6 The *Third IMO GHG Study 2014* has estimated that GHG emissions from international shipping in 2012 accounted for some 2.2% of anthropogenic CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and that such emissions could grow by between 50% and 250% by 2050. Future IMO GHG studies would help reduce the uncertainties associated with these emission estimates and scenarios.

### **Objectives of the Initial Strategy**

1.7 The Initial Strategy is aimed at:

- .1 enhancing IMO’s contribution to global efforts by addressing GHG emissions from international shipping. International efforts in addressing GHG emissions include the Paris Agreement and its goals and the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its SDG 13: *“Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts”*;
- .2 identifying actions to be implemented by the international shipping sector, as appropriate, while addressing impacts on States and recognizing the critical role of international shipping in supporting the continued development of global trade and maritime transport services; and
- .3 identifying actions and measures, as appropriate, to help achieve the above objectives, including incentives for research and development and monitoring of GHG emissions from international shipping.

## **2 VISION**

IMO remains committed to reducing GHG emissions from international shipping and, as a matter of urgency, aims to phase them out as soon as possible in this century.

## **3 LEVELS OF AMBITION AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES**

### **Levels of ambition**

3.1 Subject to amendment depending on reviews to be conducted by the Organization, the Initial Strategy identifies levels of ambition for the international shipping sector noting that technological innovation and the global introduction of alternative fuels and/or energy sources for international shipping will be integral to achieve the overall ambition. The reviews should take into account updated emission estimates, emissions reduction options for international shipping, and the reports of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), as relevant. Levels of ambition directing the Initial Strategy are as follows:

**.1 carbon intensity of the ship to decline through implementation of further phases of the energy efficiency design index (EEDI) for new ships**

to review with the aim to strengthen the energy efficiency design requirements for ships with the percentage improvement for each phase to be determined for each ship type, as appropriate;

**.2 carbon intensity of international shipping to decline**

to reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions per transport work, as an average across international shipping, by at least 40% by 2030, pursuing efforts towards 70% by 2050, compared to 2008; and

**.3 GHG emissions from international shipping to peak and decline**

to peak GHG emissions from international shipping as soon as possible and to reduce the total annual GHG emissions by at least 50% by 2050 compared to 2008 whilst pursuing efforts towards phasing them out as called for in the Vision as a point on a pathway of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions reduction consistent with the Paris Agreement temperature goals.

### **Guiding principles**

3.2 The principles guiding the Initial Strategy include:

- .1 the need to be cognizant of the principles enshrined in instruments already developed, such as:
  - .1 the principle of non-discrimination and the principle of no more favourable treatment, enshrined in MARPOL and other IMO conventions; and
  - .2 the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities, in the light of different national circumstances, enshrined in the UNFCCC, its Kyoto Protocol and the Paris Agreement;
- .2 the requirement for all ships to give full and complete effect, regardless of flag, to implementing mandatory measures to ensure the effective implementation of this strategy;
- .3 the need to consider the impacts of measures on States, including developing countries, in particular, on LDCs and SIDS as noted by MEPC 68 (MEPC 68/21, paragraphs 4.18 to 4.19) and their specific emerging needs, as recognized in the Organization's Strategic Plan (resolution A.1110(30)); and
- .4 the need for evidence-based decision-making balanced with the precautionary approach as set out in resolution MEPC.67(37).

## **4 LIST OF CANDIDATE SHORT-, MID- AND LONG-TERM FURTHER MEASURES WITH POSSIBLE TIMELINES AND THEIR IMPACTS ON STATES**

### **Timelines**

4.1 Candidate measures set out in this Initial Strategy should be consistent with the following timelines:

- .1 possible short-term measures could be measures finalized and agreed by the Committee between 2018 and 2023. Dates of entry into force and when the measure can effectively start to reduce GHG emissions would be defined for each measure individually;
- .2 possible mid-term measures could be measures finalized and agreed by the Committee between 2023 and 2030. Dates of entry into force and when the measure can effectively start to reduce GHG emissions would be defined for each measure individually; and
- .3 possible long-term measures could be measures finalized and agreed by the Committee beyond 2030. Dates of entry into force and when the measure can effectively start to reduce GHG emissions would be defined for each measure individually.

4.2 In aiming for early action, the timeline for short-term measures should prioritize potential early measures that the Organization could develop, while recognizing those already adopted, including MARPOL Annex VI requirements relevant for climate change, with a view to achieve further reduction of GHG emissions from international shipping before 2023.

