

Secretary-General's Information Bulletin for Member States during the COVID-19 Period

Period covered: 27 April – 3 May

1. Meetings

1) IMO Official meetings

Thirty-second extraordinary session of Council

Arrangements have been put in place for the start of the thirty-second extraordinary sessions of Council, beginning on 4 May via correspondence. The provisional agenda for the meeting was drafted and published on IMODOCS and further Secretariat documents were issued. Several queries about the session were addressed. For access to the meeting documents please click the following link: <https://docs.imo.org/Category.aspx?cid=603>

Advancing IMO's commitment to reducing GHG emissions from international shipping

On 1 May the Secretary-General spoke with the Chair and Vice-Chair of MEPC, Mr. H. Saito (Japan) and Mr. H. Conway (Liberia), and the Chair of the Intersessional Working Group on Greenhouse Gases (ISWG-GHG), Mr. S. Oftedal (Norway), to discuss options for organizing ISWG-GHG 7 and MEPC 75 as soon as the Organization can resume its meeting schedule.

The Secretary-General stressed the importance of progressing discussions on the short-term measures aimed at reducing the carbon intensity of international shipping by 40% by 2030 as part of the Organization's commitment to decarbonize shipping, in line with the Initial IMO GHG Strategy and in support of a sustainable global COVID-19 recovery.

The Chairs underlined the importance of continuing to work, including by a possible preparatory virtual meeting, on GHG short-term measures to facilitate ISWG-GHG 7 to prepare draft amendments to MARPOL Annex VI, which can be approved by the next session of MEPC.

2) Other meetings such as a meeting with PRs

Secretary-General convenes virtual roundtable meeting with industry representatives (30 April)

The Secretary-General met with industry representatives to update them on ongoing collaborative work underway to address specific issues during the pandemic, including the safety and well-being of seafarers, ship operations, crew changes and survey and certification. The meeting was attended by IMO Secretary-General Kitack Lim and IMO Directors, and heads

or representatives from the following NGOs in consultative status with IMO: BIMCO; Cruise Lines International Association (CLIA); International Association of Classification Societies (IACS); International Association of Ports and Harbours (IAPH); International Chamber of Shipping (ICS); International Federation of Shipmasters' Associations (IFSMA); International Marine Contractors Association (IMCA); International Association of Dry Cargo Shipowners (INTERCARGO); INTERFERRY; International Association of Independent Tanker Owners (INTERTANKO); International Parcel Tanker Association (IPTA); International Transport Workers Federation (ITF); Oil Companies International Marine Forum (OCIMF); World Shipping Council (WSC).

More information here: <http://www.imo.org/en/Mediacentre/WhatsNew/Pages/default.aspx>

2. Cooperation with UN systems / External Organizations

1) with UN, WHO, ILO, etc.

The UN system continues its work on environmental issues

On 29 April, IMO attended the 26th mid-term technical meeting of the UN Environment Management Group (EMG), reviewing progress with its task teams and issues management groups, and also looking forward at new issues that may be addressed by the EMG. The EMG is a system-wide coordination body on environment and human settlements. It was established in 2001 by the UN General Assembly and consists of the specialised agencies, programmes and organs of the United Nations, including secretariats of the Multilateral Environmental Agreements. More information here: <https://unemg.org>

Participation in the third meeting of the International Health Regulations (2005) Emergency Committee regarding the outbreak of coronavirus disease (COVID-19)

The Secretariat participated in the third meeting of the International Health Regulations (2005) Emergency Committee. Membership of the Emergency Committee was expanded to reflect the nature of the pandemic and the need to include additional areas of expertise. The WHO Regional Emergency Directors and the Executive Director of the WHO Health Emergencies Programme (WHE) provided a regional and global situation overview. After ensuing discussion, the Committee unanimously agreed that the outbreak still constitutes a public health emergency of international concern (PHEIC) and offered advice to the Director-General. The Director-General declared that the outbreak of COVID-19 continues to constitute a PHEIC. He accepted the advice of the Committee to WHO and issued the Committee's advice to States Parties as Temporary Recommendations under the IHR. More information here: [https://www.who.int/news-room/detail/01-05-2020-statement-on-the-third-meeting-of-the-international-health-regulations-\(2005\)-emergency-committee-regarding-the-outbreak-of-coronavirus-disease-\(covid-19\)](https://www.who.int/news-room/detail/01-05-2020-statement-on-the-third-meeting-of-the-international-health-regulations-(2005)-emergency-committee-regarding-the-outbreak-of-coronavirus-disease-(covid-19))

