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**CIRCULAR LETTER 43/2017  
30 June 2017**

**REPORT ON THE 98<sup>th</sup> SESSION OF THE IMO MARITIME SAFETY COMMITTEE  
(MSC 98)**

**References:**

- A. IHO CL 11/2017 dated 6 February - *Report on the 97<sup>th</sup> Session of the IMO Maritime Safety Committee (MSC 97)*;
- B. IHO CL 29/2017 dated 31 March - *Report on the 4<sup>th</sup> Session of the IMO Sub-Committee on Navigation, Communications, and Search and Rescue (NCSR 4)*.

Dear Hydrographer,

1. As announced in Reference A, the 98<sup>th</sup> session of the International Maritime Organization (IMO) Maritime Safety Committee (MSC98) was held at the IMO Headquarters in London, United Kingdom, from 7 to 16 June. Assistant Director David Wyatt represented the IHO.
2. The discussions on matters that may be of particular interest to IHO Member States are summarized in Annex A. The full report of MSC 98 (MSC 98/23) will be available on the IMODOCS website (<https://webaccounts.imo.org/>) when issued.

**Dates for the next sessions of the MSC**

3. The next sessions of the MSC are scheduled from 16 to 25 May 2018 (MSC 99) and from 3 to 7 December 2018 (MSC 100) at the IMO Headquarters in London.

**Actions required from the IHO and its Member States**

4. Considering the outcome of the 4<sup>th</sup> session of the IMO Sub-Committee on Navigation, Communications, and Search and Rescue (see Reference B), the MSC agreed to activate the IMO/IHO Harmonization Group on Data Modelling (HGDM) to work on the output on “Develop guidance on definition and harmonization of the format and structure of Maritime Service Portfolios” and endorsed the holding of the first meeting of this Group, at the IMO Headquarters in London, from 16 to 20 October 2017.
5. The work item of the HGDM relates directly to tasks allocated by the IHO Hydrographic Services and Standards Committee (HSSC) to the Nautical Information Provision Working Group (NIPWG) and to the S-100 Working Group (S-100WG). The IHO Secretariat will liaise with the Chair of the HSSC, NIPWG and S-100WG to ensure that the IHO interests are adequately represented in the HGDM. It is expected that the participation of members of the working groups at this first and any subsequent meetings of the HGDM will be supported by their national organization.
6. More generally, and in accordance with the HGDM Terms of Reference, IHO Member States and organizations accredited as observers to the IHO are encouraged to consider attending this first and subsequent meetings of the HGDM. National Hydrographic Offices are also encouraged to liaise

with their national representative organization to IMO, which is usually the Maritime Administration, on this matter.

7. All relevant documents and the registration procedure will be made available through the HGDM section of the HSSC page on the IHO web site at [www.iho.int](http://www.iho.int) > Home > Committees & WG > HSSC.

On behalf of the Secretary-General  
Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Gilles Bessero', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Gilles BESSERO  
Director

Distribution:

- IHO Member States
- HSSC Observers
- Chair, HSSC
- Chair, NIPWG
- Chair, S-100WG

Annex A: Summary of the discussions at MSC 98

## Summary of the discussions at MSC 98

### Unsafe Mixed Migration by Sea

1. The Committee encouraged Member States to use the facilitation module in the Global Integrated Shipping Information System (GISIS) and the information included in the appendix to MSC.1/Circ.896/Rev.2 - *Interim measures for combating unsafe practices associated with the trafficking, smuggling or transport of migrants by sea* - to report any incidents. The MSC also acknowledged that Search and Rescue (SAR) was not an acceptable long-term response to mixed migration by sea and that the international community may have to be prepared to review the international regulatory regime.

### Global Maritime Distress and Safety System (GMDSS)

2. The Committee adopted the draft amendments to the following resolutions:

- MSC.148(77) on *Revised performance standards for narrow-band direct-printing telegraph equipment for the reception of navigational and meteorological warnings and urgent information to ships (NAVTEX)* – to be issued as resolution MSC.430(98);
- MSC.306(87) on *Revised performance standards for enhanced group call (EGC) equipment* – to be issued as resolution MSC.431(98);
- MSC.401(95) on *Amendments to Performance standards for multi-system shipborne radionavigation receivers* – to be issued as resolution MSC.432(98).

