

**BRIEFING NOTE FOR MARINE ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION COMMITTEE (MEPC)
68th SESSION
11 – 15 May 2015**

Agenda Item 1

Adoption of the agenda

The sixty-eighth session of the Marine Environment Protection Committee was held at IMO Headquarters from 11 to 15 May 2015, under the chairmanship of Mr. A. Dominguez (Panama). The Vice-Chairman of the Committee, Dr N. Parker (New Zealand), was also present.

The Committee adopted the agenda (MEPC 68/1) and agreed to be guided by the provisional timetable on the understanding that it was subject to adjustments depending on the progress made each day.

The agenda, as adopted, with a list of documents considered under each agenda item, is set out in document MEPC 68/INF 41.

Agenda Item 2

Harmful aquatic organisms in ballast water

The Committee noted that the number of Contracting Governments to the International Convention for the Control and Management of Ships' Ballast Water and Sediments, 2004 (BWM Convention) is currently 44, representing 32.86% of the world's merchant fleet tonnage. The Committee urged those States which have not yet ratified the Convention to do so at the earliest possible opportunity.

The Committee recalled that MEPC 67 had adopted resolution MEPC.253(67) on *Measures to be taken to facilitate entry into force of the International Convention for the Control and Management of Ships' Ballast Water and Sediments, 2004* and established a Correspondence Group on the Review of the *Guidelines for approval of ballast water management systems*.

Otherwise there is little of interest for ISAF.

Agenda Item 3

Air Pollution and Energy Efficiency

44 Documents were submitted for consideration on this item and the committee referred these to Working Group on air pollution and energy efficiency for consideration, without introduction in plenary.

An international Conference on Maritime Technology Transfer and Capacity Building is to be held in Singapore on 28 and 29 September 2015. The aim of the Conference is to generate a greater momentum towards more energy-efficient and low-carbon shipping through technology transfer; and a platform for the international shipping community to discuss and exchange ideas and identify priority areas on facilitating maritime technology transfer.

The Committee approved draft amendments to the NOX Technical Code 2008 regarding testing of gas-fuelled and dual fuel engines for NOX Tier III strategy, and requested the Secretary-General to circulate them in accordance with MARPOL Article 16(2), with a view to adoption at MEPC 69.

The Committee approved draft amendments to MARPOL Annex VI regarding record requirements for operational compliance with NOX Tier III

emission control areas, and requested the Secretary-General to circulate them in accordance with MARPOL Article 16(2), with a view to adoption at MEPC 69.

Agenda Item 4 Further Technical and Operational Measures for Enhancing the Energy Efficiency of International Shipping

There is nothing of interest in this item for ISAF.

The Committee noted that MEPC 67 re-established the intersessional Correspondence Group on Further Technical and Operational Measures for Enhancing Energy Efficiency and instructed it to develop full language for a data collection system for fuel consumption that can be readily used for voluntary or mandatory application of the system. As a result the correspondence group had developed a proposed text for the full language of the data collection system (MEPC 68/4), this generated considerable discussion and no consensus.

The Committee established a Working Group on further technical and operational measures for enhancing energy efficiency and instructed it to take account of the comments set out in the annex to document MEPC 68/4.

Agenda Item 5 Reduction of GHG Emissions From Ships

No significance to ISAF but included for interest.

The Committee considered document MEPC 68/5 (Secretariat), providing information on the outcomes of the United Nations Climate Change Conferences held in Lima, Peru, in December 2014 and in Geneva, Switzerland, in February 2015 ahead of the climate change conference to be held in Paris in December 2015.

In the discussion that followed it was felt that the reporting of the work of the Organization by the Secretariat to the UNFCCC is very important and the Secretariat should continue to report to that body; the development of further measures to enhance the energy efficiency of international shipping was the most appropriate way forward and a specific sector GHG reduction target for emissions may hinder the activity of international shipping which supports the international community.

In summarizing the views expressed and conclusions thereof, the Committee:

1 Thanked the Marshall Islands for document MEPC 68/5/1 acknowledging and recognizing the importance of the issue raised;

2 recognized the measures already adopted by IMO in relation to the reduction of emissions from ships, also recognizing that more could be done;

3 was of the opinion that current work should continue to focus on further reduction of emissions from ships, particularly through the finalization of a data collection system;

4 considered the issues raised by the Marshall Islands could be further addressed at a future session of the Committee, acknowledging the need to move forward cautiously; and

5 looked forward to a successful meeting in Paris later this year.

Agenda Item 6

Consideration and adoption of amendments to mandatory instruments

This agenda item is of little interest to ISAF and mainly concerned amendments to MARPOL annexes and polar shipping that do not affect small craft

Agenda Item 7

Amendments to MARPOL Annex V, Form of Garbage Record Book

The Committee, due to time constraints, agreed to defer consideration of this agenda item to MEPC 69.

Agenda Item 8

Review of nitrogen and phosphorous removal standards in the 2012 Guidelines on the implementation of effluent standards and performance tests for sewage treatment plants

This is of interest as the treatment and discharge prevention of sewage from small craft is now included in the RCD.

The Committee noted that MEPC 67 had concluded its review of the nitrogen and phosphorus removal standards in the *2012 Guidelines on implementation of effluent standards and performance tests for sewage treatment plants* (resolution MEPC.227(64)) by agreeing that they should not be amended.

The Committee noted that no documents had been submitted under this agenda item and recalled that the work had been concluded at MEPC 67 agreed to delete this item from its agenda.

