

Secretary-General's Information Bulletin for Member States during the COVID-19 Period
Period covered: 4 – 17 May

1. Meetings

1) IMO Official meetings

C/ES.32 virtual informal meetings

In order to better facilitate the exchange of views and the gaining of consensus, the Chair of the Council decided to arrange for three virtual informal meetings where the agenda items of the thirty-second session of the Council would be discussed. No decisions will be taken at these discussion sessions. The Secretariat has been putting in place all the necessary arrangements to facilitate these meetings, which will take place on Tuesday, 26 May; Thursday, 25 June; and Friday, 3 July. More information about these informal meetings can be found in document [C/ES.32/1/1](#).

2) Other meetings such as a meeting with PRs

Meeting with the Chairs and Vice-Chairs of the MSC, the MEPC and the Sub-Committees

An online meeting of the Secretariat with the Chairs and Vice-Chairs of the MSC, the MEPC and the Sub-Committees was held on 15 May 2020. Participants were briefed on actions taken by IMO and Member States in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, working arrangements of the Secretariat in light of the pandemic, outcome of the thirty-first extraordinary session of the Council and updated on options for holding virtual IMO meetings. Chairs and Vice-Chairs fully supported the holding of intersessional working groups virtually, where possible, and the continuation of the work of correspondence groups in view of meeting postponement. The Chairs and Vice-Chairs also expressed caution on allowing further document submissions for the postponed meetings once their revised agendas are issued, in light of the already high workload of their respective bodies.

2. Cooperation with UN systems / External Organizations

1) with UN, WHO, ILO, etc.

Participation in the WHO/AFRO virtual regional training to provide up-to-dated WHO guidance and offer Q&A to countries to prepare for return-to-normal preparation at PoE

The Secretariat has informed the participants of the first WHO/AFRO virtual regional training, organized by WHO, about the relevant actions adopted by the Organization during the COVID pandemic to minimize its impact on maritime trade. More than 400 people attended the webinar. More information can be found in this link: <https://mailchi.mp/salud.unm.edu/session-recording-thank-you-for-attending-the-who-training-on-the-management-of-public-health-events-of-international-concern-in-civil-aviation-155288?e=b2749249c6>

Africa Renewal newsletter – Special focus on Africa and Covid-19

As various UN entities, including IMO, continue to make great progress on the Africa and COVID-19 strategic narrative and core messages, the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa (OSAA), on behalf of the Department of Global Communications (DGC), shared with IMO, the Africa Renewal e-newsletter for the month of April 2020 that has a special focus on Africa and COVID-19. The newsletter can be accessed through the following link: <https://mailchi.mp/un/africa-renewal-december-2019-march-2020-newsletter-3482474?e=23c2b875ec>

Chief Executives Board of the United Nations

IMO Secretary-General joined the meeting of the Chief Executives Board of the United Nations, held on 14 May, chaired by UN Secretary-General Guterres. Actions taken by the UN in respect to Covid-19 were among the many items discussed; IMO Secretary-General made an intervention strongly supporting the inclusion of seafarers in the category of essential workers.

Webpage highlighting IMO support to seafarers

Created a new web page detailing actions taken by IMO to support seafarers amid the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as examples in which IMO intervention helped resolve cases around the globe. Available in the three working languages, this webpage has been promoted on the main UN website and major media outlets including the BBC. The web page can be found here: <http://www.imo.org/en/MediaCentre/HotTopics/Pages/Support-for-seafarers-during-COVID-19.aspx>

3. Secretariat related information

Monitoring the average sulphur content of marine fuels

MED has been working on two additional documents for MEPC 75 providing the outcomes for 2019 of the annual monitoring of the worldwide average sulphur content of fuel oils, as well as a proposal to amend the associated guidelines (resolution MEPC.192(61)) setting out how the annual monitoring is to be done to reflect the entry into force of IMO2020 on the 1 January 2020. The worldwide average sulphur content of the tested residual fuel oils for 2019 was 2.34%, which represents a decrease of 0.26 percentage points compared to 2018, while the yearly average of the tested distillate fuel oils is 0.07%, same as in 2018. The main proposed amendment to the sulphur monitoring guidelines would allow the sulphur content of the new fuel blends that entered the market to comply with the global 0.50% sulphur limit to be reflected in next year's reporting. The two additional documents, [MEPC 75/5/8](#) and [MEPC 75/5/9](#), have been published on IMODOCS.

New reporting facility for the Marine Casualties and Incidents (MCI) module of GISIS

As requested by III 5 and MSC 101, the Secretariat has developed a new reporting facility for lessons learned on casualties in the MCI module of GISIS. This new reporting facility allows marine safety investigating states, having finalised and uploaded an investigation report to GISIS, to record their lessons learned therefrom.

Virtual Town Hall meeting

IMO held its first virtual "Town Hall" meeting on 5 May with just under 300 IMO staff joining the Secretary-General to share information on IMO's response to the Coronavirus pandemic. The Human Resources Services Working Group has been revived and among its first tasks will be to undertake a review of IMO's working-from-home modality and propose long-term options.

IMO Crisis Operations Group (COG)

The IMO Crisis Operations Group (COG) is also developing plans to re-open the building to IMO staff in line with UK Government advice and guidelines to maintain social distancing.