3. The MSC supported the proposed text amendments to and the draft MSC resolution on performance standards for a ship earth station for use in the GMDSS, including revisions submitted by the United Kingdom (UK), United States (USA) and the Comité International Radio-Maritime (CIRM). In particular the UK and USA proposed revised wording to cover equipment already in use or in the advanced stages of design, so that the equipment will meet the IMO performance standards. The CIRM proposed retaining the ability to identify clearly any position information not updated for more than 24 hours. The MSC preferred the UK proposed wording that if the ships' position is older than [23.5 hours], the position is clearly identified with date and time of the position fix in UTC for distress alerting purposes; however the MSC decided to use the cut-off time of 24 hours, as proposed by CIRM. The Secretariat was tasked to make the necessary editorial amendments and to issue it as resolution MSC.433(98).

4. The MSC endorsed the action taken by the Sub-Committee on Navigation, Communications, and Search and Rescue (NCSR) in instructing the Secretariat to convey a liaison statement on changes consequential to displaying NAVTEX and Inmarsat-C SafetyNET information on integrated navigation displays (see NCSR4/29 annex 6) to the IHO, the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) and the Technical Committee TC 80 of the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC).

5. The MSC approved the draft Modernization Plan of the Global Maritime Distress and Safety System (GMDSS) as well as the draft amendments to SOLAS IV and its appendix on certificates, with a view to subsequent adoption at MSC 99. The Committee also supported the text provided for use of the term *recognized mobile satellite service* and the definition that was submitted.

6. The Committee endorsed the view of the NCSR that the recognition of the Inmarsat FleetBroadband Maritime Safety Data Service for use in the GMDSS should be treated as a new application, noting that not all elements of resolution A.1001(25) would need to be reviewed in detail in this specific case and that it would be subject to the evaluation of these elements by the International Mobile Satellite Organization (IMSO). The MSC invited the IMSO to undertake the

necessary technical and operational assessment of the Inmarsat FleetBroadband Maritime Safety Data Service and provide a report for consideration by the NCSR.

7. The Committee approved the intersessional meeting of the fourteenth session of the Joint IMO/ITU Expert Group on Maritime Radiocommunication Matters to take place in mid-2018 at the IMO Headquarters.

### **Hydrography and Charting**

8. The MSC addressed various matters related to hydrography and nautical charting resulting from the 4<sup>th</sup> Session of the NCSR (NCSR 4) held in March this year. The main items included adopting the amendments to the existing Long Sand Head two-way route and SUNK Inner precautionary area in the traffic separation scheme “In the SUNK area and in the Northern approaches to the Thames Estuary” for dissemination by means of COLREG.2/Circ.69; the adoption of a new recommended route “Off the western coast of Izu O Shima Island”, a new area to be avoided “Off Peninsula de Osa in the Pacific coast off Costa Rica” and a new area to be avoided as an associated protective measure for the “Tubbataha Reefs Natural Park Particularly Sensitive Sea Area (PSSA) in the Sulu Sea” to be published as SN.1/Circ.335. These routeing measures will come into force on 1 January 2018.

9. The MSC also authorized the NCSR to forward routeing proposals, where the proposed routeing measures were primarily related to environmental protection, to the Marine Environmental Protection Committee (MEPC) for advice with respect to marine environmental aspects, before considering the proposals in detail.

10. The Committee approved the amendments to MSC.1/Circ.1503 - *ECDIS - Guidance for good practice* – developed by the Sub-Committee on Human Element, Training and Watchkeeping (HTW) and instructed the Secretariat to issue it as MSC.1/Circ.1503/Rev.1.

### **Polar Code**

11. The Committee agreed to change the title of the output related to the Polar Code from “Application of the Mandatory Code to non-SOLAS ships operating in polar waters” to “Safety measures for non-SOLAS ships operating in polar waters”. New Zealand suggested a possible approach for progression of this second phase, including a preliminary analysis of how the Code, as adopted by resolutions MSC.385(94) and MEPC.264(68), could be applied to non-SOLAS ships. Noting that for the Antarctic the most important issue is to ensure the safety of fishing vessels and yachts; it was suggested to develop the second phase for the Antarctic area first and, after a period of lessons learned, extend it to the Arctic waters.