The Committee agreed that the relevant provisions of the guidelines will apply, in general, from 1 January 2016; however, this excludes those provisions that relate to Special Areas, which will only apply from the date when the Special Area will take effect.

Agenda Item 9

Use of Electronic Record Books

The Committee, due to time constraints, agreed to defer consideration of this agenda item to MEPC 69.

Agenda Item 10	Identification and protection of special areas and Particularly Sensitive Sea Areas (PSSAs)
	<p>The Committee considered documents (MEPC 68/10 and MEPC 67/10) setting out information and action to be taken on matters related to the identification and protection of Special Areas and Particularly Sensitive Sea Areas (PSSAs), based on documents submitted to MEPC 67 but deferred to this session owing to time constraints.</p> <p>The Committee forwarded the proposal to extend the Great Barrier Reef and Torres Strait PSSA to include the south-west part of the Coral Sea (MEPC 68/10/1) to the Technical Group on PSSAs and as a result adopted resolution MEPC.268(68) on <i>Designating the south-west part of the Coral Sea as an extension to the Great Barrier Reef and Torres Strait PSSA</i>.</p> <p>The delegation of Singapore supported the outcome of the Technical Group reiterated the importance that any measures that may be proposed to protect the marine environment are in accordance with the regulations and guidelines adopted by IMO and consistent with international law, including UNCLOS.</p>

	<p>There was intense debate on establishing effective dates for the Baltic Sea Special Area under MARPOL Annex IV. Although the Committee agreed that sufficient notification had been received and that, therefore, effective dates could be established for the area, it was overturned by a legal challenge that confirmed that the proposed definition of the area differed from that defined in MARPOL Annex IV and that an amendment to MARPOL Annex IV would be needed for the area to take effect.</p>
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Agenda Item 11	Inadequacy of reception facilities
	<p>The Committee noted that MEPC 67 had deferred the consideration of the documents submitted under this agenda item to this session. The Committee noted document MEPC 68/11 (Secretariat), setting out information and action to be taken on the revision of the IMO Manual on Port Reception Facilities, based on documents submitted to MEPC 67.</p> <p>Otherwise there was little of interest to ISAF.</p>

Agenda Item 12	Report of Sub-Committees
	<p>MEPC 68 received reports from a number of its sub committees. There is nothing of interest in these for ISAF.</p>

Agenda Item 13	Work of other bodies
	<p>MEPC 68 received reports from other IMO committees. There is nothing of interest in these for ISAF</p>

Agenda Item 14	Promotion of Implementation and Enforcement of MARPOL and Related Instruments
	<p>The Committee noted that, owing to time constraints, MEPC 67 had deferred consideration of the documents submitted to that session under this agenda item to this session.</p> <p>There is nothing of interest in these for ISAF.</p>

Agenda Item 15	Technical cooperation activities for the protection of the marine environment
	<p>The Committee noted the information provided in document MEPC 68/15 (Secretariat) on the Organization's technical cooperation activities related to the protection of the marine environment, implemented between 1 July 2014 and 31 January 2015, under the Integrated Technical Cooperation Programme (ITCP) as well as under major projects financed through external sources. These activities were aimed at assisting Member States in the implementation of the provisions of relevant IMO Conventions.</p> <p>Summarizing, the Chairman recalled that the constituent programmes of the ITCP could only be delivered if the required funding is secured from internal resources and/or external donor contributions; expressed appreciation for all the financial and in-kind contributions to the ITCP and major projects; and invited Member States and international organizations to continue and, if possible, increase their support for IMO's technical cooperation activities so that successful delivery of the programme could be achieved.</p>

Agenda Item 16	Capacity Building for the Implementation of New Measures
	<p>The Committee agreed that it would not be necessary to establish the Ad Hoc Capacity-building Needs Analysis Group (ACAG) and requested the Vice-Chairman to submit to MEPC 69 a preliminary assessment of capacity-building implications or technical assistance needs related to the</p>

amendments to mandatory instruments and the new outputs related to proposed new measures approved at the current session.

Agenda Item 17

Work programme of the Committee and subsidiary bodies

The Committee noted that MEPC 69 and MEPC 70 have been tentatively scheduled to take place from 18 to 22 April 2016 and from 24 to 28 October 2016, respectively.

Agenda Item 18	Application of the Committees' Guidelines
	Nothing of note for ISAF.

Agenda Item 19	Election of the Chairman and Vice-Chairman for 2016
	<p>The Committee, in accordance with Rule 17 of its Rules of Procedure, unanimously re-elected Mr. A. Dominguez (Panama) as Chairman and unanimously elected Mr. H. Saito (Japan) as Vice-Chairman, both for 2016.</p> <p>The Committee, in acknowledging the contribution of its outgoing Vice-Chairman, Dr N. Parker (New Zealand) to its work, thanked her and wished her success in her future endeavours.</p>

Agenda Item 20	Any Other Business
	<p>It is worth noting that New Zealand provided information for the Committee on the introduction, in May 2014, of biofouling management requirements for all ships coming into New Zealand to minimize the risk of introduction of invasive aquatic species. The requirements are initially voluntary, becoming mandatory by May 2018 and New Zealand is working closely with the shipping industry to ease their effective implementation. The national requirements align with the <i>2011 Guidelines for the control and management of ships' biofouling to minimize the transfer of invasive aquatic species</i> (resolution MEPC.207(62)). During implementation, New Zealand will be collecting information and reporting these findings to the MEPC as appropriate.</p> <p>The delegation of Japan noted that such efforts would contribute to a review of the guidelines and the <i>Guidance for evaluating the 2011 Biofouling Guidelines</i> (MEPC.1/Circ.811).</p>