4.3 Certain mid- and long-term measures will require work to commence prior to 2023.

4.4 These timelines should be revised as appropriate as additional information becomes available.

4.5 Short-, mid- and long-term further measures to be included in the Revised IMO GHG Strategy should be accompanied by implementation schedules.

4.6 The list of candidate measures is non-exhaustive and is without prejudice to measures the Organization may further consider and adopt.

### **Candidate short-term measures**

4.7 Measures can be categorized as those the effect of which is to directly reduce GHG emissions from ships and those which support action to reduce GHG emissions from ships. All the following candidate measures<sup>4</sup> represent possible short-term further action of the Organization on matters related to the reduction of GHG emissions from ships:

- .1 further improvement of the existing energy efficiency framework with a focus on EEDI and SEEMP, taking into account the outcome of the review of EEDI regulations;

---

<sup>4</sup> The Initial Strategy is subject to revision based on fuel oil consumption data collected during 2019-2021 and does not prejudice any specific further measures that may be implemented in Phase 3 of the three-step approach.

- .2 develop technical and operational energy efficiency measures for both new and existing ships, including consideration of indicators in line with the three-step approach that can be utilized to indicate and enhance the energy efficiency performance of shipping, e.g. Annual Efficiency Ratio (AER), Energy Efficiency per Service Hour (EESH), Individual Ship Performance Indicator (ISPI), Fuel Oil Reduction Strategy (FORS);
- .3 establishment of an Existing Fleet Improvement Programme;
- .4 consider and analyse the use of speed optimization and speed reduction as a measure, taking into account safety issues, distance travelled, distortion of the market or to trade and that such measure does not impact on shipping's capability to serve remote geographic areas;
- .5 consider and analyse measures to address emissions of methane and further enhance measures to address emissions of Volatile Organic Compounds;
- .6 encourage the development and update of national action plans to develop policies and strategies to address GHG emissions from international shipping in accordance with guidelines to be developed by the Organization, taking into account the need to avoid regional or unilateral measures;
- .7 continue and enhance technical cooperation and capacity-building activities under the ITCP;
- .8 consider and analyse measures to encourage port developments and activities globally to facilitate reduction of GHG emissions from shipping, including provision of ship and shore-side/on-shore power supply from renewable sources, infrastructure to support supply of alternative low-carbon and zero-carbon fuels, and to further optimize the logistic chain and its planning, including ports;
- .9 initiate research and development activities addressing marine propulsion, alternative low-carbon and zero-carbon fuels, and innovative technologies to further enhance the energy efficiency of ships and establish an International Maritime Research Board to coordinate and oversee these R&D efforts;
- .10 incentives for first movers to develop and take up new technologies;
- .11 develop robust lifecycle GHG/carbon intensity guidelines for all types of fuels, in order to prepare for an implementation programme for effective uptake of alternative low-carbon and zero-carbon fuels;
- .12 actively promote the work of the Organization to the international community, in particular, to highlight that the Organization, since the 1990's, has developed and adopted technical and operational measures that have consistently provided a reduction of air emissions from ships, and that measures could support the Sustainable Development Goals, including SDG 13 on Climate Change; and
- .13 undertake additional GHG emission studies and consider other studies to inform policy decisions, including the updating of Marginal Abatement Cost Curves and alternative low-carbon and zero-carbon fuels.

### **Candidate mid-term measures**

4.8 Measures can be categorized as those the effect of which is to directly reduce GHG emissions from ships and those which support action to reduce GHG emissions from ships. All the following candidate measures represent possible mid-term further action of the Organization on matters related to the reduction of GHG emissions from ships:

- .1 implementation programme for the effective uptake of alternative low-carbon and zero-carbon fuels, including update of national actions plans to specifically consider such fuels;
- .2 operational energy efficiency measures for both new and existing ships including indicators in line with three-step approach that can be utilized to indicate and enhance the energy efficiency performance of ships;
- .3 new/innovative emission reduction mechanism(s), possibly including Market-based Measures (MBMs), to incentivize GHG emission reduction;
- .4 further continue and enhance technical cooperation and capacity-building activities such as under the ITCP; and
- .5 development of a feedback mechanism to enable lessons learned on implementation of measures to be collated and shared through a possible information exchange on best practice.

### **Candidate long-term measures**

4.9 All the following candidate measures represent possible long-term further action of the Organization on matters related to the reduction of GHG emissions from ships:

- .1 pursue the development and provision of zero-carbon or fossil-free fuels to enable the shipping sector to assess and consider decarbonization in the second half of the century; and
- .2 encourage and facilitate the general adoption of other possible new/innovative emission reduction mechanism(s).