12. It was agreed that the loss of lives and impact on the environment both associated with non-SOLAS ships operating in polar waters demanded urgent action. There was some support for delaying work until experience is gained with the new Code for SOLAS ships. Also, as the 2012 Cape Town Agreement on fishing vessel safety had not entered into force, it was considered more appropriate to wait until after its entry into force. Due to the unacceptable accident statistics for fishing vessels, this initiated a call for IMO member States to sign the 2012 Cape Town Agreement and thus expedite its entry into force. It was noted that the Polar Code is an add-on to the 1974 SOLAS Convention and contains only part of the safety requirements. As a consequence, there is no internationally agreed safety standards on which to develop guidance for non-SOLAS vessels. . It was also noted that the Code did not apply to cargo vessels between 300 and 500 gross tons, and that fishing vessels and yachts are not covered by any basic international safety standards. Referring to the lack of basic hydrographic survey data and the poor state of nautical charting in polar waters as highlighted in the current Code for SOLAS vessels, it was not suggested to repeat or expand on this information.

13. The marine mammal avoidance provisions in part 1-A chapter 11 of the Polar Code and the

reviewing of data and communication tools relevant to its implementation were discussed with the Committee requesting IMO Member States and relevant organizations to report on the status of their collection of marine mammal information with a view to communicating the information to masters transiting in polar waters.

14. Under the Work Programmes, noting the change of title of the output, the MSC agreed to move the output from the post-biennial agenda to the agenda for the 2018-2019 biennium and the provisional agenda for MSC 99 with the view that a policy decision will be made regarding the scope of application of the second phase of the Polar Code, its mandatory or recommendatory status and the types of vessels to which it would be applicable.

### **e-Navigation**

15. In order to avoid multiple amendments to resolution MSC.252(83) on revised performance standards for integrated navigation systems (INS), the Committee agreed to postpone the approval of the amendments to this resolution, until completion of the related work on the Guidelines for the harmonized display of navigation information received via communications equipment at NCSR 5.

16. In this context, the Committee agreed to keep the output on “Additional modules to the revised performance standards for integrated navigation systems (INS) (resolution MSC.252(83)) relating to the harmonization of bridge design and display of information” in the post-biennial agenda of the NCSR, in order to further consider the matter at the appropriate time.

17. Considering the outcome of NCSR 4, the MSC agreed to activate the IMO/IHO Harmonization Group on Data Modelling (HGDM) to work only on the output “Develop guidance on definition and harmonization of the format and structure of Maritime Service Portfolios (MSPs)”; and endorsed the holding of the first meeting of this Group, at IMO Headquarters in London, from 16 to 20 October 2017.

### **Maritime Cybersecurity**

18. The Committee approved the MSC-FAL.1/Circ.3 - *Guidelines on maritime cyber risk management* which supersedes the interim guidelines contained in MSC.1/Circ.1526. Regarding the implementation of the maritime cyber risk management, the MSC, noting the advice provided by the IMO Legal Affairs and External Relations Division that cyber risks could be addressed as part of the existing provisions of the International Ship and Port Facility Security (ISPS) Code and the International Safety Management (ISM) Code and that some Member States considered that mandatory implementation of maritime cyber risk was an issue, agreed that this would require further consideration after gaining more experience from the use of the guidelines.

19. The Committee noted that Singapore and the Baltic and International Maritime Council (BIMCO) had developed cyber risk management posters for distribution to ships to raise crew awareness of cyber issues and that version 2.0 of the industry cyber guidelines would be released shortly and would be reported to the MSC. The Committee also noted that the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) had started work on cyber risk safety assessment with a focus on cybersecurity on board ships.

### **Office Bearers**

20. The MSC unanimously re-elected Mr Bradley Groves of Australia as Chair and Mr Juan Carlos Cubisino of Argentina as Vice-Chair of the Committee for 2018.

21. The Chair confirmed that MSC 98 was the last session of the MSC at which Mr Ashok Mahapatra, Director Maritime Safety Division, would be attending as part of the IMO Secretariat due to his planned retirement in October.