3. Secretariat related information

Meeting of the cross-divisional gender group

The IMO cross-divisional gender equality focal points group meet to continue their work on the IMO Gender Equality Strategy and Action Plan. When developing the Strategy, the group analysed existing IMO and UN rules, guidelines, best practices of other UN entities and the specific needs of the Organization. The Strategy was submitted to the Senior Management Committee for comments.

Revision of SOLAS chapters III and IV for Modernization of the GMDSS

The work on the revision of SOLAS chapters III and IV for Modernization of the GMDSS, including related and consequential amendments to other existing instruments, is still ongoing in preparation for the sixteenth meeting of the Joint IMO/ITU Experts Group on Maritime Radiocommunication Matters. In order to achieve the planned entry into force date of 1 January 2024, alternative arrangements for the postponed meeting of the Experts Group are currently under consideration in consultation with ITU and the Chair of the Experts Group ([Circular Letter No.4265](#) refers).

As IMO staff use new systems to work remotely, planning continues for an eventual return to the IMO building

Every effort has been made to ensure the Secretariat continues to function effectively under the current circumstances. The Secretariat's remote working methodology has continued to improve with the finalization of an e-recruitment platform, and the ongoing migration to a SharePoint online structure. The Crisis Operations Group has prepared the first draft of the plan to re-open the IMO building.

Circular letters from Member States related to action taken due to COVID-19 pandemic

IMO Secretariat received Circular Letters from many Member States on the actions related to shipping and the maritime sector being taken in their countries in the light of the COVID-19 pandemic. Circular Letters can be viewed here:

<http://www.imo.org/en/MediaCentre/HotTopics/Pages/COVID-19-Member-States-Communications.aspx>

The new taxonomy of the GISIS Marine Casualties and Incidents (MCI) module

The Secretariat is completing the testing phase of the new taxonomy of the GISIS module on marine casualties and incidents. It covers different options for the collection of casualty information and reports of investigation. The new system maintains data exchange with the EMSA casualty database to avoid duplication of reporting. MCI is also tested with national administrations to allow reporting States to generate entries directly or to download from their national database. The final release should be completed before the end of July 2020 followed by migration of data from the current version of the module.

IMO Member State Audit Scheme

Work on the implementation of the audit scheme continues, to the extent possible, following the established Procedures regardless of the postponement of the in-country audits for 2020. Technical review of corrective action plans submitted by the Members States is ongoing. At the same time, greater emphasis is placed on the technical evaluation of the Member States' comments on the progress of the implementation of their corrective action plans.

Virtual meetings with remote simultaneous interpretation

Several official IMO meetings have now been postponed due to the COVID-19 crisis. In order for the Organization to be able to resume its official meetings, other than by correspondence, the Conference Division has been actively researching software platforms and technologies for holding virtual meetings with Remote Simultaneous Interpretation. In this context, to ensure that multilingualism, as an essential factor in harmonious communication among peoples, can still be implemented, various platforms have been identified. A progress report will be submitted to the Council at its 32nd extraordinary session.

Production of documentation in the official languages of the Organization

The Conference Division is successfully adopting new methods of work and embracing the challenges of working from home and remains fully committed to the timely management and production of documents for IMO meetings (including translation, revision, word processing, formatting, proofreading and editing) in the six official languages of the Organization.

4. Other relevant information.

IMO has issued the "Declaration by Port Authorities Roundtable (PAR) members in view of the global COVID-19 situation"

A group of leading port authorities from around the world have agreed the "Declaration by Port Authorities Roundtable (PAR) members in view of the global COVID-19 situation", recognizing that the maritime sector plays a critical role in keeping trade flows open in the global fight against COVID-19. Twenty PAR members from Asia, Europe, the Middle East and North America call for port authorities to collaborate and share best practices in ensuring that port operations can remain undisrupted. The Declarations have been issued as [Circular Letter No.4204/Add.12](#).