Implementation of the audit scheme

The Secretariat continues its efforts to promote effective implementation of the audit scheme. Preparations commenced for the development of an e-Learning training course for IMO Member State Audit Scheme auditors. The e-Learning training course will enable IMO to reach prospective auditors from around the world and will facilitate the participation of individuals who cannot attend classroom training courses. The e-Learning training course will also enhance the global and uniform implementation of the applicable IMO instruments, as participants will be in a better position to assist their administrations in the implementation of the III Code.

Update on registration to forthcoming meetings and documents processing

The Conference Division has successfully notified all delegates already registered for C 124, III 7 and IMO/ITU 16 that the Secretary-General had decided to postpone all meetings due to take place in July, as per Circular Letter No.4213/Add.4, and cancelled further registration for these meetings. All meeting documents are nonetheless duly processed (translation, revision, word processing, formatting, proofreading and editing) and translation services are currently working on documentation submitted for HTW 7, TCC 70, III 7 and C/ES.32, as well as urgent Circular Letters and correspondence related to the COVID-19 pandemic and its impact.

4. Other relevant information

Recommended framework of protocols for ensuring safe ship crew changes and travel during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic

A group of Non-Governmental Organizations (ICS, IAPH, BIMCO, IFSMA, INTERTANKO, P&I Clubs, CLIA, INTERCARGO, InterManager, IPTA, IMCA, INTERFERRY, FONASBA, ITF and WSC) and the International Air Transport Association (IATA) have agreed on a set of general measures and procedures designed to ensure that ship crew changes can take place safely during the COVID-19 pandemic. Crew change is one of the biggest challenges facing the shipping industry as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. The Secretary-General of IMO

endorses these protocols designed to lift barriers to crew changes. The Declaration has been issued as Circular Letter [No.4204/Add.14](#).

Recommendations prepared by the offshore energy industry to address the situation of offshore energy sector personnel

IMO has issued CL No. [4204/Add.13](#) with the *Recommendations for Governments and relevant national authorities on facilitating the movement of offshore energy sector personnel during the COVID-19 pandemic*, prepared by a group of Non-Governmental Organizations representing the offshore energy sector (IADC, IOGP and IMCA); the International Association of Geophysical Contractors (IAGC) and the International Support Vessel Owners Association (ISOA). The recommendations address the needs of the workers in the offshore energy sector who face challenges similar to those of seafarers, inter alia, the identification of these workers as "key workers", and Member States and international organizations are invited to make use of and to circulate them.

Use of Personal protective equipment and safe shipboard between ship and shore-based personnel

IMO has issued guidance related to the use of PPE to support decisions on use of PPE to minimize the risks of COVID-19 infection for personnel on board, as well as shore personnel intending to go on board, and in their interaction with each other, based on the material of WHO. The guidance provides additional information from other relevant sources, and has been issued as CL No. [4204/Add.15](#).

IMO has also circulated practical measures to address COVID-19 risks for all people involved on ships and in ports when they may need to interact with each other, prepared by the maritime industry (ICS, IAPH, BIMCO, IACS, IFSMA, IMPA, INTERTANKO, P&I Clubs, CLIA, INTERCARGO, InterManager, IPTA, FONASBA, and WSC; and also take account of input from the International Maritime Employers' Council (IMEC) and the International Support Vessel Owners Association (ISOA)). The guidance has been issued as CL No. [4204/Add.16](#).

Additional activities to the Torremolinos Declaration in relation to the 2012 Cape Town Agreement

The IMO Secretariat is organizing regional TC webinars with FAO, ILO and PEW on the 2012 Cape Town Agreement (CTA) to keep the momentum emanating from the Torremolinos Ministerial Conference held in October 2019 and, in particular, to support the States that signed the Torremolinos Declaration on their public commitment to ratify the CTA by the tenth anniversary of its adoption (October 2022). The webinars will include presentations from Declaration States that have taken action to ratify the CTA, briefs on how COVID-19 has impacted the fishing sector and the actions taken by both international and regional organizations to support the fishing sector during this difficult time.

38th Session of the World Maritime University Board of Governors

IMO Secretary-General chaired the WMU Board of Governors virtual meeting, held on Monday, 11 May.

Submission of fuel oil consumption data in GISIS

In accordance with regulations 6 and 22A of MARPOL Annex VI, Administrations or organizations authorized to act on their behalf are required to verify the reported annual fuel consumption data of their ships of 5,000 GT and above, and issue a Statement of Compliance by 31 May at the latest. Not later than one month after issuing the Statement of Compliance, the Administration or authorized organization shall transfer that reported data to the IMO Ship Fuel Oil Consumption Database in GISIS.

In line with the above, Member States and/or authorized organizations are kindly reminded to submit the verified fuel oil consumption data of their fleet to GISIS at their earliest opportunity, and by 30 June 2020 at the latest. As of 13 May 2020, fuel consumption data of around 7,500 ships has been submitted out of the approximately 30,000 ships that are subject to the requirements in MARPOL Annex VI.

Parties to MARPOL Annex VI who have not done so yet, are also reminded to designate all organizations that can submit fuel oil consumption data on their behalf in the Fuel Oil Consumption Database module in GISIS. For any issues regarding the IMO Data Collection System, including the setup of web accounts for authorized organizations, please contact the IMO Secretariat on dcs@imo.org. A recently updated GISIS Fuel Consumption Database User Guidance and FAQ section are also available on the IMO website.
