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Circular Letter No.3624
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To: All IMO Members
Contracting Governments to the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea, 1974
Intergovernmental organizations
Non-governmental organizations in consultative status with IMO

Subject: **Verification of the gross mass of packed containers – amendments to SOLAS regulation VI/2**

1 The Secretary-General has the honour of advising that the amendments to the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS), 1974, as amended, adopted by the Maritime Safety Committee, at its ninety-fourth session (17 to 21 November, 2014), through resolution MSC.380(94), were accepted on 1 January 2016. Consequently, the aforementioned amendments will enter into force on 1 July 2016, in accordance with SOLAS article VIII(b)(vii)(2).

2 The amendments to SOLAS regulation VI/2, as set out in the annex to resolution MSC.380(94), introduce the requirement for the gross mass of a packed container to be verified by the shipper prior to loading on a ship. The verification of the gross mass of a packed container may be achieved by either of two methods:

- .1 weighing the packed container using calibrated and certified equipment; or
- .2 weighing all packages and cargo items, including the mass of pallets, dunnage and other securing material to be packed in the container and adding the tare mass of the container to the sum of the single masses, using a certified method approved by the competent authority of the State in which packing of the container was completed.

3 In accordance with new paragraph 6 of SOLAS regulation VI/2, if the shipping document, with regard to a packed container, does not provide the verified gross mass and the master or his representative and the terminal representative have not obtained the verified gross mass of the packed container, it shall not be loaded on to the ship.

4 The Maritime Safety Committee also approved the *Guidelines regarding the verified gross mass of a container carrying cargo* (MSC.1/Circ.1475), with a view to establishing a common approach for the implementation of the SOLAS requirements regarding the verification of the gross mass of packed containers.

5 While the Guidelines developed by the Organization provide the basis for consistent implementation, there is still a need for SOLAS Contracting Governments to communicate, at a national level, with all parties involved in maritime containerized transport (e.g. shippers, port authorities, container terminals, shipping agents and carriers) on how methods 1 and 2 will be given effect, together with any measures that will be put in place to ensure compliance.

6 The Secretary-General encourages all IMO Member Governments and international organizations to ensure that awareness of the upcoming requirement for the verification of the gross mass of packed containers is as widespread as possible. Furthermore, the Secretary-General urges SOLAS Contracting Governments to ensure that the necessary information and processes for effective implementation of amended SOLAS regulation VI/2, as set out in the annex to resolution MSC.380(94), are in place before 1 July 2016.

7 Additional relevant information has been posted on the IMO website at:
<http://www.imo.org/en/OurWork/Safety/Cargoes/Containers/Pages/Verification-of-the-gross-mass.aspx>)