### **Impacts on States**

4.10 The impacts on States of a measure should be assessed and taken into account as appropriate before adoption of the measure. Particular attention should be paid to the needs of developing countries, especially small island developing States (SIDS) and least developed countries (LDCs).

4.11 When assessing impacts on States the impact of a measure should be considered, as appropriate, inter alia, in the following terms:

- .1 geographic remoteness of and connectivity to main markets;
- .2 cargo value and type;
- .3 transport dependency;
- .4 transport costs;

- .5 food security;
- .6 disaster response;
- .7 cost-effectiveness; and
- .8 socio-economic progress and development.

4.12 The specification for and agreement on the procedure for assessing and taking into account the impacts of measures related to international shipping on States should be undertaken as a matter of urgency as part of the follow-up actions.

4.13 Disproportionately negative impacts should be assessed and addressed, as appropriate.

## **5 BARRIERS AND SUPPORTIVE MEASURES; CAPACITY-BUILDING AND TECHNICAL COOPERATION; R&D**

5.1 The Committee recognizes that developing countries, in particular the LDCs and SIDS, have special needs with regard to capacity building and technical cooperation.

5.2 The Committee acknowledges that development and making globally available new energy sources that are safe for ships could be a specific barrier to the implementation of possible measures.

5.3 The Committee could assist the efforts to promote low-carbon technologies by facilitating public-private partnerships and information exchange.

5.4 The Committee should continue to provide mechanisms for facilitating information sharing, technology transfer, capacity-building and technical cooperation, taking into account resolution MEPC.229(65) on *Promotion of technical co-operation and transfer of technology relating to the improvement of energy efficiency of ships*.

5.5 The Organization is requested to assess periodically the provision of financial and technological resources and capacity-building to implement the Strategy through the ITCP and other initiatives including the GloMEEP project and the MTCC network.

## **6 FOLLOW-UP ACTIONS TOWARDS THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE REVISED STRATEGY**

6.1 A programme of follow-up actions of the Initial Strategy should be developed.

6.2 The key stages for the adoption of a Revised IMO GHG Strategy in 2023 as set out in the Roadmap, are as follows:

|                          |  |
|--------------------------|--|
| Spring 2018<br>(MEPC 72) | Adoption of the Initial Strategy <sup>5</sup> , including, inter alia, a list of candidate short-, mid- and long-term further measures with possible timelines, to be revised as appropriate as additional information becomes available |
| January 2019             | Start of Phase 1: Data collection (Ships to collect data)  |
| Spring 2019<br>(MEPC 74) | Initiation of Fourth IMO GHG Study using data from 2012-2018   |
| Summer 2020              | Data from 2019 to be reported to IMO   |
| Autumn 2020<br>(MEPC 76) | Start of Phase 2: data analysis (no later than autumn 2020)<br>Publication of Fourth IMO GHG Study for consideration by MEPC 76  |
| Spring 2021<br>(MEPC 77) | Secretariat report summarizing the 2019 data pursuant to regulation 22A.10<br><br>Initiation of work on adjustments on Initial IMO Strategy, based on Data Collection System (DCS) data  |
| Summer 2021              | Data for 2020 to be reported to IMO  |
| Spring 2022<br>(MEPC 78) | Phase 3: Decision step<br>Secretariat report summarizing the 2020 data pursuant to regulation 22A.10   |
| Summer 2022              | Data for 2021 to be reported to IMO  |
| Spring 2023<br>(MEPC 80) | Secretariat report summarizing the 2021 data pursuant to regulation 22A.10<br>Adoption of Revised IMO Strategy, including short-, mid- and long-term further measure(s), as required, with implementation schedules                      |

6.3 The Marginal Abatement Cost Curve (MACC) for each measure, as appropriate, should be ascertained and updated, and then evaluated on a regular basis.

## **7 PERIODIC REVIEW OF THE STRATEGY**

7.1 The Revised Strategy is to be adopted in Spring 2023.

7.2 The Revised Strategy should be subject to a review five years after its final adoption.

7.3 The Committee should undertake the review including defining the scope of the review and its terms of reference.

---

<sup>5</sup> Initial IMO Strategy is subject to revision based on DCS data during 2019-2021 and does not prejudice any specific further measures that may be implemented in Phase 3 of the three-step approach.